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The Letters of Robert Hewson Pruyn

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The Letters of Robert H. Pruyn

1862-1865

Transcribed and Introduced by

Susanna Fessler

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Foreword

The letters transcribed here have lived in obscurity for many years. They were lovingly kept by their recipient, Jane Ann Lansing Pruyn, and then passed down through subsequent Pruyn generations. At one point Robert C. Pruyn, Robert H.'s son, lent them to Payson Jackson Treat, who used them in part to write his book, *Early Diplomatic Relations Between the United States and Japan 1853-1865* (The Johns Hopkins Press, 1917). Later the letters were stored away, sometimes exposed to the elements, or chewed on by vermin. Eventually the letters and other Pruyn paraphernalia were acquired by the Albany Institute of History & Art, where they remain today.¹

There have been a number of scholars and librarians intrigued by the Pruyn collection, particularly these letters that Pruyn sent to his wife while he was the United States Minister to Japan. Pruyn wrote volumes, and that is part of the problem. Despite being less than a linear foot in the Pruyn collection, the letters comprise hundreds of pages. Pruyn's handwriting, by his own admission, is hard to read. Some letters are missing (we know this because Pruyn numbered his letters), and some are incomplete not only because of environmental damage but also because of purposeful redaction. Pruyn wrote about his political dealings with Japan, but he also wrote about the flora and fauna, the expatriate community, the lives of the Japanese, the food, the cost of living, etc. He also wrote about Albany business and politics and the American civil war. There really is a little bit for everyone, if one can find it amidst the scribbles. It is my hope that these transcriptions will prove useful to a wide range of readers.

What are transcribed in this volume are all letters from Robert H. Pruyn (RHP) to his wife Jane Ann Lansing Pruyn ("Jennie," JALP), save one that he sent to his sister-in-law, Sue Lansing. Pruyn typically would start a letter on one day and add to it subsequent days, sending it when the opportunity presented itself. Post could travel through Europe to the United States, or across the Pacific via San Francisco to Albany. Some routes were speedier than others, but there was never a guarantee that correspondence would arrive in a timely fashion. It usually took a month or two for letters to go one way, which made Pruyn's diplomatic work difficult and increased his frustration when he could not have recent news from home.

I have indicated the damaged sections of the letters with square brackets: [damage]. There are also a handful of words that, despite my best efforts, I was unable to decipher. Those are indicated by "xxx" in the text. Perhaps someday another scholar will be able to read what I was not. Some letters are partial—we are missing a sheet or two, based on the

¹ The Pruyn Papers' catalog number is CH532. References to specific items will give box number and folder number. For example, box 2 folder 17 is noted as B2F17.

numbering that RHP used. Some partial letters are undated, in which case I have put them where they seem to belong, based on the content. Divisions between letters is based on what RHP appears to have sent as one letter—even if the “one letter” was written over the course of many days. This can be unclear at times; RHP often signs a letter as if it were finished, only to pick up his pen the next day and continue with it. RHP meant his letters to be shared with others in the Albany community. Occasionally he includes pages titled “Business” or “Private,” so that Jennie could separate them out or destroy them as she saw fit. There are a couple letters from which someone (presumably Jennie) has cut a section out.

Many of the letters are written on paper so thin as to allow ink bleed from one side to the other. RHP complains often about the paper and the ink in Japan, and rhetorically asks Jennie if she is able to read his scrawl. The letters contain very little in the way of punctuation, which I have added to make them more readable. There was not yet a standard Romanization system in Japan; sometimes RHP uses the spelling current among the expatriates (e.g., *itzabu* for *ichibu*), but sometimes he chooses his own spelling. In the interest of consistency I have chosen one spelling—whichever he seems to use the most—and stayed with that. Abbreviations, ampersands, and the like are mostly converted to full words.

Occasionally RHP included sketches in his letters. Those have been included as embedded images.

I have attempted to identify the many people that RHP mentions, most of whom were prominent Albany residents. In some cases their identities remained obscure, more often in the case of women than men because the former tended not to be listed in the annual Albany City directory.

Many people have supported me in this endeavor. I'd like to thank Erika Sanger whose enthusiasm for “Project Pruyn” was a driving force for me. I'd also like to thank the volunteers at the Albany Institute Library, particularly Phoebe, Andy, and Prentiss, whose help and buoyancy made my Thursday afternoon visits an absolute joy.

Albany, October 2022

Introduction

Robert Hewson Pruyn (1815-1882) was many things: a businessman, a diplomat, a politician, a military man, a church member, and a philanthropist. Until 1861 his life was solidly anchored in Albany, New York, where his family and his wife's family had lived for many generations. He was educated at the Albany Academy and Rutgers College, graduating from the latter in 1833. He went into the practice of law and was admitted to the Bar in 1836. He was Judge Advocate-General from 1841-1846 and served multiple terms in the New York Assembly as a representative of the third district of Albany County. He was married to Jane Ann ("Jennie") in 1841 and they had four children: Edward Lansing ("Eddie"), Robert Clarence ("Bertie" or "Ber"), Helen Lansing ("Ellie"), and Charles Lansing ("Charlie"). Helen died in childhood at the age of five, leaving her parents devastated at the loss.

Jennie had two siblings, Charles B. Lansing and Susan Yates Lansing ("Sue"), whom RHP mentions often in his letters. He was particularly close to Sue, who never married and remained a constant presence in the Pruyn family. RHP's relationship with Charles was less loving and had its occasional rough patches. When RHP left Albany for Japan he left the Albany Saw & Iron Works (the "Works") in Charles' hands. But the business was not doing well, and Charles seems to have been under much stress as a result. RHP decided to send Charles extra business in the form of a contract with the Japanese government for three warships. Much of that correspondence sits outside of the correspondence transcribed here, but interested parties can find more details in my article, "Gunboat Diplomacy of a Different Kind: Robert H. Pruyn and Japan's Purchase of U.S. Warships, 1862-1865" in the *Journal of American-East Asian Relations* 27 (2020) 29-57. RHP mentions the ships often in his letters.

Abraham Lincoln's decision to send RHP to Japan came in September of 1861. This was the first and only time that RHP traveled to Asia in his life. It was seen as a great adventure, and he decided to take his two older sons, Eddie and Bertie, with him, leaving Jennie at home with the youngest, Charlie. Eddie was 18 years old and Bertie was 14. They set sail in late December 1861 from New York, traveling to the Panamanian isthmus where they crossed by rail to the Pacific side and boarded another ship for San Francisco. Tragically, Eddie fell ill and died there on February 8 1862. RHP expresses his emotional and financial stress acutely in his letters home. His family begged him to return to Albany, but he continued on to Japan with Bertie, largely because of the debt he would face had he turned back.

Paying off that debt was the main incentive for taking the post in Japan. The subject of his debt figures large in the first year of letters home, as he explains to Jennie how the

exchange in Japan worked to his benefit, how he was economizing on household expenses, what funds he was sending home, and which debts to pay off first. It would seem that RHP planned from the beginning to stay only as long as it took to become solvent, then return home. The exact sum of RHP's debt in 1862 is unclear, but from his instructions to Jennie it seems to have been upwards of \$20,000. It weighed heavily on his mind. As it turned out, his departure was delayed by various events, and by 1864 he found himself in a position to instruct Jennie how to use the excess cash he had amassed for philanthropic purposes.

RHP and Bertie arrived in Japan in late April. He joined a small community of foreigners, largely diplomats, missionaries, merchants, and transient navy men. It was a pivotal moment in Japanese history as the Tokugawa Shogunate was failing, soon to end its grip on power that had lasted two and half centuries. In essence there were two ruling powers: the Shōgun (whom RHP calls the “tycoon”) and the emperor. The Shogunate struggled to keep this domestic strife hidden from the foreigners but were only partially successful. RHP mentions the rebellious Prince (Daimyō) of Chōshū (which he spells Chosiu) often, and in a derisive tone. The Americans sided with the Shōgun and saw the imperialists as rebellious outliers. Eventually the imperialists overthrew the Shōgun, but RHP had left Japan by that point.

One source of constant frustration for RHP was dealing with Japanese government officials, whom he found tedious. Mostly he interacted with members of the *Gorōjū* 御老中 (which he Romanizes as “Gorogio”), or Council of State to the Shōgun. Literally *gorōjū* means “honorable elders,” but Pruyn erroneously wrote to Jennie that *gorōjū* means “five wise men.” Despite their prominence in the Shogunate, RHP rarely refers to them by name, indicating that they remained at a distinct remove to him. Indeed the only Japanese that RHP seems to mention by name with any regularity are his house servants.

RHP succeeded Townsend Harris, who was the first American Minister to serve in Japan (1856-1861). The two men were very different: whereas RHP was a dedicated family man, Harris was a bachelor. RHP prided himself for being more popular than Harris among both the expatriate community and the Japanese government, although that is hard to qualify. The American Ministry was at the time housed in a re-purposed Buddhist temple, the Zenpukuji, in Edo (modern day Tokyo). But the Japanese had convinced other diplomats to move down to Kanagawa, where they could keep a closer eye on them. RHP was insistent that he wanted to stay in Edo; it took the arson of the Zenpukuji eventually to drive him south.

RHP, like most diplomats, was given a large entourage of samurai guards, whom he calls “two-sworded men” (because samurai carried two swords) or *yakūmin*. He saw this as unnecessary, but he was probably wrong based on the number of attacks on foreigners at the time. One shudders to think about Jennie's reaction when she read his letters describing grisly assassinations, then averring that he was being “prudent” and she shouldn't worry about him. Bertie chafed somewhat at the restrictions, and decided to

return to Albany in late 1863, leaving RHP alone. With the lucrative exchange disappearing and his family gone, RHP began thinking about going home himself. He wavers in the letters between making those plans and making plans for Jennie to come to Japan. Jennie suffered terribly from motion sickness, and RHP was constantly suggesting routes and methods that would alleviate her queasiness.

While he daydreamed about Jennie visiting, RHP became more active in the local foreigner community, attending amateur theater productions, dinners, and concerts. He also attended church regularly and was keen on helping to establish a Christian presence, at least among the Westerners. For the Japanese, Christianity remained illegal until the 1870s.

Jennie never made it to Japan, and her husband's stay was extended beyond what he wanted because he felt responsible to stay until the one gunboat that was constructed for the Japanese arrived. That ship, the *Fusjyama*, did eventually arrive, but not before RHP gave up waiting and left Japan in April of 1865. He traveled to Europe, where he met Jennie, and then returned to the United States, where he gave up all diplomatic life. Financially he was very comfortable and all his debts were paid off.

As his letters reveal, RHP was eager to send home all manner of objects: clothing, fabric, thread (what he calls "sewing silk"), plant clippings, lacquerware, fans, photographs, even live dogs. Although his time in Japan was relatively short, he was very proud of his knowledge of the country. That said, he did not learn the language beyond a few words. His appreciation of things Japanese stopped at inanimate objects. He was increasingly critical of the Japanese, seeing them as heathens with unhealthy habits. It was truly a "love-hate relationship."

1862

At Sea, Monday January 6 1862

My Darling Jennie,

I am told we may meet the steamer for New York tomorrow and possibly exchange mail, so I will be ready, if with only a dozen lines.

First cast your eyes on the Atlantic just north of the East end of Cuba. You will see the island of Maranguana [*sic*]² the first land seen after leaving New York. We expect to reach it by 10 o'clock this evening, being now at 5 o'clock about 45 miles north of it. We are proceeding slowly, the vessel's copper being loose, and do not expect to reach Aspinwall³ till Friday afternoon.

Edward is quite well; has not been sea sick or any way unwell. Bertie has been off and on sick till today, when he has for the first time succeeded in taking a meal at the table which has had a disposition to keep his acquaintance. Yesterday I brought food from the table for him which he ate with a relish and retained in his stomach. He will now make a wonderful advance. He has leaned many an hour on my shoulder, for I have been inclined to be sedentary in my habits. He is unwilling to admit he is at all homesick, unless when sea sick. I have been quite fairly well. I started with the idea I must be sea sick and superadded to this was the idea that it would be well for me to be thoroughly sick; when I found that my sickness only lead to my throwing off the tea and other substances just taken in the stomach I resolved to battle against it, took more care as to my diet and concluded I would be long enough at sea to desire benefit from my voyage without any rough disciplinary process which could be avoided. I am now quite well. As Edward is sitting by me ready to write I will wait till he's done before finishing.

² Probably Mayaguana.

³ Also called Colón. The city had been founded by Americans in 1850, at the terminus of the Panamanian railroad.

Tuesday 3 p.m.

South of the East Point of Cuba

The island we first reached was Maranguana. This morning we passed Great Inagua, with a small town (Matthew T[own]) on its south west point. I am now writing on the deck with the desk partly on my knee. The sea fine, slightly ruffled only. Yesterday it was as smooth as in crossing to Jersey City. Yesterday morning asking what time it was Ed said, "Listen to the North Dutch clock," whereby straightway I said "Oh that we could hear!" But Ed said, quite philosophically, "I do not, for it would put us so far back." And then we went on a wishing race until we wished ourselves in Japan and even on our return. This out on the ocean sailing is wearisome work, but then it is fattening. Ed says he thinks he has gained 10 pounds. He eats like an ostrich. Bert is rather peaked; but yesterday and today he was and is ready for eating all the ship except the steerage as he says. He was as hungry today after dinner as when he sat down. We may meet the home steamer this afternoon and I am trying to surprise you with a letter. Would you were here. You would have no sea sickness I feel sure. The air is as balmy as any day in August at Rockaway. The sea is like sapphire. The greatest waves that made by the paddles. We have slept for two nights with open windows.

You will be pleased to learn there are two ladies on board bound for China, a Miss Smith, to be married, from Salem Massachusetts, with a little brother of 11 or 12, and Mrs. Rodgers who goes to join her husband (three years at Shanghae), a son of Dr. Kearney Rodgers⁴ of New York, with her son of 5 years. She is pleasant, unaffected and tolerably fair looking, a good domestic body. With Miss Smith I have only had a word or two. She is somewhat desirous of admiration and attention of which she probably receives an unprecedented amount. They are in expectation of finding the bark *Rival*, Captain Rouse, awaiting their arrival, to sail at once. As two other ladies, one the wife of the Captain, were expected to go out with the same vessel we may be able to get their vacant room. The Captain is a friend of Mr. Rodgers, the vessel a staunch one, two years old. Of course until we reach San Francisco nothing can be determined on. We expect to reach Aspinwall Friday afternoon.

My ever dear Jennie we have remembered you, Charlie, grandfather, Sue and all nightly in our prayers and daily in our thoughts and conversation.⁵ God help you all and

⁴ John Kearney Rodgers (1793-1851) was a prominent surgeon in New York City. His son, J. Kearney Rodgers Jr. was a general broker in Shanghai. RHP's misspelling of "Rodgers" has been changed to "Rodgers" to distinguish this person from the Dr. E. Rogers who ministered in the First Dutch Reformed Church in Albany.

⁵ "Charlie" is either Charles Bridgen Lansing (1809-1890), RHP's brother in law, or RHP's son, Charles Pruy. "Sue" is Susan Yates Lansing, Jane Ann Lansing Pruy's sister.

everyone. Did I say goodbye to Betsy?⁶ I was in such a whirl I hardly know.

Today we looked over the photographs of Bertie and your dear daguerreotypes. It was hard to realize a thousand miles intervened. Yet God has been seen every foot of the way. There is his wondrous sea all around, above his glorious sun and every clear night the silver moon looks down as placidly on the smooth or ruffled sea as on the quiet village or golden wheat field. The sea is not as lonely and desolate in its vastness as I expected. Though till yesterday we only had seen two vessels and all else was sky and water, it looked familiar and even narrow for the view is limited, 12 or 15 miles. I will get this letter ready for the steamer if fortunate enough to reach it this afternoon and write again from Aspinwall. Oh darling Jennie, never so dear and wished for as now, distance is not powerful enough to chain thought or to conquer love daily, nightly will I pray, long for you. Kisses for all. My heart goes out to you and dear darling Charlie. His name has been nightly on my lips with yours. Sea sickness has not been enough to prevent that. Kisses for you, Charlie, and Sue. Love to your Father⁷ and all dear friends. My dearest take care of yourself. You are so thoroughly unselfish and so self-sacrificing, I fear for you. Oh if you were here you would improve in health and spirits. I will say nothing, urge nothing to make you waver in duty. But with me or from me you are ever my dear devoted, affectionate little wife.

Yours, Robert

I wish the *Statesman* of Saturday January 4 sent me and all the numbers till *Brandon of Brandon* is completed.



No. 3

At Sea, January 16 1862, 4 p.m.

My Darling Wife,

We expect to reach Acapulco Mexico tomorrow afternoon at 3 o'clock being now within 220 miles of it. This letter will be left then for the steamer which will pass down the next day. I will therefore give you a sketch of our journey since our arrival at Aspinwall from which I mailed you in the same envelope my nos. 1 and 2. We arrived

⁶ Also referred to as "Betsy Brooks," "Baby," and "Baby Brooks," Elizabeth Brooks (b. 1805) was a seamstress who was living in the Lansing household in 1860 (source: U.S. 1860 Census Records).

⁷ Unbeknownst to RHP, JALP's father, Gerrit Yates Lansing (1783-1862), had died three days earlier on January 3 1862.

at Aspinwall Friday evening [January 10] at 6 o'clock. We went ashore to see the place. Most of the passengers, as directed to do, took lodging ashore: we ventured to follow our inclinations and slept on board. If those ashore suffered more from the heat I pity them. The scene ashore was of course novel. Negroes, half breeds, Spaniards and a few whites comprise the population. On one side of the street on which the railroad is laid, the hotels and stores are located, the St. Charles, Howard and Aspinwall etc., etc. The stores are well supplied; the port being free. In the street dozens of women, yellow, brown and black with lemons, limes, oranges, bananas, cake etc. for sale. Every foot gay with mirth and music and dancing. We went to supper at the St. Charles—eggs stale, chickens tough, all the way from Cartagena 200 miles east. Price tough too, \$1 each. Instead of our maples and elm grow the coconut and palm trees. The former with leaves from 15 to 20 feet long and 4 broad, like the feather of a peacock except that they terminate in a point. The nuts hang in an unexpected, heavy cluster, near the trunk, just above the commencement of the leaves. Oranges and bananas very fine, about 2 cents each. A bunch of bananas could be purchased at from 4 to 6 bits, according to size and quality.

Just before reaching Aspinwall we passed Puerto Bello, which on account of its unhealthiness was named the grave of Europeans. It now contains but a few miserable huts.

Saturday [January 11] 7½ a.m. Left Aspinwall by the Panama Rail, 47 miles long. By reference to the map, you will see the road runs south.

6½ a.m. Friday [January 17]

I woke this morning at 4½ to see the Southern Cross. Ed said he saw it yesterday. I could not. I soon had Bertie up and we had a beautiful view of it. It is no fanciful idea. There is a bona fide cross with no stars visible to the eye near it to destroy its form. The North Star disappears from view at the lower end of the Bay of Panama. We have been, you will see, only about 400 miles from the equator.

But to resume where I left off last evening. The railroad route is very interesting, and yet you would soon tire of it. A profusion of flowers line the route of every hue and very brilliant. I noticed one like our morning glory. Whether it was a vine or not I could not determine for although it covered tops of high bushes there is such intermingling of vine and tree that it is at times difficult to separate the one from the other. The large trees almost invariably have dozens of vines, some with stems like ropes pendant from the ends of the branches and winding around the trunk. Such is the profusion of vegetation that from trunk and limbs of trees wherever a lodging can be effected spring plants with and without flowers. I enclose a leaf of one which I pulled from a palm tree on the Isthmus of Panama, also a flower which Bertie pressed. The line of the road is

mostly an immense marshy jungle filled with trees and gigantic weeds. The palm is everywhere. The miserable huts of the natives gather along the route. The children, often innocent of clothing, tumble out to take a view of us. The women wear mostly calicos, mostly French and English, no hoops. Every time we stop they gather around with their fruit. Oranges were sold by some at a cent each, some even cheaper. Very fine guava picked ripe or nearly so. They have chicken and pigs, the latter with long wolfish snouts, animals you feel inclined almost to run away from. I saw three animals, one fairly a horse, the other so called. The food used is mostly the plantain, banana etc. I saw some hard looking corn. A few houses, probably of officers of the road, were of boards and painted white. The natives live in bamboo huts one story and one room common to the animate creation. The turkey buzzard was at home and tell Charlie we saw a beautiful species of bird—he can find it in his books—a white crane with long slender legs. The elevation to overcome to reach the Pacific is I think 258 feet. It is said the construction of the road cost the lives of a thousand for each mile, 47½ [miles].

We reached Panama at 11 o'clock and left at 3. Commodore Bell of the *Lancaster* sent his boat with an officer to invite me on the *Lancaster*, a large steamer with 9 and 11 inch guns. Near her lay the *Cyane* sailing sloop of 20 guns, nearer still the British frigate *Tartar* with the same number of guns as the *Lancaster*, all the guns of all the ships loaded to the muzzle as it was not known but that our ship might bring news of a war with England. Commodore Bell had been told that the British Captain had declared he would not respect the neutrality of the port. He had called on Commodore Bell and disavowed any such declaration, which it would have been folly to make, as with the *Cyane* away the *Lancaster* could soon have sent her majesty's frigate to the bottom. I learned from the secretary of the commodore that the steamer *Wyoming* had been ordered up to San Francisco thence to China. I expect to telegraph the State Dept on the subject of going in her. The Commodore apologized for not firing a salute as all his guns were shotted.

Panama contains 10,000 inhabitants. Everything is in decay except the railroad buildings. The old wall is crumbling. The Cathedral with two towers is covered with moss. The old Franciscan monastery at the southeast angle of the walls is now an American boat builder's shop. A nunnery is near which contains, I was told, 7 nuns who would be out of place if not also in decay and quite moss covered. About 6 miles south is the site of the old city which was destroyed by the Buccaneers under Morgan in 1661. The ruins are said to be fine. The old city surpassed the new one in the number and size of its churches and towers etc. We saw neither except at a distance. We had no opportunity to visit either. Indeed I believe since the fight between its soldiers and people and some of our Californians, passengers are not allowed within the walls. The railroad terminus is just without the walls. We were taken to the steamer *Sonora* by a small steamer, as a coral reef runs some miles out which is bare at low tides. The tide rises and falls nearly 21 feet. The bay is filled with some beautiful islands, one occupied

by our ship company and another by an English company, covered with the orange, palm, etc. The sail down the bay, 70 miles, is fine, and then the broad Pacific. Truly named with the exception of one day, the sea has been smoother than the river at Albany, some days with scarce a ripple. There is always a long swell almost imperceptible to the eye which causes the bow of the vessel to rise and fall. We have not seen a sail since we left Panama, not even a fishing vessel. I send our latitude and longitude each day. You can take an atlas and see our exact course.

January 11. Left Panama 3 o'clock p.m.

12 o'clock	January 12	Lat. 7° 12	Long. 81° 45	206 miles
"	" 13	" 9.01	" 85.03	225 "
"	" 14	" 11.19	" 88.42	256 "
"	" 15	" 13.47	" 91.52	238 "
"	" 16	" 15.09	" 95.41	238 "
"	" 17	" 16.30	" 99.26	230 "

We are generally in sight of the land. Yesterday we saw the peaks of Guatemala. There are three so nearly alike as to appear as if made in a mold, 8, 12 and 14,000 feet high. We are now running due west and you will be surprised to see how such westing we make. We are opposite Mexico having passed Costa Rica, Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala. We expected a storm in the Gulf of Tehuantepec, usual at this season. The land is there only 130 miles wide and the northers of the Gulf of Mexico blow through a gorge of the mountains. We have escaped this: the only roughness being opposite the Gulf of Fonesca, caused apparently by a storm which had already passed: the first notice we had of it being the heave of the ship while no wind was blowing which could cause the waves. The almost constant vicinity of the land, the smoothness of the ocean, excellent arrangement of the ship, the good food well cooked, make this part of our trip incomparably finer than on the Atlantic. We have suffered some from heat as I can't get a particle of my summer clothing. There is my black trunk in my room, nothing in it I can use. You may judge of the weather when I state I sat on the upper deck last night at 10 with no hat. I scarcely have one on during the day. I have given Ed the state room assigned to me, and Bertie and I are roommates. We sleep with the window partially open immediately opposite our berths. We are all well and mind the motion of the vessel no more than on the Hudson. I can write as easily. My present almost illegible scroll is occasioned more by a poor pen, the only steel one I can get, than by the waves which are this morning like those of our river with a fair wind. The worst part has been written with a goose quill. Mr. McCready says I have improved a hundred percent since

I left New York. I feel better. My bleeding has almost ceased. I have paid close attention to Edward and Bertie's regularity of life. Costiveness is to be particularly avoided: because if contained two days fever might set in. They both eat like sharks. I rather think we are all fattening.

Bertie is quite faithful in his attendance on Mrs. Rodgers, who was a Miss Hardenburgh from New Brunswick or near it, a niece of C.L.H.⁸ and a cousin of a classmate of mine. She really begins to look handsome. She is lovely in character and disposition. She and Ber play checkers. We expect to go ashore at Acapulco though it will cost \$1 each. I must let the boys set foot in Mexico. We are obliged to have ice each day for dinner, 1 pound, price 2 bits. Our water is taken from wells and tanks at Panama and has no taste, rather is horrible, without the ice. Lemonades etc. 2 bits each glass. I have allowed Ber one every two days which he thought was reasonable.

The captain of the vessel is very polite. He has made me free of his office where I am now writing. He is a son of Commodore Hudson.⁹ The ship is 200 tons smaller than the *North Star* but is comparably neater and more convenient. It has no deck state rooms. The whole deck aft has a saloon with walks around it. It serves for parlor and dining room. The first cabin has two outer and two inner rows of state rooms, ours both outer. We breakfast 8½, lunch at 12. Dine at 4½, ending dinner with coffee or tea. For breakfast oranges, fried bananas. Dinner oranges, bananas, pineapples. Let me show you how to eat an orange. Take for instance Havana oranges. Freeze them on ice. Cut around the end so as to cut through the peel, run a fork right up through the center, then cut off the upper end. Then cut off all the peel down to the lower incision, coat it with pulverized sugar and eat. So the captain prepares some each morning. They are delicious. He has sent them to our room also before breakfast. You know I don't quite dislike fruit and can readily imagine I take to this style of living kindly. Today we will lay in a supply of oranges and bananas for ourselves, ship likewise.

Were you here my dear Jennie you could not be sea sick. The only fear I would have, if you came out, would be on the other side where you would have to make a rigorous effort. You would be a sailor here. But I reserve for another letter some useful hints.

I hope this will find you all well and in good spirits. If you have not received my letter from Aspinwall, let Mr. Dawson¹⁰ write for it to the New York office. Some think it required a stamp to go from New York to Albany, though I should think the American Consul would know as he makes up a mail and mine was given to his charge.

⁸ Charles L. Hardenburgh (1832-1894), one of the superintendents of Rutgers University.

⁹ William Levereth Hudson (1794-1862), of the U.S. Navy.

¹⁰ George Dawson of Weed, Dawson & Co., Albany New York.

I hope Charlie gets along smoothly at the Works.¹¹ I would like Haskell¹² to give some detailed information occasionally. Remember me to him and Abby¹³ and all the family, your father, Sue and Towny¹⁴ and Betsy, Dr. Rogers¹⁵ and all and all.

Kiss Sue and dear little Charlie for me and believe me ever and ever my dear darling Jennie,

Your Faithful and Loving Husband,
Robt. H. Prun

1 o'clock

We are near within 20 miles of Acapulco where this will be mailed by the agent who is acting as Consul.



San Francisco February 10 1862

My Dear Mother,

When this reaches you, nearly one month will have elapsed since our dear Edward has been carried to his grave. The news reached you by telegraph at a time when our Heavenly Father's hand yet rested on your head soothing and comforting and sustaining you in the place of that of your earthly Father whose hand I trust was holding a golden harp in Heaven.¹⁶ Could I have been the first to bear the sad tidings I would by tomorrow's steamer join you and together would we talk of the God's judgment tempered with so much of mercy. I took precautions that the announcement should be made by Dr. Rogers to whom I sent a dispatch, as my friends here said it might reach the papers from other offices than that at San Francisco. I know, my darling, the blow will be heavy and yet I hope that absence and distance will mitigate the severity of the blow. I cannot realize that your father is dead. The news comes to me like a far distant

¹¹ "The Works" refers to the Albany Iron and Saw Works, owned by RHP and Charles B. Lansing.

¹² William H. Haskell of Albany.

¹³ Abby Townsend (1831-1909) was the second wife of Charles B. Lansing.

¹⁴ J. Townsend Lansing (1843-1919).

¹⁵ Ebenezer Platt Rogers (1817-1881) served as the pastor in the North Reformed Dutch Church of Albany for six years. In 1862 he decided to leave Albany and become the pastor in the South Reformed Church in New York City, a move that RHP did not approve of, seen in later letters.

¹⁶ Jennie's father, Gerrit Yates Lansing, died on January 3 1862.

shock. He is only a little farther distant from me: perhaps even nearer. So you, Dear Mother, I hope may feel. True it is you were denied the satisfaction of soothing his dying pillow but you have been spared, mercifully spared, the indescribable loneliness I felt as I stooped beside his lifeless body away from wife, home, and kindred. And you will see that though our dear boy missed your gentle presence and your soothing ministrations which none short of angels' presence and ministrations could have supplied, yet that God mercifully gave me the heart and strength to supply your place as far as any could possibly have done.

This afternoon we inter his remains temporarily in the receiving vault of the Lone Mountain cemetery at 3½ o'clock, Bishop Kip¹⁷ performing the last sad rites.

I scarcely know what to say or how to say: my mouth is parched, my throat is choked and yet tomorrow by 8 o'clock a.m. all that I can say must be in the hands of the Express Company.

In looking over the whole course of our journey I see but little that could have been done humanly speaking to have arrested this stroke. Of course as Bertie and I were sick several days on the Atlantic and I once on the Pacific and most of the time after we were three days from Panama so uneasy as to render it necessary for me to keep quiet and impossible for me to walk to parts of the vessel to which it was pleasant for those not sea sick to resort and I wished to see Edward pleasant, while keeping my eye on him as much as possible I was pleased to see he was enjoying himself and to all appearances gaining in health and strength. On the isthmus he only moved about in my company. We went into town in the evening for supper and walked about the distance from the river to the Capitol in all. We slept on board the steamer, took breakfast in the town and left, as I before wrote you. On the railroad Edward wished to stand with some others on the platform of our car which was the rear one. I urged him to come in more with a view to safety than health, because when I went to the door I did not at any time see he was exposed to the sun. When we were delayed to pass a coming train for half an hour many got off to go to a wayside house of refreshment. Edward got off and so did I to follow him. He returned at once with me as I did not think it prudent to go so far from our car. I scarcely had occasion to ask him to do or avoid anything and never that I can now recollect without avail. As far as my poor brain can collect its thoughts I have endeavored to see what more I could have done or left undone for his good and while now I could wish I had monopolized every moment of his precious company and reproach myself as much as I can for omissions of duty, yet after all my dear Jennie it all resolves itself into this question: who can contend with the Almighty? What puny

¹⁷ William Ingraham Kip (1811-1893) served as rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Albany 1838-1853. He left New York in 1853 for California, where he became that state's first Episcopal bishop.

arm of flesh can stay or baffle his purposes? Up to our arrival he was vigorous to all appearance as well and strong as ever. He was cheerful and as popular as any on the steamer. Much to my surprise a few days before our arrival here he put on his uniform (two lieutenants of the army being on board and in uniform) and there he stood towering in strength and manliness with promise of as long life as any on board. We landed here and arrived at the Oriental Hotel shortly before 5 o'clock p.m. Bertie and I after dinner went to hear T. Starr King,¹⁸ one of the boarders giving us seats and conducting us to the Church. Edward preferred to stay at home. In the evening two gentlemen, fellow passengers called in, Mr. H. W. Johnson of New York and Mr. Marcus. Edward told them in the course of conversation he had never felt better and that he was so well, he almost felt inclined to go home in the next steamer. Bertie and I slept in the bedroom, he on a cot which was made for him in the parlor, the hotel being crowded and we having only temporary accommodations. We all slept well. In the morning we went to breakfast. After breakfast some time Edward wished to play a game of billiards with Mr. Davis. After cautioning him against undo exertion rather to the point of not playing at all I left him and shortly after returned to ask him to do something which he said he would when he finished. I went out and was gone almost an hour. It appears Edward played two games and then walked rapidly as he says around the block. Shortly after he bled at the nose and before my return from the lungs. Dr. Bodinier of New York whom I at once called in, who had been a fellow passenger and was at our house, prescribed for him.¹⁹ He informs me now that this bleeding was the result, not the cause, of the fever, so that no imprudence on that occasion of our darling boy brought it on. It might have been forced on shortly after by taking off or putting on a boot as any of the usual or unusual strains to which we are all subjected. At the time, as I think I have before written by steamer of first instant, the doctor prescribed for the disease which was most dangerous, no fever having as yet been developed. Still the doctor even then looked to this bleeding as only the incidental, and expected fever to be the disease which would have to be battled with and accordingly gave that night or the next day two grains of quinine. He suffered Eddy to go to dinner and eat moderately under his own eye, my seat at the table being adjoining the doctor's. The next day the doctor gave four grains of quinine, the fever having fairly set in. This caused bleeding, or was shortly followed by bleeding, at the lungs and occasioned much difficulty in the treatment of Eddie's case. The doctor said if the treatment was too active to stop the bleeding at the lungs, sufficient strength could not be left to resist the

¹⁸ Thomas Starr King (1824-1864) was a Unitarian minister who staunchly supported the Union.

¹⁹ Dr. J.N. Bodinier was a French physician. He died only a few months later in July, when he was a first class passenger on the steamship *Golden Gate*, which caught on fire and sank off the coast of Mexico.

fever, whereas if the fever was treated as in ordinary cases of simple fever, permanent injury which in a few months would result in death, would be done to the lungs. I should have said the fever was typhoid, not the simple Panama Fever. The doctor immediately changed his treatment having reference to both diseases. I was and am eternally satisfied with his care. His room was in our hall. He was more friend and nurse than physician simply. Kind and gentle and assiduous, even getting up without being asked and coming in the room at 3 o'clock a.m. on one occasion to see if certain medicines were needed in view of a change in the disease which he anticipated might occur. He was in never less than ten times each day or as Bertie now says he was in the majority of the day. Had Edward been his own son he could not have been more faithful. Besides he was deeply interested. I did not know what typhoid fever meant and had no idea of what was before us. I did not think therefore at first of a nurse and when I did Edward was so averse to it unless absolutely necessary to spare me, saying "Father I would rather have you alone with me," that I gave it up. On Sunday Bishop Kip suggested the name of Doctor Bowie²⁰ as one of the most skillful physicians in the place (having been in the Navy) and said it might be well, however skillful Dr. Bodinier might be, to have one acquainted with the climate etc., etc. Mrs. Hort, the wife of [Samuel] Hort of the firm of C. Adolphe Low & Co., boarding in the house, had made the same suggestion the previous day.²¹ On Monday, finding a good opportunity, Edward being a little impatient with the treatment of Dr. B[odinier], not fully comprehending the changed circumstances as compared with his attack at Albany, I asked him if he would like to have another physician. And on his desiring it I sent for Dr. Bowie. He came on Monday evening about 8 o'clock. The treatment was changed, how much I cannot say, though I fear too much. The next day Edward's pulse was at 120. How much was owing to the progress of the disease and how much to the change of treatment I cannot say. He pronounced the disease pneumonia, and that certain pustules which Dr. Bodinier, who speaks English rather broken, I think called *sudamonia*,²² showed themselves in other than cases of typhoid fever. Dr. Bodinier the next day said I wish Dr. Bowie were now here to see Edward as I have before seen him, I am an old fogie, what I have seen I know etc., etc. I sent for Dr. Bowie. Either that evening or the next day (I having succeeded in saving some urine), tests were applied which showed that danger from the lungs had passed away for the time at least. From that time (if not before) the doctors were in accord. Dr. Bowie visited Edward three times each day and Eddie was delighted with him. He is a frank, prompt, manly gentleman reminding me by his manner and conversation greatly

²⁰ Augustus Jesse Bowie (1815-1887) was a highly renowned physician in San Francisco. While Bodinier had only recently arrived in California, Bowie had been there for more than ten years.

²¹ Samuel Hort (1816-1892) was married to Emily A. Hort (1822-1902).

²² He probably said, "pseudomonas," which is a type of infection.

of Dr. Hun.²³ Wednesday evening through the kindness of Mrs. Hort who went for her, I obtained the services of Mrs. Jordan, a capital nurse. She told Ber she is the cousin of James Homer. That afternoon we changed our rooms which were noisy, being near the dining room, and confined, facing another building only 80 to 100 feet off, Mr. and Mrs. Van Bergen (the husband a brother of a fellow collegian at New Brunswick) having kindly vacated their rooms for us and taking in place those of landlord vacated by him. We had thus airy rooms and a good bed which gave Edward great comfort, the bed which had previously replaced his cot being short and not quite as wide. Although in great anxiety I had to this time but little fear comparatively of an unfavorable result, Dr. Bowie on Wednesday evening having said, to use his own language I think, "I would bet anything on a favorable result." This was said when consulting him as to the probable time I could depart as Captain Basil Davidoff of the Russian Navy commanding the steam corvette *Calavala* having most generously offered to put his vessel at my disposal having learned it might be essential to the preservation of Eddies health and life that we should at once proceed to the Sandwich Islands where he was ordered to proceed.

Before Wednesday bleeding had stopped and the disease of the lungs had assumed the form of congestion and for one day Eddie had suffered much from difficulty in breathing. Thursday evening and night Eddie was in great pain and said he could not bear such another night. He would rather die. That evening a blister was applied between the shoulders which was kept on six hours and was intended not to raise the skin when taken off at 1½ o'clock a.m. Edward was so uneasy and in such pain that Dr. Bodinier was unable to wipe off part of its substance which adhered to the skin and in the morning his back was much blistered. Friday he was comparatively comfortable. That evening Mr. Rice,²⁴ commercial agent of the United States, sat up with Edward. I accepted his services as he had much experience in such cases, he himself having had the fever—his son, sister, and two brothers. Eddie was delighted with him. He said, "Father I like Mr. Rice. He is so gentle." At 3 o'clock Saturday morning, Mr. Rice said, "Mr. Prun you have another boy." He was so much better. The experienced ear of Dr. Bodinier it appears at the same time detected unfavorable symptoms. Saturday after at 1 o'clock I went to lunch. On returning to the door of my room I met someone and walked for some time near the door in the hall. About two o'clock or a little before I went in. Edward's mind was wandering. He told me I had deserted him, that he had

²³ Thomas Hun was a physician in Albany. The 1860 Directory indicates that he was a member of the Medical Society of the County of Albany.

²⁴ Elisha E. Rice, who would accompany RHP on the trip to Japan. Rice was the U.S. Commercial Agent at Hakodate, one of the treaty ports. When RHP met him, Rice had already spent time in Japan and was thus a knowledgeable resource.

been left alone with Mrs. Jordan whom he liked very much but whose face he did not even know. Says he, "I have been sick how many days?" I said 12, thinking of the fever. He said no, 13, which was the time counting from Monday the day of the bleeding. He said "So many days...six days...12 o'clock noon...Father with me...12 at night...Father with me," etc., etc. Then going on to other days, "Father with me...Mrs. Jordan sleeping...Mrs. Jordan with me...Father sleeping..." He talked gently. But I shortly stopped him by reading. In about an hour he had terrible shortness of breath. We had to open the window, raise him to a sitting position. He asked for the doctor, said "Father, see I can scarcely keep myself alive" —seemed to have an idea he was doing so by forcing the breath in and out of his lungs by his own will. I sent Bertie for Dr. Bowie. He was about. But Dr. Bodinier soon came in. He was not then so excited. The doctor felt his pulse, examined his skin, extremities, etc., told him to take larger breaths if possible. Eddie said he could not but immediately did so, breathing fully and slowly. The doctor said he could see no cause for it. But shortly after discovered that the extremities were getting cool. The heavy sweat which was on him was cooling off on his hands and feet. From 4 till ten minutes of 10 o'clock p.m. with hot water in bottles, mustard to chest, brandy, quinine to the extent of 15 grains (almost if not quite) we worked—the doctor, nurse, and myself (Bertie having been sent off for medicine and Dr. Bowie having been there meanwhile). Eddie had all along resisted the application of mustard plasters. He did even now to the feet and legs. But I rubbed him with dry mustard on his thighs and legs until about the very minute of his death. At 15 of 10 o'clock I called the doctor from the adjoining room, where he had gone for some article, observing somewhat of a rattle in his throat and asked him, "Is not that death?" It was. Without a groan or a struggle, he slept himself away. Bertie had not got back and did not until five minutes after. Even then Doctor Bodinier moved up and down alternately the chest, I continued to rub. So peaceful was his death that he breathed twice after he had been pronounced dead.

So much of Judgment. Was there no mercy? Thank with me our Heavenly Father there was.

Our boy was a noble boy. Mother my love has gone out to him more in two weeks, I was about thinking and saying, than ever before in all his life. But that, while it would express more my feelings, would be an exaggeration. I can now understand, more than ever before, a mother's feelings and comprehend somewhat of the nature and extent of a mother's love. To our boy I was as much as it was in human nature to be Father, Mother, Brother and Sister. You can have no idea how he clung to me, how often he wished to have his arms around my neck or mine around his neck. He could not bear me from his sight. Five minutes after he had urged me to go out for air, exercise or dinner, he would send for me, and then it would be, "Father kiss me." How many happy moments we had. Even in his sore affliction, I said, "Eddie if God spares your life what

a blessing this will have been? How it will make us love each other! How we will cling to each other. What great assistance you will be to me.” These were his own feelings frequently expressed. I overheard him telling Mr. Rice how much he loved me and how good I had been to him. Mother, I must say it. You would not have even known me. I did not know myself. I was undressed two hours in eight days. One night besides all but drawers and shirts. My habit was when Bertie was with me alone to go to dinner, take soup and a little meat and then send Bertie in. Even after the nurse was with me, the whole or part of my meals were sent to me. Thursday night I said to Mrs. Jordan, I will sit up until 2 o’clock then I will sleep and you can take my place. At three I lay down. Eddie wished me to stay with him and lay in his bed. I said no darling that will oppress you. I will move the sofa to your bed side. I did so, and there with his hand in mine I slept so thoroughly exhausted that I slept even while Eddie talked to me, which he continued to do. At one moment wishing me to sleep, and then to keep awake and talk with him and yet he was so thoughtful of me. When I spilled a tumbler of milk over me while bathing his head with warm water, in his pain even he wished me to desist and care for myself. And then clinging to me as he did he would urge me so often to think of myself and not neglect meals and exercise as to force me. Two days in succession I did not know whether it rained or the sun shone. The only exercise I took was to go after medicine as late as 11 p.m. You will observe I have said little of Bertie; he was my only and efficient assistant till the nurse came. Then I spared him except to go for medicine as someone has told him the disease almost always ran through families and he and I would have to use great caution to escape.

Bertie is now urging me to go out saying I should not lean over so much. We might as well be careful etc. I will leave till tomorrow morning the details of kindness shown and the funeral (it is now a few minutes to 10 o’clock). I may be able to mail the letter tomorrow morning. The Express Company takes letters as late as 8½ o’clock a.m.

On the Atlantic side we occupied as you know adjoining state rooms. We had there our little circle of prayer. Little did I think as prayer was offered daily that after a brief separation we might be reunited loving each other more and loving and serving God with a fuller and more perfect love and service that the family might audibly hear those prayers from his abode in heaven. On the Pacific a hall was between our rooms and as there was no light in our rooms, the most of the time Bertie and I had prayer alone. I took Bertie with me to watch him because on the *North Star* one night he had got up in his sleep. Here we resumed our prayer daily with regularity, all present. I prayed with Eddie during the day also. He expected to get well but yet I am certain knew he was in danger. One day panting for breath he followed me when I came to the Lord’s Prayer. On Friday night when Mr. Rice sat up and I was asleep he heard me breathe heavily, and perhaps snore, he said to Mr. Rice, “There is Father asleep. I am glad of it.” Shortly after Mr. Rice went down to get something to eat and Mrs. Jordan sat with him. She

heard him say "Father" several times and asked if he wanted me. He said, "No. I am talking to our Father." She heard him ask why he was afflicted. What he had been guilty of etc. to deserve chastisement. What else he said she did not distinguish. Saturday morning he joined with me in prayer. I had prayed for restoration to health, preservation of life and consecration of his life to God's service, that we might be spared to carry on God's work among the Heathen and asked him to join with me in asking for pardon of sin making confession thereof and asking Jesus to make him his, that he would always be with him and especially when crossing the dark valley, and which he did though pulse was beating so fearfully. When I asked that God would give him a new heart and used the words of the 51st psalm, he took the words out of my mouth and I followed in several verses of that and the 23rd psalm, which he repeated. Even the thief on the Cross was saved. Shall not our boy find a mansion in Heaven breathing up from dying bed petitions for pardon and acceptance? He was the child of a pious mother's prayers, baptized by her tears. Will not God have remembered her prayers and heard and answered his, imperfect as they may have been? His soul has gone to God who gave it. Blessed Jesus, Sympathizing Elder, brother is it well with the Child? God grant it may be, and to his name be the praise and then another of praise mingled with no sigh of regret would go up from your and my heart. My duty did not appear plain to me. Dr. Bodinier said it was essential his courage should be kept up. Was I to tell him he would die? I did not think there was danger till Thursday. If the physicians did they did not tell me. That or the preceding day his nails appeared blue. I could not read that writing. I did not know it was the impress the King of Terrors made by the grasp of his hand calling him away all along while praying for health. I prayed for him and myself as dying creatures. I little thought death would come so soon. I had hoped for more opportunity for prayer. Bishop Kip twice called. I had intended he should talk to and pray with Eddie, for it was a fearful thing that prayers should ascend only from one so imperfect and unfaithful as myself, but on both occasions he could not see him, once because he was afflicted at the time by quinine. I read to Eddie the different verses selected by Sue, the 23rd psalm, 14 John, etc., etc. On Saturday I said, "Eddie, let us pray again for mother, little Charlie and our home friends" He said, "Not now Father, wait a little. I will gather my thoughts. I wish to conduct that prayer myself." He was fearful on Saturday he was losing his brains and said, "Father how dreadful that would be." I told him there was no danger of that. It was the effect of weakness, and with strength his mind would be as strong as ever. Shortly after he asked to see *Harpers Pictorial* and what the picture was. I told him sinking vessels in the harbor of Charleston. He said he did not before understand it, and continued "There are words," (I understood) commencing whisper, "of Mother's which I have repeated every day and yet I cannot recollect them." I found

in a book given him by Mary Viele²⁵ just before he left what he meant: the language of Mizpah. The book I will send.

We buried Eddie this day at 3½ p.m. in the receiving vault of the Lone Mountain Cemetery, looking out on the broad Pacific. Beneath the wood coffin was one of lead. Of the friends who accompanied him to the grave filling 13 carriages, the many, many acts of kindness experienced, of the arrangements for sending home the remains, my own feelings as to what I should do though I know you would wish my return I will try to write about tomorrow. I have put off writing, because on Sunday I did not wish to write even on this subject for I must keep constant watch and pray God to keep watch over the door of my lips. We have just taken a walk at Bertie's urgent solicitation and stopped at Mr. Brooks' office to finish and seal up this letter.²⁶ It is after 11 o'clock and he is asleep on the sofa. I send you half of the hair I had taken off, more by another steamer more effectually to guard against loss. I also send his sleeve buttons, two rings etc., etc., and a few roses which were placed in his coffin. A large wreath and bouquet are to be pressed, preserved in an enduring form and sent to you. These were the gifts of new found friends whom God bless!

I should add, my darling, that once kissing him I said, "Eddie darling there is a kiss for Mother." He said, "Father no one can give that." Another time he said, "Father I would rather be sick at home in Mother's arms than lying well here." Still another time I said, "Eddie I will let Mrs. Jordan do this. She will do it gently almost like Mother." He said, "She is kind, but she cannot do that." Many more such things could I say but Mother I have been in a fearful state. I have fallen asleep even counting Eddie's pulse. I send you a blotted pencil memorandum I kept for two days when I was so worn out I was afraid I might forget the medicines and their order from which you may judge in part what had to be done. This was before I had the nurse. My object was also to be able to give a faithful report to the doctor. Between three½ hours I would also be obligated to get up to hold a vessel for him to spit in, or wipe his face or bathe his forehead. God gave me strength for duty and that duty was cheerfully, gladly done, and yet imperfectly for I was without experience.

My darling Eddie did not know of your father's death. He did not know I had received a letter. I waited till a safe time presented and none offered. Your letter found me with my mind absorbed by Eddie. Will you pardon me if I reserve further remark? Gladly did I read of that death bed scene. Your father was not demonstrative. I can

²⁵ Mary Kenyon Viele (1822-1882) of Albany.

²⁶ Charles Wolcott Brooks (1833-1885) of C. W. Brooks & Co. He was Japan's consul general and commercial agent in the United States from 1858-1873. Brooks became the main agent in the United States for RHP, and is mentioned often in the letters. Later on, RHP explains to JALP who Brooks is.

readily and fully believe in the sincerity of his belief. Our boy was not very much inclined to make known his feelings. God grant that many a prayer for pardon unknown to us may have proceeded from his lips.

Knowing your fear of premature interment I could say I had Eddie carefully examined by Dr. Bodinier accompanied by myself and decomposition had already unmistakably taken place.

My Darling we have now two children on earth and two I hope with our Savior in Heaven.²⁷ May you and I and our precious Bertie and Charlie so live as to be admitted there when we shall leave a dying bed and may our end be as easy as was dear Eddie's. I had feared that with his strong frame his convulsion and agony would be awful, but God was merciful to the end. Our boy did not die, he fell asleep, I trust and pray and hope and believe, with Jesus.

Love to Sue to whom I trust to be spared to write this week. Kisses to her and Charlie, dear little one. So much dearer now and love to all.

Bertie is perfectly well, as also is your own loving Husband,
Robt. H. Pruyne

¼ to 12 o'clock

Eddie died by San Francisco time 10 minutes to 10, Saturday night. By Albany time 1 minute after 1 o'clock Sunday morning.

7 o'clock a.m. February 11th 1862

I rise my dearest much refreshed in body to resume my sad narrative. I can scarce speak now, I have not thus far without tears, of the many acts of genuine honest kindness. Nearly the first day of Eddie's sickness Mr. Samuel Hort of the firm of C. Adolphe Low & Co. came in our room and said Mrs. Hort, a lady of 40 to 50, would cheerfully come in and sit by Eddie. He introduced himself. Mr. Low had previously called you may remember and I had a letter to the firm from Messrs. C. A. Low & Co. New York. The next evening Eddie said, "Father I would like to see that lady." I said, "My son what for. You could not talk to her." But it was just after he had spoken of being in your arms and he was no doubt longing for you. He said, "No Father but I wish only to hear her talk." I went for and she came and sat in the room a long time. She sent Eddie jelly, she brought him flowers, went for his nurse, provided him with flannel, ours having been exhausted, she sat with his remains during the day and evening when the nurse took her meals. She had flowers, tea roses, carnations etc. for the coffin,

²⁷ Helen Lansing Pruyne was born on September 13 1849 and died May 5 1854. She was the third child and only daughter of RHP and JALP. Edward Lansing Pruyne was born August 2 1843 and died February 8 1862. He was the first of three sons.

a wreath etc., etc., either purchased by her or attained from friends. She accompanied his remains to the cemetery. She could have done no more had Eddie been a dear relative. Mrs. O. M. Alden,²⁸ the daughter of Thurlow Weed,²⁹ sent him the first beef tea he was able to take, made in your mode, and some beautiful preserved fresh peaches (which he was not able to take). After that, finding a waiter in the house who had made the tea the same way, we relied on the house. Mrs. A[lden] and her husband called several times and offered their services in any way. Mrs. Rockwell, whose husband was formerly a partner of S. S. Benedict, also called. Her husband had several times.³⁰ Mrs. George S. Fisher whose husband has been appointed consul to Kanagawa Japan called with her husband with offers of services.³¹ They urged Eddie's removal to their own house, offering to give him the parlor. This was urged several times but the doctor said there was danger of Eddie taking cold at that time. Mr. Rice sat up with Eddie Friday evening. Mr. Fisher was to have done so Saturday evening. Messrs. Hort and Fisher sat up with his remains that night. Mrs. Rockwell and Adler the next night.

Mrs. Kip called offering her services, as also did her son William. I have already stated the Bishop called four or five times. There were other calls before and after his death, many of the passengers with whom he was greatly popular. As Dr. Bodinier says he was so much of a gentleman. One of them, Mr. Matthews (who returns to Europe for his wife tomorrow), called and Mrs. Hort says sat and cried like a child. Mr. Bell's brothers called after Eddie's death.

The funeral services were coordinated by Bishop Kip and the funeral was very largely attended. More tears than mine and Bertie's were shed. Other kisses than mine pressed his forehead. Mrs. Alden and Mrs. William Alvord³² might have been supposed by strangers to be near relatives. Johnny Gould and young Alvord, both acquaintances of Eddie, acted as bearers with Mr. C. W. Brooks and a young son of Mr. Fisher, also a son of another Mr. Low living in the house. The remains as I have stated were taken to the Lone Mountain Cemetery. What an appropriate name, Lone, 5,000 miles from home and kindred. There our boy's remains will rest for at least six months when they will be sent home. 13 carriages filled with new and old friends accompanied his remains, some

²⁸ Ogden M. Alden is listed in the 1862 San Francisco Directory as a statistical clerk. His wife was Maria (1823-1896), the second daughter of Thurlow Weed.

²⁹ Thurlow Weed (1797-1882) was a close friend of RHP. Weed was active in New York state politics, and was also a newspaper publisher. He is often mentioned in the letters in various contexts.

³⁰ E. A. Rockwell (1825-1877) is listed in the San Francisco directory of 1859 as Associate Editor of the *San Francisco News*.

³¹ George S. Fisher (1823-?) was married to Martha Catherine Mann.

³² William Alvord was a San Francisco merchant, banker and later mayor of the city. He was born in Albany, New York, and attended the Albany Academy. He moved to California in 1853.

who knew your father and esteemed him highly, Mr. G. W. Ryckman³³ and Mrs. Alvord, Governor Stanford³⁴ and family, Mr. and Mrs. Hort, Mr. and Mrs. Low, Mr. and Mrs. Rice, Mr. and Mrs. Fisher, Mr. and Mrs. Alden, Mr. and Mrs. Rockwell, Mr. McCready, etc., etc., Mr. and Mrs. Tompkins formally of Binghamton New York. I should have mentioned before Mr. C. W. Brooks. This gentleman is in the largest business here, and I became acquainted with him through his calling on me as the agent of the Japanese government. Affable and pleasant he could not do enough. He sent me lemons for Eddie from Malaga when there were not as many more in the place, also from Los Angeles with the stems fresh on them. He and Mr. Hort took upon themselves all the arrangements of the funeral and will not close their friendly labors till Eddie's remains are forwarded in one of their own vessels or [by] some safe captain.

As advised by them and Mr. Gray, the undertaker, it would be unsafe now to send the remains as if found out by the sailors or passengers, they might insist upon their being thrown over. Such cases have occurred. By the isthmus they could not be sent, short of 6 months. And then they could be jostled about. All concur in saying they should be sent around the Horn. It would take only two months more. The remains would be put in before the crew were shipped and not moved till they reached New York. I had a strong lead coffin made which was put inside one of rosewood. This will be hermetically sealed and filled with spirit, and the remains can therefore...³⁵

[last page(s) missing]



Business³⁶

My Darling,

³³ Garrit Wilhelmus Ryckman (1798-1882), whose family was originally from New York, resided in San Francisco.

³⁴ Leland Stanford (1824-1893) was the 8th governor of California, in office 1862-1863. Before moving to California in 1852, he lived in the Albany New York area.

³⁵ On July 25 1863, Charles W. Brooks wrote to RHP from San Francisco, "Your son Edward's remains I have concluded to keep here for the present, until all risk of capture by pirates shall be passed when I shall have them sent home as desired." How long it took for the risk to deescalate is unclear, but Edward's remains were eventually moved back to Albany and now lie in the Albany Rural Cemetery.

³⁶ Although undated, we know this letter is sometime after Eddie's death but before they leave for Japan.

I shall be obliged to make a larger draft on Charlie than I had supposed. My expenses here will be about three fold more than I expected yesterday. Oh had God been pleased to crown the means employed with his blessing how trifling and magnificent they would appear had they been increased tenfold. The charges appear exorbitant but are Californian.

For medicines etc. I expended as near as I can now tell	\$40
Dr. Bodinier's bill	270
“ Bowie's	160
Undertaker	297
Nurse	25
	\$792

My necessary delay here will increase this bill and delay my remittance from Japan. I cannot now say when I shall leave, the prospect is I shall have to take passage in a private vessel. I shall put off draft till last steamer, for the sake of convenience to you at home and to embrace all in one draft. I shall make it as small as possible and yet there are articles I must provide here. Under other circumstances I would purchase more, as on all articles I take no duties are payable. Consequently the expense would be much less here than if purchased at Yokohama and the articles would be fresher and better. I should be pleased to have butter sent via New York. Mr. Cochrane³⁷ on North Pearl Street would attend to it and thus save you an addition to the heavy troubles you must have.

I send a power of attorney for Sue as requested by Charlie. It is not acknowledged because it will be useless in a legal point of view. Could I devolve my duties on another I would first have to qualify myself, as an acknowledgement would cost \$5. I think it would be money thrown away. The only good it can do will be to assure you of my hearty concurrence in all you shall do.

While I should be pleased to have my pictures and books saved I shall acquiesce with pleasure in any disposition of them you shall think best. Only don't sacrifice unnecessarily.

Please bear in mind that all letters sent via San Francisco must be addressed “care of Charles Wolcott Brooks Esquire.”

Mr. Brooks will forward at the proper time dear Eddie's remains. For the expenses of vault and of ship he will either draw or send bill by ship. Let someone see to the identification.

³⁷ William F. Cochrane, a retail grocer whose business was located in the Masonic Hall on 41 North Pearl Street in Albany.

I send the balance of articles, including dear Eddie's memorandum books. Bertie says he had another one which I have not been able to find. It may be found yet in some trunk. I have been in some doubt about his uniform and other clothes. I have not found it possible to think of disposing of anything here. I shall take all along and should be pleased to hear if you wish any sent home or brought back by me if spared to reach home again.

Ever Yours, R

My Darling,

I am having a box made to enclose the articles I propose sending. As it is not finished I will add a few lines.

I send your cap etc. carried off by [damage] as the cost of transmitting the package will not be increased and it will aid in preventing breakage [of] glass. I also enclose two pieces of Japanese coin for you and Charlie presented to me by Mr. Brooks. I have sent you two bills paid and proposed enclosing the doctors' bills but Mr. Brooks thinks the charges large and thought it is a bill which will not bear dispute. I was so impressed with the idea that the bills were horribly exorbitant that I spelled, in my letter to you, the latter word with an "h". I have re[damage] the bills to Mr. Brooks for payment. Dr. Bowie called several days 3 times. Bertie think some days only twice and one day at least once. He paid in all about 15 visits. I called him in I think on Monday of the last week.

I will send you if possible a few lines more tomorrow morning.

A Mr. Reed, brother of Mrs. Dr. Wyckoff,³⁸ has been at our house till Tuesday when he left for Oregon with Mr. and Mrs. Van Bergen. It was as passengers [we met] in the steamer, but I did not know anything of his relationship till he had arrived here.

Time hangs heavily and I am weary of this place. Not but that under other circumstances it would be pleasant enough, but the room in our inn is the one where Eddie was first taken sick and the associations constantly presented to my mind in the absence of anything to occupy it saddens my many moments each day.

Your father's death dear Jennie does not present to my mind that actuality, if that be a proper words, which it would have done had I stood beside his bed or even attended his funeral. It appears like a far off event of which I have to remind myself to bring it home. I think I have presented this idea before. But alas I can now also call up many occasions when I could have added to his comfort. My darling, if we could live over our lives again, could we improve them any? The past is beyond recall. I hope we have days in store yet, when those of us who are left may enjoy each other's society with unalloyed happiness, and at least as much so as this earth will permit. Before I leave I

³⁸The Reverend Isaac Newton Wyckoff (1793-1869) served in the Second Reformed Church of Albany for over 30 years.

will, if health and life are spared, write to Charlie, Abby and Sue.

There is some prospect of the bark *Benefactor* belonging to C. A. Low & Co. sailing in a few days for Kanagawa, also of a large steamer which Mr. Brooks is negotiating to purchase. I have waited with patience for a few days for the *Lancaster*, but the chances are against her reaching here, as I am informed on good authority, before from the 1st to 10 March. And then there is a chance of so much delay even if a national vessel should be sent as scarcely to justify waiting. But as my box is probably ready for me I will now close.

I am, my darling, yours ever, R

I should advise you my dear, in view of my debt and the uncertainty of life, to make some provision for the preservation of your share of your mother's property. While I hope that my present sacrifice may result in much good and entire relief, till it is made effectual it is best to guard against accidents. That your life may be spared for many, many years is the fervent prayer of your affectionate husband.



San Francisco February 20 1862³⁹

My Beloved,

I little thought when I placed my foot on the soil of California that at this late day I should [damage] you from this city. Had an opportunity for my departure presented last week I should have felt it my duty to remain as I was advised I was not free from the risk of having the typhoid fever. Although constitutionally timid I cannot say I was much disturbed, though for a few days my tongue was much furred. Dr. B was sick for a few days. He remarked one day if not a physician he would feel a little [damage] as on one occasion when dear Eddie brought up very green bile or matter he fancied he had [damage] the malaise. As I remembered the occasion and was about as much exposed as he, the remark did not [damage] to quiet me. I was thoroughly satisfied, that if [damage] I would never recover. But I did not intend to enlarge on this topic. Suffice it to say, Dr. B said it would be very serious to have attack on ship board. But as no opportunity presented itself, the whole subject was more speculative [damage] calling for action.

I cannot even yet, my darling Jennie, [damage] that Eddie is with us no more. Your

³⁹ This letter is damaged on one edge having been eaten by mice.

absence [damage] of dear Charlie seems like his. I have to sit and go over the moments of anxiety, of distress, of hope and fear to bring it home, my prayers apart by myself [damage] for his recovery, my thanks on bended knee when God appeared to be answering these prayers in mercy. As I pass within sight of the cemetery or some point I suppose to be near it, my thoughts go up there. As I [damage] around me the articles which belonged to him and when I wake in the morning having been disturbed by dreams or waking thoughts in which the fearful scenes are reenacted in some instances invented with some fearful attendants, then it is brought home to me. When I look towards the west I think of my mission and hear of anything whether of encouragement or discouragement connected with it, then my thoughts go out to Eddie as the wished for, longed for, sharer of my pleasures or the able and sustaining friend and son on whom I would to God I could yet rely. But my darling, why go on with such thoughts. I know yours. Estimate mine by your own. Although there are many little things I could now wish had been different, thus giving him more of the comforts of home, I have the satisfaction of knowing our dear boy felt he was treated with a tenderness and patience and love and fidelity which lacked nothing but the impossible, the presence of the loved ones at home.

I have written you of the kindness of Mrs. Hort. After the funeral, she took the wreath and one of the bouquets and had them pressed as well as it could be done here and framed and yesterday presented them to me for transmission to you. I hope the articles which I enclose will reach you in good order.

Bertie continues well and I am happy to say I have enjoyed good health; though I do not present as good an appearance as on my arrival. I had intended to have a *card visite* taken, however given up such thoughts now.

I enclose you a copy of a letter I addressed [to] Captain Davidoff. As a copy has been sent [to the] government with a letter to Secretary of State, it is of course to be kept only for our friends. Captain Davidoff has left for Sandwich Islands but before his departure sent me a message that [damage] could take me to Japan from the islands if a [damage] of our own failed me. It is my purpose [damage] to leave by the first possible vessel which offers for Japan direct.

I find it will be useful for me to have a seal with a coat of arms, which is represented as [damage] and almost indispensable in Japan. As J.V.L. Pruyn⁴⁰ has one I wish Charlie would ask him for one, if he has a duplicate or to have one engraved for me if it do not cost too much, it will answer on brass instead of stone. I supposed J.V.L. [damage] very cheerfully attend to this: as he probably [damage] discovered or been able to get up for

⁴⁰ John Van Schaick Lansing Pruyn, usually referred to as J.V.L.P. A prominent Albany politician, he served as a U.S. Representative from New York during the Civil War. He was RHP's first cousin once removed.

so de[amage] a family as ours something which will pass.

Bishop Kip has been very kind. He called for me in his carriage on Sabbath morning and Bertie and I took a family dinner with him yesterday.

In my next I hope to say something of this place where I have experienced naught but kindness. I have thus far been much secluded, as there were days I was not outside the house till late in the day and for the last 10 days I have not moved outside the city, partly because of the floods, but more that I might not lose any opportunity which might offer for the prosecution of my journey as there are vessels here which at a days' notice might be ordered off by eastern news through the instrumentality of the telegraph.

I will now close this letter as I wish to enclose it in the package. I will probably add a few lines this afternoon and evening.

Meanwhile, my beloved wife, give to Sue and Charlie and Abby and Townsend and Charlie my [amage] love. Kiss my darling little boy for me. Remember me to Betsy, Dr. Rogers and all enquiring friends and for yourself from a heart brim full of love accept the assurance that I am more than ever yours.

Robert



San Francisco February 20 1862

My Beloved Jennie,

I send this day by Wells Fargo & Co. Express, subject to a charge of \$5, a box containing a wreath and bouquet of flowers presented as I wrote you by Mrs. Hort and which she has very kindly had framed and pressed for you. She says that the person to whom she sent them had left the city and the one by whom they were prepared has not done the work as handsomely as she had hoped. I also send the balance of dear Eddie's hair which I had pressed for you and sundry articles contained in four envelopes placed in the box. There is some apprehension that by the orders of Vanderbilt⁴¹ the packages of W. F. & Co. will be detained ten days on the isthmus so that this note may reach you

⁴¹ Cornelius Vanderbilt (1794-1877) was an American businessman who was heavily involved in railroads and shipping. In 1862, mail from the east coast to the west coast went by ship to the Panamanian isthmus, crossed by railroad, and then went by ship up the west coast. Vanderbilt maintained a virtual monopoly on this route, and charged exorbitant prices. In order to quash competition that might force him to lower his prices, Vanderbilt ordered that any passengers traveling across the isthmus on his railroad be prevented from carrying any mail. This apparently included private delivery companies. He also ordered that mail be detailed in Aspinwall, as a sort of ransom when the government, which had contracted with him to carry the mails, refused to pay his usurious fees.

at least that length of time in advance of its arrival. I enclose receipt. The box contains one Japanese gold coin of the value of \$6.50 presented me by Mr. Brooks.

I had better say that the charges I will have to pay for medical attendance etc. will amount to about \$800. These are outrageous charges but perhaps on a par with everything else here. The details you will find in my letters enclosed in box. I shall not draw until the last moment so as to occasion as little inconvenience as possible.

It is now 10 o'clock and I will have no time to write much tomorrow morning as the letter must reach the Express office at 8½ a.m.

The book presented by Mary Viele, with her handkerchief Eddie carried in his pocket. It was to the inscription on the fly leaf at the back to which he alluded when distressed by his loss of memory when he said (and oh Jennie I now see his looks), "Father these are those words of Mizpah I read every day in Mother's book which I cannot remember." I hope he used that book daily. Oh darling may we not hope we have two in Heaven? My prayers have followed him and even yet do follow him.

8 o'clock a.m. February 21st 1862

I read Charlie's telegraphed dispatch marked sent at 4:50 p.m. within less than a half hour thereafter. I well knew, my darling, that God would be your refuge in this as in all calamities. When you shall have received my letters, imperfect as they were and imperfectly as they described my own feelings (and which I now read over and therefore much may have been omitted) I pray you may find something to soothe, console, and comfort. Say to Dr. Rogers who I presume was at home to make the announcement that for all of tenderness and consolations which he was able to bestow on that sad occasion he has my warm thanks. It was a hard task I imposed on his kindness. But I knew it would be well executed and that though he might have wished to be spared the necessity, he never shrank from the duty.

Bertie is still in bed and will take another sleep. He sends his love to you and Charlie and Sue and all. Though we have two rooms he and I sleep together in one large bed. It serves to make us less lonesome. He has lost none of his power as a good sound sleeper.

This difference of time that exists, gives us very often a glimpse of you at hours when we are very differently employed. As we go to Church in the morning at 11 o'clock you are at or through your Sunday dinner. There is no Church in California which has afternoon service. But Bertie and I will say, now Sabbath School is in.⁴² Now they are all at tea. Now they are singing some of our old tunes. And so we try to imagine your employment and to be with you in the spirit when the sweet songs of Zion ascend or you are engaged in your other employments.

⁴² The Pruyne family attended the First Dutch Reformed Church in Albany.

I have had no telegraphic dispatches since the 29th, some part of the line being down. But the city has been in a blaze of joy for a week. It is full of secessionists, as representatives of every state are to be found here. But all feel that disunion is in the process of strangulation.

Tell Charlie I should be pleased to have Haskell give me a brief minute of what is going on at the Works. I do hope he will find my absence will not overwhelm him. And I hope I may be spared so as amply to make it all up four fold.

But I must close, as I have to take this to the Express office $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile off. As they propose to hide their letters some way so as to escape Vanderbilt, I was told that 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ was the latest it could be taken. If my letters in the box are stopped this will probably slip through and therefore with this I send a fresh supply of the love which I send in them.

Kiss dear little Charlie for me. If he were here or I home he would have a bearish hug. He will be a dear good boy, obedient and loving to you and to God. Love to dear Sue. Her prediction will be before me. It would be pleasant to have it fulfilled. We will see whether it will be right. Remember dear Mother you and she will always be welcome to me even in Japan. Contemplate the possibility of your coming to me. Love to Charlie Abbey and all. I must close.

Ever wholly yours,
Robert H. Pruyn



San Francisco February 28 1862

My Beloved Wife,

I was made uneasy last night by a dispatch from Charlie to H. Bell asking whether I had yet sailed, to which I replied. As he had not 10 words in the telegram, I would have been delighted at seeing the words "all well" or something to indicate the purpose of the dispatch. I have as yet heard nothing further and shall hope and pray that "all's well."

You will be surprised at my being here so long, but several opportunities, far better than any which have appeared for the last two weeks, were lost and no vessels are now up for China except for distant parts, Hong Kong or Fouchou and none for Japan. Mr. Rice our Consul agent at Hakodate is now negotiating with clipper ship *Ringleader*. An answer will be given by the captain tomorrow morning. She is an elegant, strong ship and I hope he will be successful in making a bargain.

I have given up all ideas of a public vessel, as even if one is ordered over, great delay must occur and I am heartily sick of this place. Under other circumstances I could have

better endured the delay. As it is I shall hail with much pleasure my departure, even if sea sickness shall afflict me at the very moment it takes place.

I had intended to send you and Sue and Abby each a Japanese silk dress at 7 bits per yard. It is open like the baizes, but strong and durable as any silk. But Mr. Angel who was to take it, will not probably leave till next steamer. If he concludes to leave tomorrow, this letter will reach you with the dresses. You will find it very suitable for mourning and probably cheaper than anything you can find at home. I should have waited till my arrival in Japan, when it might have been procured far cheaper, but then you could not have had it for summer wear. I shall be pleased if you find it as good and suitable as I think it to be.

My letter and packages sent by steamers of 11th and 21st January Wells Fargo & Co. I hope will arrive in safety.

Please always bear in mind that through Charles Wolcott Brooks Esquire of this place you will probably reach me by messenger, and a letter from him enclosing message quicker than any other mode.

Bishop Kip's son William will accompany me.⁴³ I have agreed to take him as attaché, he paying the additional sum I shall be subjected to by reason of his being with me. He is a young man of excellent character, has traveled much having been twice to Europe, is a good French scholar, 21 years of age. And I trust will be a good and useful companion for Bertie, who is much pleased with him and had so expressed himself to me after several hours' communication with him, before the idea had been broached to me.

I have said I should hail with pleasure the moment of my departure. My eyes will fasten on one spot as the shore recedes, with a long and longing gaze. Then shall I realize more than ever before our bereavement. Though now as I retire, during the night, when I rise, thoughts of dear Eddie, his looks, his words, oh I would not part with the memory of some of those words for any sum, constantly press on me. Sometimes, my darling, I write bitter things against myself. Oh for a few hours with you now. There is so much I wish to say. Every time I write I feel how little I have said of what I would wish to say to you with your head resting on my bosom.

I am not fitted as yet for this absence. Perhaps when duties press on me and I have something to claim thought besides home and sad remembrances connected with absence from it, time may pass less heavily. As it is, one day is but the shadow of the preceding one. And I have nothing to do, but simply wait.

Bertie is well and I am happy and grateful to be able to say the same of myself. The weather here is rather trying. Flowers are in bloom in the open air. Plants which, with

⁴³ William Ingraham Kip, Jr. (1840-1918) served as a secretary to RHP in Japan. He also published a series of newspaper articles about his experience in Japan.

us [in Albany], are now in the hot house, here are in the open air, though one night slightly touched by frost. Radishes, salad asparagus are in market. It rains almost every day, in the middle of the day the sun is uncomfortably warm. It is almost like an April day at Albany, except that everywhere you see green foliage. I should welcome a good heavy snow storm, if my system were prepared for it.

I will not write a very long letter now as this may be detained on the isthmus accordingly to Commodore Vanderbilt's orders, but will write you by overland mail.

Kiss my darling little Charlie for me. What a treasure he must be to you. I am anxiously longing for a letter from him. I know he will be a good boy. I pray for you and him each morning and night and often during the day. I trust a wish for your life and health and happiness ascends to our Father. Kiss Sue also. I am afraid you and she will almost forget me now that you are so clearly knit together. Charlie and Abby are often in my thoughts. My love and best wishes to all.

I have seen the *Evening Journal* and *Kinderbooker* notice of your father's death. How much more might be said and then how little would it have been. How little the world cares for us, compared with our care for it.

May you and I and all our dear ones think less and less of it and as we approach nearer and nearer to our graves, approach nearer and nearer to Heaven. Heaven in our hearts and Heaven as it shall be eternal and full of joy because our Savior God shall be there.

My dear loving affectionate wife I know that I am in all your thoughts—you are in mine.

Ever Yours, R



San Francisco March 10 1862

My Dear Wife,

I send by Mr. Charles. H. Angel of Shanghae, formerly from Livingston County, 43 yards of silk from Japan suitable for summer mourning designed for dresses for you and Sue and Abby. It was all the store had. He will send it by express or leave it. I paid 7 bits per yard.

I enclose a copy of a letter to Mr. Brooks which will explain itself.

We expect to sail tomorrow or Wednesday by clipper ship *Ringleader*, 1156 tons burden, Captain White Master. It is a fine ship. We sail direct for Japan stopping at Honolulu.

Mr. G[eorge] S. Fisher, Consul at Kanagawa and his wife, adopted son and

daughter—son and daughter and wife's father and sister and Mr. E[lisha] E. Rice, Consul agent at Hakodate, wife, son and daughter accompany us. I have already written that W[illiam] I. Kip Jr. goes with me. As the season is favorable the Captain expects to reach Japan in 35 days.

I will not know till tomorrow how large a draft I will have to make on Charlie. It will be at least \$1,200. The price of everything is awful. Washing 20 bits per dozen for large pieces, 6 bits per dozen collars etc. I have already paid dentist for repairs to Dr. Newcomb's⁴⁴ work \$13. By the advice of those conversant with Japan I have purchased fine sugars and some other articles here on which duties are payable and which I can take in free of duty.

I have paid Dr. Bowie \$100, instead of \$160 and propose paying Dr. Bodinier \$125 instead of \$270. But you will see, my darling, I could not say what I would about these charges as I could in other circumstances. Mr. Brooks advised me not to pay the bills. Mr. Tompkins advised me to have a letter written that I had left the money for bills with Mr. Brooks and that if demanded then bills would be paid but not without the protest of my friends etc. But I went to each gentlemen and gave them my view frankly, but kindly, Dr. Bowie said pay me \$100. Dr. Bodinier said he left it to me to do as I thought best. I will send check for \$125.

You will see I make this a business letter. I shall write by Mr. Angel who leaves tomorrow.

Please say to Charlie that everything I know confirms me in the estimate I made of the promising advantage offered by my mission. Of this I can however speak more intelligently on my arrival. Meanwhile I hope for the best in our affairs at home. I know he will do all he can. I trust he will keep good courage and that God may spare his life and grant him health and strength.

I send by Mr. Angel a few copies of a photograph I had taken at the request of Mrs. Alden and for Mrs. Kip, aboard. Hort etc., etc. I had proposed to have it taken simply to show how much I had improved on my arrival. I gave up all idea of it afterwards until repeatedly asked for copies. I think I have lost all I had gained.

Bertie has improved vastly. He is very popular with everyone. Converses freely and well and if God spares his life you will hardly know him when he returns. He is perfectly well. I have caused him to join me in taking blue pills⁴⁵ etc. as a preparation for our journey.

My stay here is growing daily more irksome. Time hangs heavily. Nothing to do.

Please say to Dr. Rogers I will reserve writing to him till I reach the Sandwich Islands

⁴⁴ George H. Newcomb was a physician in Albany.

⁴⁵ Blue pill (also known as "blue mass" or *pilula hydrargyri*) was the name of a mercury-based medicine formerly common from the 17th to the 19th centuries.

or Japan. I had sketched a letter for the Sabbath School. But I have not the courage to write or do anything I can avoid.

And now, my darling, I will conclude this letter and this afternoon try to give you a good one which will express the thousandth part of my feelings which I will send by Mr. A[ngel] and which will probably reach you with this, perhaps earlier as Commodore Vanderbilt is fighting the Express Company. I suppose you and Sue are quite domesticated by this time and that dear little Charlie is a great comfort and blessing to you. May our Heavenly Father pour on you all his choicest blessings and grant that no more inroads may be made on our small diminished household. Oh how I long to see you.

Were I home I should not leave situated as we now are. Being at the halfway house I must go steadily on and I trust we shall all be repaid by the sacrifice when we meet again if God shall grant that: for which I pray each day.

And now, my darling wife, for yourself and Sue and Charlie, my darling little one, accept kisses and love from a flaming heart. How well do I know how lovingly you hold me in remembrance and how often we are spoken of. Remember me with love and kind greetings to Charlie and Abbie, Townsend and all, all.

I hope the packages I sent you by Wells Fargo & Co. at two different times will have reached you in safety containing as they do precious relics of our darling child. I divided them to guard as far as possible against loss.

I know you will write to Mrs. Alden and Mrs. Hort one of your sweet letters. They were very kind.

Much as I desire to sail I shall leave with a heavy heart. Favorable winds will bear me farther from you and the remains of our darling boy. I hope and pray his spirit is with God and that we may all one day meet at His right hand. My darling I follow him with my prayers and at times would feign hope and believe that the Catholic is right in his belief in the efficacy of prayer for the departed.

Oh how truly and affectionately
Your Loving Husband, R.H.P.



San Francisco March 10 1862

My Beloved Wife,

Mr. Angel has just informed me he will not leave till the next steamer. I must therefore reserve till then the package I this day wrote you I would send as also an unfinished letter containing matter of little importance which will keep 10 days.

The chances now are we will not sail till Thursday. On that day I hope once more to pass through the Golden Gate which on the 26th of January we passed through under a pleasant sky, with as happy hearts as we all could have 5,000 miles from home. Now Bertie and I will pass out casting lingering looks to the Lone Mountain at their top [sic] where the precious remains of our dear boy temporarily repose. God in his infinite mercy grant that those gates described in the Revelations, each gate one pearl, may have opened to receive the ransomed souls of your dear Father and of our darling boy. Those gates are the entrance of a far more beautiful, and of an eternal, city. May they one day open to receive you and myself and our dear ones here and at home.

I have written in the blank leaf of the Bible you gave me under your writing two verses of Joshua from the 1st chapter, the 8th and 9th verses, believing them as appropriate as any I have met with.

I addressed the Sabbath School of the Congregational Church yesterday, attendance 387.

Commodore Bell of the *Lancaster* came ashore this evening in the rain to show me orders from the Navy Department for the *Wyoming* to proceed to China, stopping at Japan and to take me there. As the cost would be greater to wait till she came up and orders go down tomorrow for her, including board here and mess on the ship, I shall proceed with the *Ringleader* on which I have by the way already paid my passage.

I have this day drawn on Charlie for \$1,300 at one day's sight. This will, after paying my passage and all bills, leave me less than \$260 of the funds provided for my passage etc. from Albany. I regret my draft must be so large. I might have made it \$100 less and had so intended, but Mr. Brooks had made out the drafts, calculations of premium, interest etc., and as the mail for Express which he prepares is a heavy one I disliked to ask him to change the amount. I hope I shall have the pleasure of making a large remittance immediately on my arrival in Japan. In case of any accident to me, Bertie should have a moderate amount at his disposal.

I was weighed today and much to my surprise found my weight 154 pounds, an increase of 10 pounds. As it is now ¼ to 12 o'clock I will go to bed and if my life is spared add a few lines tomorrow. Letters are not received now after 8½ o'clock a.m. Good night

March 11, 7½ a.m.

It rains hard this morning. Our embarkation may be delayed as some freight for the Sandwich Islands must go aboard.

My impression of this climate is not favorable. The old residents say it is the worst winter they have seen. The summer nights and evenings they say are colder than those of the winter, a strong wind from the land being invariable each summer afternoon. This is probably owing to the shape of this and the Sacramento Valley. The bay is

beautiful, being about 60 miles long and five miles wide. Since we have been here there has been considerable sickness and during the last month many deaths from fever. Were it not for its sandy soil and the strong wind which prevails here, the city would be too unhealthy for habitation.

There are several officers of the *Lancaster* at our house who have been in the East, two who were officers of Commodore Perry's squadron.⁴⁶ They are enthusiasts so far as Japan is concerned, representing the climate as perfectly delightful, the country beautiful, the trees finer than any they have seen before or since. The inducement to go is therefore strong, though it does carry us away from home and then we expect letters, ever so many, and papers either awaiting us in Japan or soon to follow. And that will draw us mentally, as swiftly as we hope favorable winds will carry us bodily there. The naval officers opined to say the season is exceedingly favorable and that we have every reason to hope for an auspicious journey.

Had not you and Sue better consider the propriety of coming to me. Selecting a favorable season, I think you would not suffer much at sea. By the way a teaspoonful of Jamaica ginger with 5 or 6 drops of chloroform diluted in water is regarded as a sovereign remedy for sea sickness. Mrs. Stanford told me she had found it so, and the druggist who prepared it for me said a steamer never proceeds without his preparing several prescriptions. He advises the articles should be kept separate till diluted by the water. Now as to your coming, I have not the least doubt, it would make you stronger and healthier and make little Charlie a young giant. Familiarize yourselves with the idea and see how it looks. We could return just as you wished. If you and Sue became good travelers we could return to our home overland and Egypt and Europe would delay us a few weeks or many months. I am speaking in all seriousness. And I hope you will give the subject serious consideration. I will meet you at San Francisco and Bishop Kip says he will receive and entertain you should you anticipate my arrival.

I see only one objection. Charlie could be left alone and even your advice in business matters I doubt not are of service to him. But in a few months he might be able to spare you. You and Sue would scarcely know yourselves, you could be so benefitted by the voyage. And I do sincerely believe that if you would struggle against sea sickness, keeping as much as possible in the open air, you would not suffer as you do in a confined river boat. I shall expect you.

And now, my darling, I must go to the express office. My thoughts and wishes go far thus, over the snowcapped Nevadas, over the plains, and the Rocky Mountains to our dear home and my dear wife and child and friends. May God bless you all and now and ever have you in his Holy Keeping is the constant prayer of your loving husband. Love and kisses to all,

⁴⁶ Matthew C. Perry (1794-1858) headed the first United States mission to Japan 1853-54.

Robert H. Pruyn

My darling wife must not be too self-denying. I shall feel very unhappy my love if my folly shall in any degree make you deprive yourself and dear little Charlie of any comfort or luxury to which your position and the means you have received from your dear departed father shall entitle you. Nor indeed will it be of my advantage. I have every confidence that if life and health be spared I shall be able to restore my affairs to a fair condition. I shall neither promise you or myself more than this while I shall avail myself of every legitimate means to do far more.

But what is wealth when the grave is so ready to open and close upon all who possess it. Let us use therefore what we have, my darling. I pray you to do this and I will hasten my return the earlier for it. Should you however be otherwise disposed then you know my pride may be aroused and I may wish to be a millionaire before turning my face homewards. You and dear Sue are in a situation where you can do much good and desire much good. You will be relieved from many calls to which I would be subjected. You may confine your expenditures outside of your immediate wants etc. to proper objects of benevolence amid charity. Don't deny yourselves in this or any channel of expenditure which will refresh body or soul. I know you so well, my dear wife, as to know that this advice, especially indeed only so far as it affects your own comfort, is necessary. I wish I was as sure it would be followed by you.

As soon as I get from this vortex for engulfing money I shall be economical. Here I have not seen a cent, a three cent or five cent price. The reason is nothing is sold here for less than a bit which means [12½ cents].⁴⁷ But if you give 2 bits you only receive 10 cents change and Bertie has come to the conclusion that a fortune can be made here by the judicious taking advantage of this usage. I have seen pears here at 6 bits each, apples are 8 cents per pound. Butter from 45 to 60 cents. Eggs 3 to 4 bits per dozen. Onions 20 cents per pound. Beets 5 bits per dozen. Beets [*sic*] the same, also carrots. Celery 3 to 4 bits per bunch. These are wholesale prices for hotel etc. In winter eggs are 6 bits per dozen and butter 6 bits per pound. Vegetables in other winters recently have been rather cheaper. Female servants \$25 to \$30 per month. Mr. Alden says he had furniture in one room varnished, men occupied 3 hours each for three days, charge \$20.

These are moderate prices. I have conversed with gentlemen who have paid \$1 for a brandied peach, same price for an egg. \$6 for a turkey. This was in the early days of California.

Turkeys and chickens are poor. Turkeys alive, 27 cents per pound, 30 cents dressed.

⁴⁷ What he actually wrote in the letter was "less than a bit which means 1/" by which he meant, "a bit is written 1/" In the interest of clarity, I have rendered all / symbols as "bit(s)".

Chickens \$12 per dozen. Beef 20 cents per pound by the loin, 15 to 17 cents for carcass per pound. These are the prices given me by the steward and are wholesale.

By way of offset, I give you price of eggs at Hakodate Japan as stated by Mr. Rice who is beside me. \$3 per thousand. Shall I send you a cargo? Beef 4 cents per pound. Chickens 2 bits each, wild ducks 2 bits each, geese 50 cents. Venison 2 cents per pound. Bear no charge. Fish 1 cent per pound, for salmon equal to Kennebec. Some fish ½ cent per pound such as sardines, cod. Rape seed (similar to flax) oil which is used for cooking instead of lard, 30 cents per gallon. This is also used for burning. Flour \$4 a barrel. These prices will be somewhat higher at Kanagawa except for oil.

March 11th

I have concluded to send this sheet, uninteresting as the details just before may prove. I will try to prepare a letter by overland mail before we leave. I would have written earlier and oftener by that conveyance. But it is not reliable and I did not wish letters lost. The snow on the Sierra Nevada Mountains, General Nye tells me, lies for 20 miles as high as the telegraph wires.

A Mr. Buckley, family with Elihu Russell who knew your father very well, and a Mr. Low have called on me and attended dear Eddie's funeral. This just occurred to me and I could not avoid putting it in here. My heart is so full of our dear eldest born and of everything relating to him.

I cannot add more without the wit of the letter being declined, so I must hasten away to the office.

When may I expect a letter from dear little Charlie?

Truly, affectionately, ever yours, my darling wife,

R.



No. 1 B Yedo,⁴⁸ May 3 1862

My Darling,

When looking forward to my arrival here one of the highest gratifications I was sure I had in store was the fact that I should have some precious letters from my dear wife awaiting my arrival. Though doubtless many are on their way, none have as yet arrived. As yet I have only had yours of January 7. I hope that you and all our dear ones are now

⁴⁸ Yedo, or Edo 江戸, is the former name of modern day Tokyo.

well and that when this is received you will so continue, that our circle will be no more broken and that God may spare us to meet again in health and love.

Mr. Harris⁴⁹ will leave here next Thursday. Meanwhile my time is much taken up with the transfer of business and the rides we take around the city of which I have had two and this day we prepared to have the third.

We arrived in the city on Wednesday, April 30 in the steam yacht *Emperor* which was presented to the Tycoon⁵⁰ by the Queen of Great Britain, that vessel having been placed at my disposal and carrying at the main my flag all the way from Yokohama to Yedo. At the landing place two of the Governors of Foreign Affairs received me, accompanied by a throng of officials. We were carried in *norimons*⁵¹ [palanquins] to the Legation in grand procession, one allotted to each, my *norimon* being about 7 feet long, made of light wood paneled like a light carriage at home with open and beautiful work at sides. This is borne on the shoulders of four men frequently relieved. It is supported by a large beam passing over the center, and when for persons of distinction this is arched. By this and its length you can estimate the rank of its occupant, and by the color in some cases the profession, those for priests and doctors being black.

Arrived at the Legation, I was very cordially welcomed by Mr. Harris who had previously visited me at Yokohama. Shortly after another Governor for Foreign Affairs waited on me with the compliments of the Ministry and a present, a list of which in Japanese and Dutch, was handed me. I enclose the list with the endorsement on the cover or envelope in which it was placed cutting off a large piece of surplus paper. The present consisted of 10 ducks, a quantity of onions, large radishes, water chestnuts (a bulb like that of the lily), and oranges.

Yokohama, May 9 1862

Mr. Harris having taken his passage on the *Lancefield* for Shanghai, we have all come down to see him off. Meanwhile I have been busily engaged in business with him riding about Yedo during the afternoon. You would be surprised to see how well Bertie rides. We rode on three days respectively 16, 12, and 12 miles without even fatigue. In coming to this place we rode on the saddle 22 miles. Yedo is unlike any place you have ever conceived of. It is scarcely a city, rather a country filled with houses. I will now give you a brief description of our rides reserving for a future day and more leisure moment the account of my passage here and my impressions of Japan.

The first day we devoted to the green lanes and fields of which Yedo is full, for 16

⁴⁹ Townsend Harris (1804-1878) was the first U.S. Consul General to Japan. RHP was replacing Harris.

⁵⁰ "Tycoon" was the term in use for the *Shogun* 将軍, head of the military government.

⁵¹ 乗り物

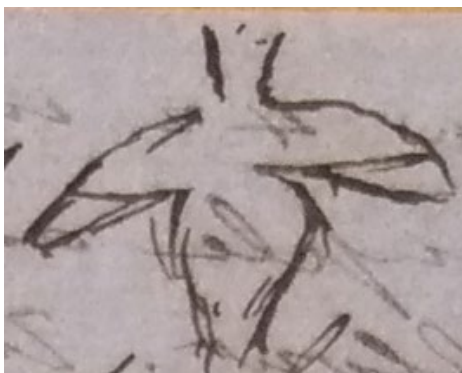
miles there was an alternation of garden, temple and field. It was like riding through the grounds of General Van Rensselaer,⁵² partly garden, partly cultivated fields, then forest.

Gardens—the camellia and cherry are just going out of bloom. Therefore we do not see them in their glory. The azalea is in full bloom. They grow to the height of 10 feet in crimson, pink, white, yellow, salmon color—a mass of flowers, sometimes without a leaf visible and in such profusion, not in gardens simply but frequently in the edge of large pastures. The wisterias are magnificent. I have seen one with the trunk seven feet in circumference with the branches spreading 130 feet in diameter, flowers pendant nearly 40 inches long. Mr. Harris has measured them 42 inches long. They are of a bluish purple and white. Mr. H[arris] has seen one yellow. They are exceedingly fragrant and numerous. The most beautiful flowers are the property of poor as well as rich. Roses are in bloom, yellow, white and pink, a species of Rhus or raspberry with a flower like a rose. The maples are beautiful beyond description. They have now the red, yellow, purple and pink foliage which we see in our trees in autumn. I have seen one mottled white so as it give it a grey appearance. Some of the leaves are star shaped, all longer and more delicate than those of our maples. Some trees are grafted and you will see from one trunk branches growing with five varieties of colors. I have already noticed with wonder the great variety of trees here. Our yellow pine growing in a soil, black rich loam in which you can thrust a cane to its depth alongside of the maple, the elm, the *Camelia Japonica*, the willow and the tropical bamboo and palm. Near and sometimes around these you will see two hedges, the outer like the Osage orange, the inner high and sometimes cut to represent a thick wall of the live oak.

In the garden at the back of the Legation there is a myrtle tree, a box cut and trimmed to represent an epergne, a weeping plum tree, branches hanging pendant to the ground, a pistachio nut tree, maples, cedars, pines. Japonicas, five large, one 32 inches in circumference opposite my breast and about forty feet high. Azaleas. Rocks and steps on side hills interspersed with flowering maples. Azaleas, box etc., etc., of every hue. Stone lamps carved and a fish pond with a small stream flowing through in which are about 150 gold and other fish: white, white and gold, white and salmon, some 26 inches long. In the garden at the side of the house a large number of varieties of cedar, azaleas etc. and a fish pond with small gold and silver fish with crinoline tails equal to the most delicate Mechlin lace.

⁵² General Stephen Van Rensselaer (1764-1839) owned one of the largest estates in New York. RHP's father, Casparus F. Pruyn (1792-1846) became the agent for the Van Rensselaer estate, north of Albany, in 1835. When General Van Rensselaer died in 1839, the estate was divided and Casparus became the agent for one part, known as the "East Manor," a position he held until he resigned in 1844. As the eldest son of Casparus, RHP was probably very familiar with the Van Rensselaer estate(s).

Their tails fold up or spread thus and are almost as wide and as long as the length of the head plus body of the fish. The drawing I give is of course rough and stiff and can give you but a faint idea of the beauty of it, sometimes it is pure white, then streaked with gold or mulberry color according as the fish is marked.



1 Sketch of a fish tail

I enclose a rough sketch of our residence made by Bertie.

The second day we rode to the castle and into three of the courts, of which there are five. A castle it can scarcely be called. First you have a moat as wide as the Erie Canal walled up on both sides surrounding the whole enclosure with a wall inside of same. This is many miles in circumference. Between this and the inner moat and wall there is a city filled with the residences of Daimios or Princes and their retainers, each surrounded by walls. The second moat is almost like the Mohawk River, say 3 to 400 feet wide (on different levels) and so on until you come to the interior wall which surrounds the immediate residence of the Tycoon. In the castle it is estimated 50,000 armed and two-sworded men reside and the population is 500,000. The population of the entire city Mr. Harris estimates at two million, of the Empire at 40 million to 60 million.⁵³

In its vicinity is a shrine approached by 80 steps, steep and high. This hill is surmounted by tea gardens. The place is called by Mr. Harris "Belle View." You look out here on a sea of houses, and as far as the eye can reach you see nothing but the continuous city of Yedo, and this is scarce one quarter of it.

The third day we rode to Yokohama where the legations are to be located. On the side facing the bay, overlooking the bay, to the right as you look up are the American grounds, 4½ acres. To the left the English. Back of the latter the French. Back of the American the Holland Legation. Between the four some 60 acres of gardens, terraced and filled with ponds which are to be the pleasure grounds common to all the four legations. The site is very beautiful and the grounds are being laid out in the best style. The English are already building a house which will cost \$30,000. They will occupy ten acres. The entire grounds are surrounded by a palisade such as is used by the high Daimios in the suburbs of Yedo and outside is a deep dry ditch which at present has a

⁵³ Japanese government census records estimated the total country population at just over 30 million at this time.

hedge planted on the outer and is to have another on the inner bank. I propose to have a residence of which I will send a plan—three buildings, center with gable to the front 54 x 63 with dining, drawing room, office and 4 bedrooms. Closets and pantry. Side building on right thrown back on the quarter of a circle 45 x 30 with sitting room and bedrooms, and another building for kitchen and servants of similar size on the other side. Of course these will be changed if the expense is too great as I propose confining the cost to at least \$5,000.

The next day we made a grand procession to the palace penetrating the enclosure next to the Tycoon's residence to the residence of the minister. Mr. Harris and myself each in a *norimon* 7 ft. long, messieurs Portman,⁵⁴ Kip and Bertie each in a shorter one of the size used by the Daimios, our guards and attendants in number about 200 and about 1,000 lining the way. Arrived at the palace we placed our pumps on our feet which had been borne by one of the attendants, each a pair, and entered the building. On one side stood ten officials, governors of foreign affairs (also governors of cities) who bowed very low. In the reception room we found the chief minister standing with two members of the second council. At one side of the room were placed 5 armchairs with lacquered tables before each, opposite three for the Japanese. These we occupied after Mr. Harris and I had shaken hands with the ministers. After we were seated tea, oranges, figs and cake were brought in and placed on each table, the servants kneeling as each dish was successively placed. The refreshments were shortly removed and the celebrated powdered tea, worth here \$8 per pound and served and taken thick, with the tea brought to each. Afterwards trays were brought to each containing boiled prawns, little cakes of sweet potatoes, duck made up like the round piece of a bologna sausage filled in the center with a preparation of beans and looking much like boned turkey and quite palatable. Before each one also a fish, the *tai*,⁵⁵ the royal fish of Japan, like our sheepshead, cooked so as to keep in a great measure its natural color, red, with every bone removed, the back opened lengthwise and stuffed. Also a plate of soup. A fork, silver or plated, and a knife. A small tray with two decanters containing sweetened *saki* and plain, and two wine glasses. After our business was through presents for Mr. Harris were brought in and we had a pleasant chat. Mr. Portman interpreting into Dutch and another, a Japanese, into that language. They appeared pleased with Bertie, said he was

⁵⁴ Anton L. C. Portman (1826-1873), who served as RHP's secretary and translator. Portman was born in the Netherlands, and had immigrated to the United States in 1851. In 1852, he was hired as commodore's clerk to Matthew C. Perry, and joined the Perry Expedition to Japan 1853-1854. He returned to Japan in 1860 with a Japanese delegation that had been to the west, and became secretary and translator for the legation in 1861, replacing Henry Heusken. He figures largely in RHP's letters.

⁵⁵ Japanese sea bream, which looks much like a red snapper.

fine looking and the second minister asked his age and what family I had. We then asked permission to retire, rose, shook hands. They came to center of the apartment for that purpose and on retiring we shook hands with the ten governors all of whom had been seated on the Japanese side of room but not served with refreshments. While we were in the room one governor was seated in the center of the room and two interpreters kneeling before the minister halfway between us. Every time they spoke to the ministers or received their orders down went the head to the floor.

The passage to the palace and back and the interview lasted for hours.

Temples— Mr. Harris thinks there are 5,000 temples in Yedo. The map which he has and will give you a copy of will give you some faint idea of their number, but as every Daimio has one in his grounds you must add largely to the number indicated. The greater number are Buddhists, though the Shinto religion is the religion of the Mikado.⁵⁶ In some, indeed in many temples, symbols of both are found. The Shinto has no images or pictures. A mirror is the only thing allowed, except the votive offerings which are put up. The practice in both is for a person who wishes to be delivered from any sins such as avarice and drunkenness, stealing, etc. to write out the prayer, sign his name and affix it in the most public place. They always wash their hands before entering a temple. As they approach they strike a bell to draw attention of their god, throw into a box some pecuniary offering and kneel. The heads of the priests are shaved and their robes are similar to the Catholics at home. The Buddhists have candles on the altar, and their pictures and bowing are like the Catholics. It appears to me the people are more ready by habits of worship and ceremonies to receive Catholicism than Protestantism but neither will make much of any progress for a long time according to human appearances. God will in his own good time carry his purposes into full effect.

Dress—the dress of the people is generally plain. The color of the principal garment subdued, blue, black, purple or drab. The *yakunins*⁵⁷ who ride out with us and who are the sons of *kamis* or knights wear such coats or tunics with conical straw hats, black or dark drab, made of a kind of straw colored or painted. Their coat is of silk and loose pants of silk or satin colored and figured. A great number of the men dress as Adam did, after the fig leaf had come in fashion, except that as cotton is now spun and is more durable a delicate fillet is bound around the loins etc. The dress is airy and very suitable for summer and not expensive.

Rides—when we rode out we were accompanied by 28 *yakunins* and preceded by 22 *betto*⁵⁸ who run ahead like deer shouting when necessary to clear the way. All horsemen

⁵⁶ “Mikado” refers to the Emperor, who at this time was Emperor Kōmei 孝明.

⁵⁷ 役人

⁵⁸ 别当 (*betto*) were horse grooms. See <https://perma.cc/6GSD-YTUR> for a photo of a *betto* by Felice Beato.

and footmen stand aside before a superior. Our *yakumins* of course are two-sworded men. They are very civil and attentive. The roads are traveled mostly by footmen. They are hard, clean and Mcadamized with a kind of gravel or rubble. They are ancient and some extend for hundreds of miles and were in existence before Adam had the prefix of Mc to his name. Mr. Harris took us principally through the suburbs where we had quiet shaded lanes, some of which were as rural as if there had been a small country population, and yet all around hill, valley, and field were teeming with population. Every small piece of land is put to use. When trees are cut down others are almost invariably planted. The consequence is that the island, as far as I have seen, is covered wherever the eye turns with the most beautiful trees. Half the land appears to be wooded. The trees grow to a giant height. Cedars large and straight enough to make spars for ships if not masts.

Mountains—The land is much broken even in Yedo. That part of the city whose extent I spoke of has been reclaimed from the bay. Looking in other directions your view would be very limited by reason of the numerous hills, all of which are invariably surmounted by a temple or the residence of some Daimio and just as invariably covered by very large trees. As we entered Yedo Bay early in the morning the holy mountain Fusi-yama⁵⁹ broke through the clouds with its peak glittering with snow, pure and shining in the sunlight as it rose above the clouds. This mountain is 70 miles from Yedo and has been seen, so clear in the atmosphere, 130 miles at sea. If men can be pardoned the worship of anything earthly this is the object. It is over 12,000 feet high, almost as perfectly pyramidal in its outlines as if laid out by man by rule and plummet, the top only being cut straight off thus.⁶⁰ Running down its sides are faint bluish lines, evidently valleys or the courses of mountain torrents. There is a slight interruption to the regularity of outline on one side where there is a knob or hill, the site of the crater when the mountain was last in the state of eruption 150 years ago. As we entered the harbor on the island of Osima we saw a volcano emitting only steam and smoke.⁶¹ There are several active volcanoes both on this island and that of Yezo.⁶² Fusi-yama is visited by pilgrims and is regarded with such reverence and admiration as to be seen pictured on tray, cabinet and fan.

Earthquakes—There are about 30 per year on an average. One occurred this week at night but did not wake Bertie or me. I should be ashamed to write this had I not

⁵⁹ Mount Fuji 富士山

⁶⁰ Here RHP took advantage of the fact that he was near the bottom of the page to cut out a small, Fuji-shaped section of the paper to indicate the mountain's profile.

⁶¹ Ōshima 大島 volcano is fairly active, but the last eruption before RHP describes it here was in 1846.

⁶² Yezo is the old name for the northern island of Hokkaidō.

found half a dozen others just as sound sleepers. You will find in a report to Commodore Perry by Captain Adams,⁶³ I think, an account of the last great earthquake, which destroyed large portions of the city and thousands of lives.⁶⁴

Tuesday morning we accompanied Mr. Harris to Yokohama where Bertie and I are now staying with the House of Walsh, Hall & Co. (Here for fear I forget it let me say if any letter you send need any special haste, direct to me as United States Minister, Yedo Japan via Marseilles and it will probably reach me 3 to 10 days earlier than via England, and should the steamer be about leaving New York it might possibly make a month's difference. I have no letters, yet Mr. Hall⁶⁵ has some of as late date as February 5.) Mr. Harris embarks Sunday and then on Tuesday or Wednesday we expect to return to Yedo. We left everything in our house as we would at home, Mr. H[arris] saying he had never lost an item nor has he ever carried a pistol.

The Legation is well guarded. Along the avenue from the street are four guard houses and around the grounds a double line of bamboo palisades between which are about 150 soldiers with their small guard houses where they eat and sleep and keep guard night and day. So absolute is the quiet at night that although in a city of millions you might at times think there was not a human being within miles. My household consists of 14 servants, two of whom, the cook and washman, were Chinese. They have been with Mr. Harris 6 years and were anxious to return [to China]. Wages respectively \$20 and \$14 per month. The 12 Japanese servants receive monthly $8\frac{1}{2}$ *itzabus*, nearly \$30. I have made the Japanese assistant washman take the place of the Chinese and will reduce wages thus \$10 per month. I have about succeeded in getting a good Japanese cook and if he answers the purpose at least as much more and perhaps \$15 will be deducted from wages list. Perhaps though for a time I may be compelled to get a Chinese to give him further instructions. The principal expenses will be firewood. Mr. Harris has used hard charcoal which sounds, when struck, like iron and makes a beautiful fire, next to hickory or Liverpool coal. He burns this in a Franklin in the office and in Japanese copper vessels placed temporarily in the chambers. Among the servants is a tailor, wages 10 *itzabus*, who has actually made a good cap for Mr. H[arris], and cut

⁶³ Henry A. Adams (1800-1869) served as the second-in-command to Matthew Perry during the Perry expedition to Japan in 1852-3. In late January 1855, Adams returned to Japan on a diplomatic mission—to deliver the ratified Kanagawa treaty—to find the great damage caused by the first two of the three Ansei Earthquakes. [see next note]

⁶⁴ There were three major earthquakes in 1854-55, collectively referred to as the Ansei Great Earthquakes. They occurred on December 23, December 24 1854 and November 11 1855. The death toll of the three combined is approximately 20,000.

⁶⁵ Francis Hall (1822-1902) was from upstate New York. He was one of the founders of the trading firm Walsh, Hall & Co. He lived in Japan from 1859 to 1866, and wrote extensively about his experience there.

and made a flannel suit for Mr. Portman. I intend to purchase some pieces of American cotton twills and have pants made for us. Mr. H[arris] had pants, shirts and jackets made without buttons, using studs made in Yedo of ivory or wood. The eastern way of washing is rough. No wringing, but striking on wood and of course the buttons fly.

Bertie and I got Mexican saddles in San Francisco. Horses here sell for from \$5 to \$50 dollars. Mr. Harris has two which cost him \$30 and \$13. It costs about \$6 per month to keep a horse, nearly half being for the *betto* who takes care of the horse, even when you ride, being ahead or beside you. So you can have exercise cheaply. The Japanese of rank never walk except they may do so for a season, while their horses or *norimons* are near, ready always for their use. So whatever walking we do must be in the Legation grounds or when we steal away here.

Sunday morning May 11

I have risen this morning to add a few lines. The ship sails today. The first Sabbath we were here we heard Mr. Brown⁶⁶ preach on the Resurrection at the English Consulate, a good audience, say 80. This morning we may hear him again, though Mr. Ballagh⁶⁷ our other missionary is here and Mr. Ostrom,⁶⁸ one of our missionaries from Amoy, is here in consequence of the sickness of his wife,⁶⁹ and Mr. Keefe, a Presbyterian missionary who has been unwell. Patients are sent from China here as in England they are sent to Madeira and it must be somewhat of a tax to Mr. Brown. One of them may possibly preach. Mr. H[arris], myself and Bertie went to Kanagawa over the bay to see Mr. B[rown] and family and Dr. Hepburn.⁷⁰ They live in a temple, have fine dwellings and gardens. (I should have told you our residence is a building between the temple and priest's residence, formerly communicating with both and erected for the use of the high Daimios and retainues when they visited the temple for the purpose of worship or to visit the tombs of their ancestors, and you can form some estimate of this government and people when I say that the priest of this temple, whose family is of considerable if not high rank, his father having been in the household of the Mikado, wishing to pay a parting visit to Mr. Harris could not come into the front door of our

⁶⁶ Samuel Robbins Brown (1810-1880) was an American missionary to China and Japan with the Reformed Church in America. He was also an amateur photographer.

⁶⁷ James H. Ballagh (1832-1920) was an American missionary active in the Dutch Reformed Church.

⁶⁸ Alvin Ostrom (1831-1898) was an American missionary in Amoy (Xiamen) before moving to Japan. He was originally from upstate New York.

⁶⁹ Susan Conover Webster Ostrom (1835-1866).

⁷⁰ James Curtis Hepburn (1815-1911) was an American physician, translator, and educator. Hepburn developed the standard system of Romanization for the Japanese language.

residence until in our interview with the minister permission had been asked and given and an order issued.)

I enclose one or two of our beautiful maple leaves and would suggest that Charlie take his place on the Troy Road and put when necessary a man there or make an arrangement with Dingwall⁷¹ on shares, and I can send seeds of maples, pines and cedars, etc., etc., which will cost cents and return dollars. Mr. Hall paid \$5 for 1,000 lily bulbs of a variety more beautiful than our tiger lily.

But my dear, dear wife I must close. A vessel is to sail to San Francisco early in June. By that I hope to send you a lapful of letters. I left California sadly. Every day and at night our dear boy rises before me. I miss him when I see a beautiful flower or view, at the social meeting, when engaged in business. I miss you and all my dear friends. They are almost as far as if in another world. Our dear boy, if with Jesus as I hope and pray, is far better.

Kiss dear Charlie and Sue for me. The breakfast gong will sound in 5 minutes and then Mr. Harris is to be here to go on board and this letter must be ready, and I have much to say. His return makes me think so much of home. Oh that I could see you and yet I am scarce prepared now to say come, not that there is danger, not that there are not ladies here who are not shocked by what they see, but there are none at Yedo, and there may be none, at least until the English embassy is arranged finally. Mr. Alcock⁷² is now home. Mr. Winchester,⁷³ whose wife is here, is now acting but he is daily expecting Colonel Neale,⁷⁴ who I think is a bachelor and he may take the place of the present minister who has gone home to be married and may be sent to China.

Kisses and love, my dear darling, precious wife, to you and all my dear friends, especially my dear little Charlie. Love to Charlie, Abby, Towney and all the children to Betsy. Kind remembrances to Dr. Rogers and family, Mr. Ten Eyck and all. Imagine my dear what I would write, what is in my heart but cannot be expressed. But believe me ever and ever yours, truly and affectionately and entirely,
Robert H. Pruyn

I have just brought in some leaves of the maple. There is no great variety in this

⁷¹ J. Dingwall is in the 1862 Albany Directory as a nursery man, living on Troy Road opposite the manor house.

⁷² Sir Rutherford Alcock (1809-1897) was the first British diplomatic representative to live in Japan, 1858-1864. He took leave in England from March 1862-March 1864.

⁷³ Charles Alexander Winchester (d. 1883) was a medical doctor in the British Royal Navy. He had served in China before going to Japan in 1862. He returned to China in 1865.

⁷⁴ Edward St. John Neale (1812-1866) served as the *charge d'affaires* of Great Britain in Japan 1862-63.

garden, only two. We have at Yedo and at Mr. Brown's some beautiful varieties which I unfortunately forgot to take leaves from.

Private 1. A

I have requested Barings Brothers & Co. London to place to Charlie's credit with James G. King & Sons New York \$1,068.12 less their commission and to advise him of amount to his credit. This is all I can spare now. Mr. Harris has furniture which I must purchase, and by keeping to my credit here two thousand dollars which I now have I can save a large sum during the year by being independent of advances etc. Mr. Harris has saved, he has shown me the figures confidentially, over \$30,000. During most of this time his salary was only \$5,000, four years at that rate, two years at mine. He says I can save \$11,000 per annum. To do this I purchase exchange for remittances thus:

Salary	\$7,500
Profits on exchange into <i>itzabus</i>	<u>\$4,000</u>
	\$11,500
Deduct household expenses	<u>\$3,000</u>
	\$8,500
Profit in bills exchange for remittance 30 percent purchased by me	<u>\$2,550</u>
	\$11,050

I am thus particular because I wish you and Charlie and Sue to see all the advantages as I trust they really will prove to be, being conscious you feel all the disadvantages of my absence. When the new residence is completed the expenses will be increased as 10 percent (say \$750) will be paid in cost of buildings.

I wish you to be perfectly candid with me. Above all things advise me truly as to your and dear little Charlie's health, and how Charlie [Lansing] stands. All the business trust on him. I shall be ready at once to give up everything to see you under circumstances as favorable in these respects.

You will see that now I have scarce realized enough to meet expenditures. It is indeed a dreadful thing worse than I even imagined to be so far away from home and so isolated from all speedy means of communication. The only letter I have had is the one of January 7th. It seems but as yesterday looking back since we parted, like an age looking forward before we can possibly meet. For this day and night I offer a prayer. Oh that they may be answered!

I am informed that in cases of resignations ministers are not allowed salary on returning. Of course I do not wish to be recalled unless with and under a request to that

effect made by me. When I make it, I wish it to go directly to the government because I wish to make it known here. If sent to anyone to be handed in or not as he saw fit I would be in a state of uncertainty and when recalled it would appear compulsory and as an evidence of want of confidence, and would attach disgrace to my mission whatever I may say. To state in advance would create difficulty. There are several here who were, and others who would be, applicants for my place and intrigues would be the order of the day.

I am unable even now to enter fully into this or any subject. The most I can do is write a rambling letter and little at that. All my things are not unpacked yet and my time has been and is devoted to getting needful information from Mr. Harris. I lay down and take up my letters to you, writing a few lines at a time and do that at unreasonable hours. As in addition to all the other things a great deal of my time when now so valuable is taken up by official calls from colleagues and consuls of other nations and citizens here.

I will now explain what is meant by profits on *itzabus*. This is a coin which weighs about $\frac{1}{3}$ of a dollar—311 for \$100 less 4 percent for coinage. The government has not enough to meet the demand at this, which is the treaty rate. One Mexican dollar therefore will not realize that amount. \$100 will obtain only 237 *itzabus* on the average. The government supply public officers, and my share (less perhaps \$2500 [*sic*] which I may have to allow interpreter to charge) is \$1,500 for month for which I receive 4,666 *itzabus*, paying \$60 besides to meet the 4 percent for recoinage. For what I use of these you will see I can purchase at a great advantage as prices are regulated by the currency. An article costs say \$1 = 3 *itzabus*; I pay for it really $\frac{237}{100}$ part of a dollar. What I cannot use is sold for me at the market rate. Each legation is allowed at this rate and officers of ships of war \$3 per day, each man to exchange \$1 per day. The only excuse which can be offered for this state of things is the inability of the government to do more. It is my duty and I shall do it to see that the currency question is settled more favorable for merchants at the earliest practicable moment.

A ship has just arrived from Shanghai bringing me my commission under Senate confirmation with a letter from Rome. Not a letter from home. Perhaps there may be something behind in the mail. I hunger and thirst for letters.

Again I charge you, my dear wife, let me know exactly your state of health. At times I wake up at night and ask myself why did Charlie telegraph so?⁷⁵ Can it be that dear Jennie is sick or was it merely precautionary? And then I torment myself asleep.

All these money matters we had better keep to ourselves. If my life is spared I shall send you by July 1st about \$1,000 which I will be able to spare and every three months thereafter \$2,500. The amount in July will be only for salary for two months, a broken

⁷⁵ It would seem that he is referring to the telegram from Charles mentioned in the February 28 letter earlier. The telegram is not included in the Pruyt papers.

quarter. Thereafter I must draw quarterly.

This letter I will send via Marseilles direct as it will probably reach you a week earlier than if under cover to Washington. As I have received no letters yet I fear there may have been some mistake or inattention at Washington.

Should there be any income tax⁷⁶ which is chargeable on my salary, perhaps Charlie had better offer to pay it at home as I can then save $\frac{1}{2}$ on the exchange which I would lose if deducted from salary. He must avoid giving any such reason however.

If I wrote about all my uneasiness I would fill sheets. Business affairs at home will press on me at times in spite of distance. But I try to dismiss them and for the health, prosperity and eventual reunion of all, look and pray to our Almighty Father and Ruler who governs all things well.

I will number my letters hereafter. I call under this enclosure 1 and will continue so you will notice any missing ones. I hope hereafter each day to make some few entries. This I have not been able to do thus far. On ship I could not write and here I have been unable to call any time my own.

I forgot to say we arrived here April 25, at Yedo April 30, when I entered upon the discharge of my duties. Mr. Harris sails today, May 10, for Shanghae. He will see you at Albany and tell you more in an hour than I can in a week by letter. Please let J.V.L. Pruyt know when he arrives, and I should like General Gansevoort⁷⁷ and Dr. Rogers to see him and to have you receive him or Charlie at your house.

He will recommend that instead of my being Minister Resident, I be made Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary which will probably be done. And then a good addition to salary may and probably will follow.



No.2 From Yedo
Yedo, May 23 1862

My Dear Wife,

At 8 of this evening I received yours of the 7th of February. How sad yet how welcome. While you were engaged in writing that letter, I was sitting by the remains of our darling boy. When you wrote so sweetly to him the succeeding day it was my sad

⁷⁶ The first personal income tax in the United States was imposed as part of the Revenue Act of 1861. The tax was 3% on all income over \$800. The details of that tax—including whether RHP's salary earned overseas was taxable—were probably unclear yet.

⁷⁷ Peter Gansevoort (1789-1876). He is usually referred to by RHP as “the General.”

duty to inter him in his mountain home. There for a season his remains repose inside the Golden Gate of the Pacific. I pray God that Jesus may have welcomed his spirit within the Pearly Gates and the Golden City, the new and Heavenly Jerusalem.

When I left San Francisco my eyes and heart were riveted on the lone mountain. How had earthly calculations and hopes come to naught and vanished. All the way over the Pacific, such change in the sails, every calculation of our situation was connected with our dear boy's memory. I had anticipated with what eagerness he would watch and with what interest he would participate in all there. Frequently on my way to San Francisco had I indulged in such visions and now by day and when I wake at night thoughts of him crowd other sights aside. I can now see how useful he would have been to me, how pleasant for him. But to be with God is far better. May a merciful God have our dear boy in his Holy Keeping, clothed in robes made white in our savior's blood, and it is my daily prayer that at last we who live and our dear boy and sweet little Helen may be found an unbroken family, in those Mansions Eternal in the Heavens which Jesus has prepared for his redeemed ones, then to go no more out forever.

Bertie is well and enjoying himself. He appears perfectly contented and not all homesick. He is improving in health and I trust will improve in moral and mental culture.

We have been at Church only two days here (at Yokohama). It is too far at this season of the year to ride there and back especially as we should reach home at least as early as 7 o'clock. I will try and have as many of these privileges as possible. Mr. Brown holds a communion service at his house the first Sabbath of each month. I did not know this till after the season of 1st May, on which day I was in Yedo. I hope to be with him next Saturday when he informs me his boy about Bertie's age will make a profession of religion. I have told Bertie of this and that he is not too young to give his heart to God and I pray that on this heathen ground God's spirit, ever the Holy comforter, may touch his heart and incline him to consecrate his life to His service.

I have had within the last week more business to transact than I will probably have for a month to come or I would have overwhelmed you with letters. As it is I will only have time to give you a brief description of my audience with the Tycoon which took place the 17th instant at 10 o'clock.

The palace is distant one hour's walk from the Legation. At 8 o'clock we set out on our march. First one of the Governors of Foreign Affairs, borne in a *norimon*, which I will hereafter describe, attended by his train. Then my new U.S. flag, large size silk, followed by myself in a *norimon* 7 feet long. Then Messrs. Kip, Fisher our Consul, and Bertie and Mr. Portman each in a *norimon*. Before, around and behind us our attendants bearing slippers etc. with guards armed with two swords each, each guard and attendant bearing my coat of arms embroidered on his coat, even the broad spread eagle of the Union. Also about 300 *yakunins* or officers (the word means "an officer") of the government mounted and dismounted. All along were stationed the various ward

officers and soldiers opposite to each other every five or six feet apart, on the average however about 20 feet apart. As we entered each ward the head men, two in number, would accompany us to the next gate striking their staffs on the ground, on the upper end steel rings being fastened which made a sharp but not unpleasant sound. Reaching the Palace we dismounted. Having had slippers placed on our feet by our attendants, we entered, were received by some twenty or thirty Governors of Foreign Affairs, Treasury, etc. to whom I bowed, and were conducted to a room where a chair was placed for me and provided tea served to all. The room was most beautiful. From this I proceeded with Mr. Kip to another one. Thence after waiting a short time we passed along the room of a thousand mats⁷⁸ where the Daimios were seated, and then making a turn at right angles entered a suite of three small rooms. At the front of the third the Tycoon was seated on a kind of throne. A few guards prostrated on his side, 8 of the *Gorogio*⁷⁹ or high officials prostrate in the second room. I stepped forward on the second mat, each 3 feet wide, and bowed. To the 4th mat and bowed, and to the 7th and bowed, one of the Governors of Foreign Affairs going on his knees at my side. I then delivered my speech and the Tycoon his reply. Mr. Kip then came forward bowing as I did and handed me the President's letter, done up on silk, which I received, raised to my head, bowed, and handed to a prostrate governor, then bowed to the Tycoon, stepped back to the 4th and 2nd mat, bowing at each and the audience was ended. I was conducted back to the 2nd room I entered from, thence to the room of 1,000 mats where the *Gorogio* received me and hoped I had been pleased with the audience. We then bowed gravely to each other and after wheeling around in another direction the bows were repeated and the interview terminated. We were then conducted to our first reception room. Powdered tea was again served and all our party was then conducted through the rooms which meanwhile had been cleared.

The first reception room had at its sides large compartments covered with landscape views colored, trees and birds, the ceiling with small panels, centre square with blue and gold figures. Exceedingly chaste and well executed within black lacquered framework with gold ornaments, the coat of arms of the Tycoon being frequently repeated. All around near the ceiling were carvings in wood 6 ft. and 3 ft. (about) of birds and flowers

⁷⁸ "Mats" here refers to *tatami* mats, which are used as standard indoor flooring and also as a unit of area measure. Although the size differs depending on region, general speaking a mat is 90 centimeters by 180 centimeters. In this case, "thousand mat room" is not an exact count of how many mats there were, but rather an indication that the room was extremely large.

⁷⁹ The *Gorōju* 御老中, or Council of State to the *Shōgun*. The *rōju* were appointed from the ranks of the Daimyō with domains of between 25,000 and 50,000 *kokū* of rice. The group was small—four men—and membership changed frequently. RHP's Romanization, *Gorogio*, was also used by others such as Rutherford Alcock.

elegantly colored and gilded. This was the character of all the ornamentation except that in the hall of 1,000 mats were some elegant gilded arabesque screens extending down from ceiling below the carved work where there were partitions. These carvings were life-like cranes, peacocks, golden pheasants, mandarin ducks, roses, lilies and birds and flowers in rich profusion. In these rooms the ceilings had not such formal figures as in the first, but the figures were artistically and boldly formed in some cases extending over 3 or four compartments.

Bertie is copying my speech to the Tycoon and his reply.



Speech of Robt. H. Pruyn, United States Minister to Japan, and reply of the Tycoon.
On the occasion of the Minister's Audience for presenting his letters of Credence
Minister's Speech

"Sire,

In presenting my letter of credence, I am directed to assure your majesty of the sincere wishes of the President of the United States, for the health and happiness of your majesty, for the splendor of your reign, and for the increased prosperity of your empire.

I am specially charged to assure Your Majesty, of the desire of my government to continue the amicable relations now existing between the two governments, and to cement more closely the ties of friendship which have been so auspiciously formed and so happily preserved.

Where mutual respect and confidence, a disposition to adhere rigidly and honorably to every obligation, to ask nothing which is wrong, and to grant whatever is just, characterizes the conduct of nations, nothing will occur to interrupt their harmonious intercourse.

I assure Your Majesty that it ever shall be my desire to promote the existing relations of friendship which I trust may be perpetual, and I solicit for myself the confidence which Your Majesty's government has so generously and justly bestowed upon my predecessor."

To which His Majesty the Tycoon replied as follows.

"Have learned what you stated on delivering the letter. The Friendship between the two countries shall be increased. To come so great a distance must have been wearisome to you."

R. C. Pruyn

This speech and everything relating to the audience must of course be kept out of the papers as I am prohibited from writing to any papers on any subject or to anyone on business matters. But I wished you to see how these matters are conducted.

The audience ended. We proceeded in the same order to our home. After giving the governor who waited upon me home a glass of champagne we parted with much ceremony. Mr. Portman says this is the first audience where the same attendance and visit has been made on returning.

About two hours after another Governor made his appearance with the present which is invariably made on such occasions, a paper containing a parcel of dried fish (see sample) handsomely tied with red and white and a large box divided into compartments containing 133 pounds of candy, some very good tasting, all beautifully ornamented and colored with vegetable colors. In it was included paste like fig paste. I sent all to Mrs. Fisher except some beautiful ornamented cakes which Ber and Mr. Kip selected from the profusion for ornamenting the table.⁸⁰

(I have just been interrupted by a four ½ hours' business interview and cannot complete Dr. Rogers' letter which I will be obliged to send via Marseilles, a vessel leaving for Shanghae this week. His letter may possibly arrive first. It is more than half done. Meanwhile my best regards to the Dr. and Mrs. Rogers and family. Remember me also particularly to Miss Brooks.

R.H.P.



May 23 1862

I think Bertie made a plan of the part of the house we occupy. I will assume you have received it. The part we occupy is about 100 feet long, a central hall running through. Bedrooms and office on one side. Dining and reception rooms and store rooms on the other side. Outside of the bedrooms a passage which can be subdivided

⁸⁰ The Shōgun (Tycoon) Tokugawa Iemochi 徳川家茂 (1846-1866) was known to have a sweet tooth. Such a large amount of sweets was probably the result of his preferences. The colored candies were probably *konpeitō* (hard candies) and the sweet paste was probably *yōkan* (red bean paste). The Japanese diplomatic record does not mention these post-meeting gifts. Although the specific amount of 133 pounds implies that RHP *weighed* the sweets, more likely is that the amount was a *picul*, which RHP knew to be the equivalent of 133 pounds.

by sliding doors and changed into dressing and washing rooms for each bed room, making the rooms more comfortable both in summer and winter. Outside of the dining and reception rooms a verandah. The office, dining and drawing rooms have glass doors extending along an entire side. We have described our fish. As you may receive this letter in advance, I will repeat in part. The dining etc. rooms look out on a garden in which there is a pond with about 150 gold fish, some of them exquisitely beautiful with crinoline tails as Mr. Harris called them, longer and wider than the length of the body and as fine as the best Mechlin lace. The garden looks homelike in one respect: it has the delicate white flower which for the last two years we had on our lower bed. Then there are pinks, flowering raspberry, poppies, cumquat which is a fruit like the orange, though smaller. You see the article in Chinese sweet meats. Cedar, cherry fir and other trees. Back of office loom up trees as high as Dr. Sprague's steeple.⁸¹ They stand on a hill which two or three hundred feet off slopes up as high as the roof of the house. In this is a large pond four feet deep, 70 feet long and from 10 to 40 wide. This has 100 to 200 fish, some 26 inches long, all colors of gold and white, mixed and unmixed. This pond is at the base of the hill. The side of the hill is ornamented with rock work and you can scarcely tell which is natural, what artificial. There are also two carved stone ornamental urns etc. for lamps. In the grounds are myrtle and maple, cedar and camellia, pine and plum and pistachio, bamboo and box trees, the latter cut so as to resemble an epergne. There are azalea and other flowers mixed among the rocks making them highly ornamental. At the door or main entrance is a species of the ficus about 90 feet high, and just opposite another one 26 feet 10 inches in circumference and nearly as high. I send leaves of each, the leaves with the opening being from the former. Though differing each tree is of the same species. Around us night and day are at least 160 armed men between 2 palisades of bamboo with guard houses in which they live and sleep and eat. From the entrance of the temple grounds to the porch of the house there are 6 guard houses besides an office for government officers and headquarters for the *yakumins* in a small temple. No one enters who is not marked and business known. So rigidly is the rule of exclusion from the home of all except our visitors and those whom we call in as business expressed that the priest of the temple who owns the house cannot enter by the front door. When he bid farewell to Mr. Harris he was allowed by the government on Mr. Harris' special request to enter and a formal order was issued by the government. The guard is composed of *yakumins*, who are two-sworded men, the sons of *kami* or Knights, and *Samurai* who are common soldiers, the former in the employ of the Tycoon, the latter of the Daimio, several of whom in turn are charged with the duty of supplying this guard. When we ride out, which we do every pleasant

⁸¹ William B. Sprague (1795-1876) was the Reverend of the Second Presbyterian Church in Albany.

week day, we have a cavalcade worth seeing. Take an instance: I send to the stable for horses for self, Bertie, Mr. Kip, Portman and Mr. Fisher on a visit, nothing more is said. We go out. There is a long line of horses, these the Guard. We start ahead and almost under the horses feet all over are the *bettos*, a race peculiar to Japan. There is one to each of our horses and 17 for the Guard. When you hire a horse the *betto* is included and however fast you go he is with you. I have had them running the 20 miles to Yokohama stopping once. Here we go. *Bettos* ahead shouting to clear the road, then two *yakunins*, then myself and companions, then 30 *yakunins*, each with two guards and all mounted. 5 Americans and 32 *yakunins* mounted and 22 *bettos* fleet as the horses. As the *yakunins* always ride single file, you will see we form quite a procession. Yesterday as I had sent Mr. Kip to Yokohama and he had Mr. Portman's horse, Bertie and I rode alone and of course unarmed to a beautiful pond and waterfall in the heart of the city 8 to 10 miles off. We had 16 *yakunins* and about 10 *bettos*. For my horse, a large bay or brown, I am to pay Mr. Harris the exorbitant sum of \$30. For Bertie's which is gentle but ornamented slightly with the springhalt \$13. I am negotiating for another for Bertie for which I have offered \$33. It would sell in Albany freely for \$300. Bertie rides well and taken to it "kindly." He wishes to be in the saddle every opportunity and the word he most delights in is *hayaku*, fast. As I wish air as well as exercise I am tempted to walk the horse in the beautiful lanes, lined with the green hedges and flanked by the high spreading cedars, pines and elms.

Now further to my household. Beyond the 100 feet of house occupied by us, the house stretches as much more, with rooms for Onigero, which means Tommy,⁸² and two students, interpreters paid by the government, and my own servants and the kitchen and other rooms, wash, etc. Then at the side and also back of the office, bathrooms etc. My household consists of Takiso,⁸³ butler, 16 *itzabus* wages. Skoro, waiter, 8. Kingsaboro, waiter 5. Sinjiro, cook 12. Kanikitshi, assistant, 6. Hirokitshi, tailor, 10. Tankitshi, washman, 8. Matsuro, assistant, 5. Kooskay, bathrooms, 8. Hikitshi, waterman, 4. 2 *bettos* each 8, 16. Barber paid monthly to dress the hair and keep all these decent 3. Yoheh the comprador who makes all the purchases (and employs an assistant I suspect at my expense) 8 *itzabus* or 109 *itzabus* = \$36 1/3 for the month. Mr. Harris went on the plan he was cheated and was willing to submit to the extort of 25 percent. I am now letting the comprador know that I will not if I can help it. We settle weekly and Mr. Portman has given him to understand for me that some things must be altered. Our expenditures for three weeks (part of the time we were at Yokohama and other part

⁸² Tateishi Onojirō 立石斧次郎 (1843-1917), nicknamed "Tommy," had traveled with the Japanese Mission to the United States in 1860.

⁸³ Murayama Takizō 村山滝蔵 (1842-1918). Although this is not mentioned by RHP, Takizō accompanied him on the return journey to the United States in 1865.

company about to make up for it) have been too much. But I had to get a basis to start on. I will state items as a matter of curiosity. Bear in mind I get 3 *itzabus* for a Mexican Dollar and that 17 *tempo* make an *itzabu* here at Yedo, though only 16 I believe at Yokohama. First two weeks, 32 chickens 190 *tempo*. 2 ducks 36. 17 Quail 101. 7 pounds pork 45½. 2 *tai*, a fish better than the sheepshead, would sell at Albany for 2 bits per pound. 49 turbot 21. 28 soles 20. 75 prawn 38. 25 crawfish, a small lobster without claws 31. 8 crabs, larger than you have seen, 6. *Avabi* or a kind of clam for soup 12. 100 pounds potatoes 4½ *itzabus*. These are Irish and high. 30 pounds flour 37 *tempo*. 378 Eggs 75. 1 pound tea 5 *itzabus*, this is the kind Mr. H[arris] has been using, I think I can get as good at 1 *itzabu*. Will try. (200 pounds rice 9 *itzabus* and fish etc. for servants 40 *tempo* and 56 candles for their use 7 *tempo*). 68 bundles of firewood 4 *itzabus* and 100 straws of charcoal 57 *itzabus*. This last for several weeks. The charcoal is magnificent—rings like iron and is used in the office instead of wood. This will give you a sample for the next week. This week we are far more moderate, but even for these weeks the expenditure was at rate of \$30. I should have added for barley 10 and for vegetables, salt and vinegar 21 *tempo*. Horse shoe 17 *tempo*. As for the tailor he not only mends, but makes clothes. He has just made Bertie out of the blue flannel an excellent coat to Ber's entire satisfaction and is now making a vest and pants. He will be busy making that and some linen up for a long time. This you will agree will give cheap clothing.

Beef at Yokohama 8 cents for lb. and excellent.

There is not a lock to a door, inside or outside, in the house. Nothing locked but the safe in which government papers and my private papers are kept. The silver stands out all night and everything exposed. Mr. Harris says he has never lost anything, nor do I believe any one if inclined, will dare touch anything on these premises.

The temple we occupy is famous all over Japan. It is a holy place and one not likely to be intruded on. The name is Zenpukuge or True Happiness Temple, “ge” always terminating the names of the temples, and actually meaning temple.⁸⁴ The Priest is the descendant of a high officer of the Mikado, from whom it was obtained. The revenues are large, for a country where two *tempo* a day will easily support a man. Mr. Portman tells me of a man, a bookkeeper, who on a salary of 50 *itzabus* per year pays house rent and supports a wife and 3 children.

Bertie and I have had a ride of 2 hours this afternoon. The day was delightful and the ride most lovely. I cannot give you an adequate idea of this country. Yedo is unlike every city in the world. There are more trees in it and more large ones than in the entire county of Albany.

⁸⁴ Zenpukuji 善福寺. See <https://perma.cc/72SD-S42A> and <https://perma.cc/7SH4-SZM3> for photographs that Prun sent home.

I send you with this a sample of the cedar trees outside my small garden. Charlie can judge from these specimens what beauties are here. There is also a beautiful white flower in the garden which I enclose. It looks lovely on the bush surrounded by its dark green leaves. As I now sit in the office I hear the chirping and whistling of birds. A good supply of frogs in the ponds occasionally make themselves heard and I am sorry to say mosquitoes make themselves felt as well as heard. They are good types of the Yankee race found everywhere. I hope the Yankees will hereafter at least resemble them in no other respect than this universality and their indefatigable industry.

I send you also a view of the entrance to our temple, being the second entrance about 300 feet back of the gateway at the street, and a view of one of the many buildings with the enclosure mainly for the purpose of giving you a glimpse of our famous big tree, a part of which is seen at the right. There are no other views here at present, but I will try and get some others.

I hope I will be able to hereafter each day to write a few lines and have something ready for you by each ship which leaves. Thus far I have been so unsettled as to prevent it. But we are now getting more regular. We rise about 8 o'clock, breakfast at 9, take a cup of tea and cracker at 1 o'clock and dinner at 6 o'clock. As soon as it gets warmer we will ride in the morning before breakfast. We will then take a cup of tea and an egg before going out. Mr. Harris dined at 7 o'clock. I have advanced the dinner one hour and am disposed to put it at 5 o'clock. We retire about 11 o'clock.

Many a time, my darling wife, I try to fancy what you are doing. It is a comfort for me to know while we are busy in the day that you are sweetly asleep. Then I am not so much occupied with those conjectures. But before and as I retire at night I say to Bertie and oftener to myself, it is now breakfast time at home, or on Sunday it is now time for Sabbath School, or Mother, Aunt Sue and Charlie are going to Church, and in the morning, our dear ones at home are now gathered around the table in the parlor or are now about going to bed.

But, my dear wife, I must close this letter as I have to finish the one to Dr. Rogers, and every time I send a letter it appears like a fresh parting. I would wish to write on for it appears like talking to you. It is not, it is true, time altogether pleasant for I cannot hear your voice or see your smile.

There are some elements in our separation, with all its sorrows, of a bright character. It is an exceeding honorable one. I think it will reflect credit on me not only for the importance of the position but the manner in which I hope to discharge its duties. The most cordial relations exist between myself and colleagues. The American citizens at a meeting held a few days ago passed a resolution of approval of my course thus far and I hope that honor will be reflected on you and my children and friends as well as myself by my public life here and by my private conduct. While others better than myself have been cast down in the wreck which these times have made, my character has been

untarnished and I pray that a few years' absence, if years it must be, will see us once more united, the happier and better for this trial.

I wish you here. Bertie shakes his head and says it won't do now, it will do better in the new residence. Consult with Charlie and see whether in view of the great advantages, especially if the rank and salary are raised, you and Sue and little Charlie can't come. Bishop Kip says you must come to his house until I can meet you. The sailing on the Pacific is tiresome, only because long. But the weather is fine and most always the sea comparatively smooth, sometimes too much so because the wind then fails and the sea is smooth as if painted.

And now, my dear wife, once more adieu. Good and loving tender and true and unselfish you have ever been to me. Oh that I had always been to you as I now wish. Worried as I have been, vexed and irritated by outside follies and business I have too often suffered them to intrude in the privacy of our house. I pray that there may be a future in reserve for us which shall be marred and disfigured and darkened by nothing of that or any other kind but that the evening of our days may be serene and unclouded with God's love in our hearts and His smile gilding the clouds, if any there shall be, of our evening sky. May God bless you and keep you and my dear little Charlie and Sue and all my friends is the prayer ever of your absent but loving husband,

Robt. H. Pruyn



Yedo, May 26 1862

My Dear Wife, Sister, and Brother,

I have taken no action as yet in reference to your request for my resignation because you on the one hand are not in possession of the necessary facts in relation to the position of things here, nor I as to the affairs at home to enable us to form a proper judgment. I assume that you have still the opinion that Charlie had when I left that I might reasonably be expected to lay by \$3,000 or possibly 5,000 here each year and that you think that neither you nor I are now called on for that sum to make any further sacrifice, particularly as I may reasonably be expected to add at home somewhat to our joint income by my personal exertions.

I wish you to be in possession of what I can actually do if God shall spare my life. I have already written on the same subject via Marseilles, but will repeat. Should you still desire my return I shall not suffer my views to stand in conflict with your own.

I only ask you to bear in mind how I felt and suffered and whether the cheapest way to prevent a recurrence of it is not to remain here till affairs assume a better and more

settled state.

My Salary is	\$7,500
The Exchange on this is	<u>3,150</u>
	\$10,650

I had left this open till this evening the 27th expecting to add more but as the Governor of Foreign Affairs here just sent word he will not be here till tomorrow at 12 to settle question of exchange of money, I may not possibly be able to include it. It is certain however I can rely on enough from the exchange of money as allowed to pay expenses, leaving, even when I begin to pay rent, at least \$10,000 clear and the probability is I can make it \$12,000. Besides Mr. H[arris] will recommend my appointment as Envoy Ex[traordinary] etc., etc. This may be without increase of salary but will probably create an advance of at least \$2,500 or if put the same as China \$4,500, which will add \$3,500 in the one case and in the other \$6,390 to my savings. This you will hear of if anything is done before I do. But some change is necessary here and I think Mr. Harris will be able to satisfy the government.

I have now on hand \$2,000 and hope to have \$1,000 in addition to apply on purchase of furniture. Probably the entire amount of purchase money will be say \$600. The exchange due me will bring it up to this if my views are correct. But all this must of course be kept to yourselves strictly. To no one must it be stated.⁸⁵

My expenses must be estimated from my three weeks' experience and the data left and given me by Mr. Harris. He said it would not cost me to exceed \$3,000 per annum. I have already made a great reduction on his expenses. He paid for servants. Chinese cook and washman \$34 per month.

Japanese servants	—————	29
		\$63

In all \$756 for year⁸⁶

I have 14 Japanese servants, whom I pay \$36.33 per month or 436 per annum. Besides Mr. Portman my interpreter messes with us and pays \$1 each day and Mr. Kip is to pay a reasonable sum, probably the same for his share of expenses. I at present pay

⁸⁵ What RHP was doing was not illegal, but he knew that he had been afforded exchange privileges that others would be jealous of. And although he was constantly thinking about finances, he did not want others to view him as venal.

⁸⁶ This passage is unclear, but it seems to mean that Harris paid a *total* of \$63 per month for his 29 Japanese servants. This pay rate was considerably lower than that for the Chinese cook and washman, as RHP mentioned in an earlier letter.

no rent. I am now engaged in preparing sketch of plan for residence, on which 10 percent is to be paid by way of rent. The comprador purchases all articles for the table and the house. I have his account for three weeks, a settlement being made each week. My present rate of expenditure is so far within the estimate of Mr. H[arris] as to satisfy me that even with the rent I can keep inside the sum he named.

You will see therefore that unless my property is sacrificed at home it will not take a long time to place me in a position, where with the handsome provision, which I presume Jennie has (bear in mind I do not know how much),⁸⁷ we can be in a situation of comfort, if not of affluence.

Should I now resign I would not be paid salary while returning. If recalled at my request possibly I might, but not so quickly, and my receipts would all be required to meet what it has cost me to go out and return.

My idea is that I should not express any wish to be recalled at least for six months. By that time I hope to have a reply to this letter. Then allow 10 months for my wish to reach Washington, my successor to arrive and for my journey and you would see me, God sparing our lives, in October 1863. What an age to look forward to! How brief will it look if we are spared to look back upon it!

If on the contrary you [Charles] could spare Sue and Jennie and they could come here it would benefit them vastly and then our stay could be graduated by your ability to dispense with our company.

I have given you all the data I can on which to found your judgment. I should like to be advised of the condition of the Works and of Jennie's property. Then we would have the same means of judging.

It would be the happiest day I have seen in many a year if this day terminated a three or four year stay in Japan and I may be on a vessel bound home. I only wish to stay so long as it may be necessary to do so to place me in a situation to manage my debt by showing me a reasonable prospect of paying interest and gradually but surely reducing the capital. Everything is so uncertain as to business and the value of investments and property at home as to unsettle my judgment and make me apprehensive. But of course my way is quite clear if my savings here shall result as I anticipate and I stay a sufficient time to accumulate a sum which you can now calculate as well as I can. Whether this shall be longer or shorter depends on the position of affairs at home. I know all this can be purchased too dearly by absence from wife, child and friends. I wish to graduate the sacrifice and the shorter it can be made the better.

When Mr. Harris sees you as I hope he will, do not say too much about my coming home, I do not wish anything to be said which will make my position look precarious here or embarrass the government. When I am recalled I wish it done on my own

⁸⁷ Jennie's "provision" is apparently her inheritance from her father.

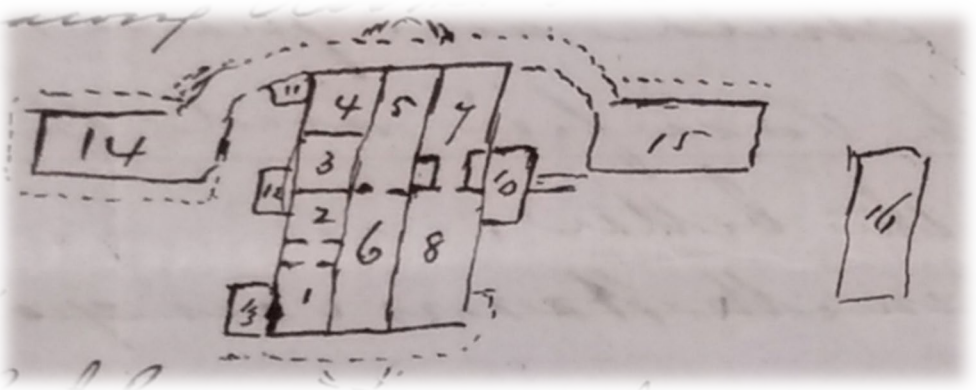
request and known only to you and the government. I owe at least this to them as it might occasion otherwise great embarrassment and I am not quite sure that Mr. Harris would not feel disposed to come back with higher rank. That I wish whether I return sooner or later.

But I do not know that it is needful to say more.

The death of your father leaves a blank in the family circle which can never be filled. All of you had him so entirely in your thoughts as to make his absence felt every day and even every hour. Little prepared was I to hear the announcement of his death. I had contemplated it as possible of course, but not probable. I felt when I parted with him that I would see him again. His constitution was so grand that it appeared to be even possible that he might reach 90. But he has gone. The account Jennie gave me of his death was most welcome. The scenes and the recollection of it must be precious to you. May our death and the death of ours be the death of the righteous and our end peaceful as his!

I have of course much more to say but will reserve it for another letter so that you can destroy this. I will send this and one to Charlie direct and enclose one to Jennie and Dr. Rogers and some of Bertie's in a package to the Department [of State] which will reach you nearly as quick.

I am now preparing plans for house. The British Legation is half finished. It is an immense building and will cost \$12,000. I propose building, if I find that it will not make the cost too high, a main building 54 x 72, one story. Hall and office through center 18 feet wide. Dining and drawing one side, bedrooms the other.



- 1. My room
- 2. Bertie's (small

- 6. Office
- 7. Drawing

room between)		Room 18x30
3. Bed Room		8. Dining Room 18x33
4. Mr. Kip's – 11 his Bathroom	15. Kitchen Store & St. Rooms	2. Pantries between each 9x4½
12. Bertie's Bathroom		10. Room for head waiter
13 My Bathroom	16. Stable Sheds, Residence for bettos	14. Guests' Building
5. Hall		3. Bedroom & Bathroom etc.

Main Building: 20 feet from each wing and connected by covered verandas.

I estimate that it will cost not to exceed \$4,000 to build this. That will bring the rent at \$600. I hope it will only be \$500. The ground rent is to be \$200. A verandah will surround these buildings. The bay lies this way from building distant say 600 feet. From our premises we can see a ship entering Yokohama harbor 20 miles distant. We overlook the 5 ports and have a most beautiful site. The French Ambassador asked me how I like it, saying he had hoped I would feel inclined to change with him. The French location is off the bay behind the English. The Dutch behind the American, the main entrance between American and Dutch. Opposite us and adjoining the Dutch is a reservation for other purposes. Ours contains several acres. Between us and the English is a large number of acres set apart for the gardens fish ponds and the ground is broken and they are beginning to terrace it. The whole premises embrace perhaps 100 acres and are surrounded by a moat and palisades. It will afford beautiful park for Sue and Jennie and little Charlie and any others who will come to exercise in and I can get little ponies for all. I am not joking. There is now at Kanagawa a lady, Mrs. Ballagh,⁸⁸ who was inclined always to be sea sick as Jennie and Sue but she came over and was not sea sick and I believe that such would be their case after a day or so.

I enclose a small piece of paper such as the Japanese use instead of glass. It is pasted over a frame and inside into small panes. Makes an exceedingly pleasant inside light and fragile as it appears is used entirely by them for outside lights. Now and then glass appears in small panes. But it is a pane of 5 x 3 inches to a house and that occasionally for a little look out. This paper you will see is quite strong and is made from the bark of a special of mulberry tree. They have many patterns, some much handsomer. This is of

⁸⁸ Margaret Tate Kinnear Ballagh authored her own memoir of Japan: *Glimpses Of Old Japan, 1861-1866* (Tokyo: Methodist Publishing House).

a piece which we are now using for a few repairs.

I had intended to send by the bark *Benefactor* in a few days some silk suitable for Abby and you with a dress or so for little Abby but have just heard the ship will sail for Shanghai, not San Francisco. I hope there was enough in the silk I sent for three dresses. That silk sells here, white and pink, etc. for 30 cents per yard, probably one cent more for coloring if black. For the same and even less other figured silks are sold and heavy silks such as the ladies here say in New York would be worth \$3 for \$1 per yard.

I am sleeping under a coverlid of silk wadded with silk. You can't imagine how light and pleasant it is. I will see you each have one, if not now when I return. The wadding I can now buy at 20 cents per pound.

I must stop for the reason given in a letter via Washington mailed this day. Have been engaged 4½ hours on business, just heard ship sails at daylight tomorrow, a special messenger takes this down tonight. Love to all.

Truly your affectionate, R.H.P.



Business⁸⁹

You say you cannot understand the currency we have here and if I remember right the discrepancy which appeared in statement of prices of silk sent you and for L[ansing] P[ruyn].

The *itzabu* is worth intrinsically a little more than 31 cents or for \$1 Mexican, $3 \frac{11}{100}$ *itzabus*. Now the Mexican is worth a premium of say 8 percent.

When the treaty went into operation and for the first year thereafter, all residents had Mexican dollars exchanged at above rates. The treaty provides that the coin of the different Treaty Powers shall be taken weight for weight. Also that until after one year the government will exchange at that rate. They do so no longer. They only take and pay out the dollar at that rate for the government dues and transactions with foreigners at the Custom House. For example, if the government is to receive 3 *itzabus* (we will drop fractions) they will take \$1 Mexican. If they are to pay 3 *itzabus* they will pay \$1 Mexican. But the people receive the dollar according to the market value, not its real value. You will see the government cannot compel people to sell their produce for any specific coin and if they could the merchant could (in any other country at least even if the government wished to enforce it) evade it by charging more for goods if paid in dollars and less if paid in *itzabus*, because when they get the dollars they are obliged to part with them at the rate at which the government from time to time will take them.

⁸⁹ This "Business" letter is undated. Based on the content, it seems to have been written in the middle of 1862.

Sometimes therefore the dollar is cheap. When tea and silk comes in some 10 to 15 million of dollars are thrown in the market and the price goes down. If produce is not coming in then dollars are scarce and they sell for more.

The current value of the dollar among merchants therefore changes. And we have had the dollar worth only $2 \frac{10}{100}$ *itzabus*. It is now worth $2 \frac{45}{100}$ *itzabus*.

But the governors say to the ministers and consuls, you are not here selling produce and making up for the loss you would sustain on the dollar by getting a better price for your goods etc., etc. We will therefore exchange to a certain amount each month dollars for you at the rate of 3.11 charging you 4 percent for cost of coinage, which is just equivalent to giving us 3 *itzabus* for every dollar.

Now suppose I buy a piece of silk for 9 *itzabus*. Those 9 *itzabus* cost me really only \$3. Suppose Mr. John Smith should ask me to purchase silks for him which cost 100 *itzabus* (now if for myself you will see I would call it \$33.33). But for him if the dollar at that time chanced to be low, say 2.10 as it was a few weeks ago, it would be \$47.62. But suppose he was to pay me in Albany and I would have in making out the bill to say, "That amount was Mexican dollars, therefore add 3.80 for premium" on that kind of dollar, making his bill \$57.42. Now if he paid me here he would buy a draft on England and you will see what that costs and you will see then what his silk would cost.

But suppose he pays me in Albany. Now as I could take that \$57.42 and buy a bill here to send you and get by paying that sum a bill on England for the equivalent say \$62 you will see that unless I make him a present of the advantage I have in getting *itzabus* at the intrinsic value and also make him a present of what I could realize by investing money for myself in a bill on England instead of investing for him in silks, I must get \$62 to make good what I have actually had the silk cost though its apparent cost was \$33.33. Now suppose I sent home a statement of such cost. I would say 1 piece of silk bought and presented to you \$33.33. If duty was paid, it would be on that sum. So merchants make up their invoices. But the price for John Smith you would find put down, at the money it would actually deprive me of \$62.

All this will enable you to understand a little better the difficult problem. The thin silk cost here \$6.

Now you will see if I did not buy silk but sent money home that 6 would bring nearly \$12 at present rates of exchange.

You will understand this perhaps better when I say that the bill for £1200 and odd pounds for which you say our \$9,700 was realized, I forget the precise sum, cost me here \$4775.

I will send you today a bill which Mr. Brown draws for £50. For this I will pay him \$194. Should exchange continue as it was in April you will be able to realize by sale of this bill nearly if not quite \$375 in currency.

Now Mr. Peltz⁹⁰ wrote me asking me to aid Mr. B[rown] in getting a loan here in order that the Church might not be subjected to the loss of exchange at so ruinous a rate. But no one will loan money here at 10 percent interest. The current rate on mortgages is 12 percent and even as high on some mortgages as 18 percent and I suppose a loan could not be made here for our Church at 25 percent or the personal security which the missionaries could offer. They are therefore helpless unless I should indeed step forward and guarantee to give other security. And even then I suppose the rate would be high because merchants do not bring money here to loan. There are no capitalists of course and merchants can do better with their money than to loan at any rate. They expect to get 100 percent for their money. Loans are made to the Chinese at Shanghae on the security of bullion at times for 3 and even 4 percent per month.

Now if you feel rich enough to give to the Foreign Mission cause the whole or any part of this remittance you have my royal permission. If I give \$50 here it is only \$50. The same money sent to you becomes \$100 and you give that. My \$50 is much as much to the Church. But your \$100 therefore worth in reality no more, would indirectly be more valuable and therefore desirable in its operation upon the Churches.



No.3 Yedo, June 9 1862

My Dear Wife,

Your very sweet letter of March was received by me today and as a vessel leaves for Shanghae Thursday a.m. I have an opportunity to send an answer at once. Oh how welcome was the enclosure; dear Eddie's photograph. I kissed it. Morning and night is his name on my lips and his memory in my heart. I pray that we may be an unbroken family in Heaven.

The burden of your letter and of Sue's is come home. Would that you and she and Charlie had come to San Francisco. Then I would have been content with Charlie's assent to have stayed here for years. It is the most lovely country the eye ever rested on and you and all would be content to remain even for years. As it is, unless you will all come to me I must return as soon as possible. When that shall be is the question. You know my debt. You see I can pay it off in three years. What can I do if I return? Everything is unsettled, property depreciated, business prostrate. The best that is to be expected is to keep stationary, not fall back. That, my darling, will not answer for me.

⁹⁰ Rev. Philip Peltz (1823-1883), a minister in the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church. Peltz held the secretaryship of the Board of Foreign Missions in New York 1860-65.

Were it not for your fearful sea sickness I would insist upon your and Sue and Charlie coming. As it is I can only say how can I return? Mrs. Hepburn⁹¹ is coming in the fall. Shall I meet you at San Francisco? Mr. and Mrs. Brown think your liability to sickness would not be so great as in a railroad car as you would not be so conscious of the motion of the vessel. I can only hope it would be so and though I would be so delighted to see you, I cannot be so selfish as to wish you to suffer as I have seen you. My darling how could I write as you request? What would have been my position here? I would have been obliged to keep silence, as the government would expect it of me and then my recall would have been a disgrace.

My office is no sinecure as you appear to suppose from saying I would only have time to look around. I have written nine dispatches to the State Department and 27 to the Japanese government and my colleagues, besides any number of official interviews. But whether more or less business have I a choice. Let your judgment and not your heart answer. You will have seen by my last letters, that my expectations when I left home were fully answered. I can do all I anticipated and then three times as well as Charlie estimated. Do I not owe it to myself and you all to stay? Two or even three years will pass quickly and then God in his mercy may reunite us. My darling do not suppose home has lost its charms. When I wake in the morning I think of you. When 8 o'clock comes then you are seated round the table by the evening lamp: and then you are not the burden but the light of my thoughts till I can say you are all asleep. Then through the day I am quiet, because I have you all snug in bed and asleep. But when my dinner comes, which is from 6 to 7 according as I am alone or have company then you are stirring again and I am imagining all sorts of things, and know not what you are about. And then I do not feel as if I have you properly disposed of. If I could only put you asleep I could be quiet.

But no more on this subject until I have your replies to my figures sent via San Francisco. One parcel forwarded through Mr. Brooks (the figures) and one through the State Department. If this reaches you before your answer is given, I entreat you weigh well that answer. I can't think of being in Albany as when I left.

Bertie is delighted. Today I have made him the owner of a horse, black and shining with a tail, tell little Charlie longer than he is. Price \$33.³³. I wish you had him in Albany. I have two little dogs, one named Charly the other Abby, black and white, not longer than this sheet of paper, with pug noses of the most puggish form. These with my own horse constitute my four footed household. Though a great mastiff, belonging I believe to all the *bettos*, runs before us on every ride.

I must say one word more. Mr. Brown cannot bear the idea of my leaving. Mr. Fisher, our Consul, is a member of the Presbyterian Church, his wife, his mother-in-law and

⁹¹ Clara Mary Leete Hepburn (1818-1906), wife of Dr. James C. Hepburn.

two ladies of his household, and Mr. B[rown] wishes you were here. He says it is so pleasant to have our officers here openly professed to serve the Lord Jesus. A few days since, two of Mr. Kip's friends visited him with my assent. In the evening I said "Young gentlemen, we have family worship and shall be pleased to have you join us." When Mr. Kip saw them in Yokohama one said it had been so pleasant, it reminded him of his mother and home. It was the first family worship he had been present at since he left home nearly four years ago.

I received your letters on Saturday of February 8th with one from Jenny and from Anna T[en] B[roek], which I have put away without reading. I dreaded to receive your first letters after that date. But my darling, there is one and only one who doeth all things well. And I know where you put your trust and I hope you will have the satisfaction before this reaches you of having Charlie finding the same refuge in calamity and joy in prosperity.

I am pleased to hear about the meetings held by Dr. Rogers. I remember him and his family and the Church and our Sabbath School morning and night. In these temple grounds these prayers go up as unworthy as the ground on which they are offered. But for the sake of Him who is all worthy I pray they may be heard and answered.

It is now nearly 11 o'clock p.m., with you 10 o'clock a.m. It appears but as yesterday at times then like an age since we parted. And yet a day passes and a week and both appear like a hand breadth. Oh that I had the results of a three or four years' stay and tomorrow was the day of my departure! But I must have some results if I can, if God will permit. It appears so vain to have come 12,000 miles and return as I left. Only think of our distance apart and yet thought and hope and love can span it in a moment! If you were all with me I could labor and wait so patiently and faithfully and we would all be so happy and well. Come! Come! Good night.

Tuesday 10th June

I had intended my dear Jennie to give you many pages by this mail which must leave by 5 tomorrow a.m. but Mr. Benson⁹² our Ex-Consul is here appraising Mr. Harris' furniture and last evening a letter of introduction was sent to me by Cashier Vail's son⁹³ and I invited him to Yedo and he came up today. Young Mann⁹⁴ is here with Bertie and I have as you can readily see no surplus time. Fortunately another mail will leave this week and I promise myself another good lot of letters for home. I had proposed to give

⁹² Edward S. Benson was the U.S. Vice-Consul in Osaka and Hyōgo.

⁹³ Henry F. Vail (1812-1881) was the Cashier of the Bank of Commerce in New York. He had three sons: James E. Vail Jr., Henry Vail, and Robert M. Vail. It is unclear which of these sons traveled to Japan.

⁹⁴ James Ayton Mann was a clerk in the U.S. Consulate in Yokohama.

Sue and Charlie a few lines, but they must wait for a few days.

We are to rise early at 5 tomorrow, Mr. Kip to go down with letters and the rest of us to visit a great temple, Osaxa.⁹⁵ At 3 p.m. I have an interview with a governor of Foreign affairs and you will readily see my time will be well, if not profitably, filled.

It is a great comfort to sit down and talk to you even at this 12,000 mile distance. But one little word, one pressure of the hand would be worth a sum which I will not attempt to calculate.

I am very happy to say that Bertie is contented and well. He occasionally stirs me up a little with calculations about our return which only unsettles me. It is this uncertainty which worries. If I knew I must stay a given time, even four years, or I could return in four months, I could then nerve myself for the worst or clap my hands with joy for the best. But to talk and not decide is far from pleasant.

I am glad to hear about the meetings which are being held and hope God may help them and that our own family may rejoice in a savior found and no longer at a distance. The sermon you sent I read last Sabbath. It was very good and read well beneath the trees of the temple of "Perfect Happiness." I am now reading the New Testament in course and tonight read 8th Mark. A chapter each morning and evening. At that rate it will not take long to finish it. But my ever dear sweet wife I must close. I have left the dinner table to finish this and must return and leave my letters to others unsealed so that they are all for you as much as if addressed to you.

Give my love to all inquiring friends and far or near I am ever and wholly and truly your loving husband,

Robt. H. Pruyn



No. 4 Yedo, June 21 1862

My Dear Wife,

I have been near two months in Yedo and yet it appears an age since we parted. Are you to come to me or I must return to you? You will be better prepared to answer that question by the time this reaches you. I wish I could be sure you would not suffer much from sea sickness, then I would say more. I know we can pay too dearly for gold. Therefore we must estimate at their true value all earthly things and not give for them our domestic happiness.

I am happy to say we are in the enjoyment of excellent health. What do you think of Bertie riding on horseback more than 30 miles in one day. This we did on Wednesday.

⁹⁵ Asakusa 浅草

We left for the gardens of Ogee⁹⁶ at 8 o'clock and returned at 6 p.m. We are not such Jehus every day, but seldom are content with less than 15 miles.

I have an unexpected opportunity to send a letter which I embrace though it must be hurried. I propose riding down part of the way this afternoon with a Russian officer now with me who will see it sent to Shanghae for mailing.

We have news from San Francisco as late as May 1, and I am happy to say we received your letter by that route. I hope that we will hereafter not be so long without letters.

Bertie is making good progress in Japanese and we are to have some Japanese here to learn English. This will give him an additional chance for improvement.

We expect to spend July 4 with our Consul and then to make a short trip to see a bronze statue 65 feet high.⁹⁷ Last 4th I was away from you I remember at Washington. The first of July I shall also observe as an anniversary as I know you will also.⁹⁸ The first Sabbath in July I hope to commune again at the Browns'. I have just received a letter from Mr. Peltz. I am making arrangements to visit Fusiyama, the matchless.⁹⁹ Will be accompanied if I go by our Consul and about a dozen others. It is about a 75 miles distant.

I shall include in a letter to Dr. Rogers an account of my visit to Osaxa. I hope you will cause copies to be made of such of the letters that I enclose that you think worth the trouble. They may contain some facts I may need for reference. The books on Japan are not worth much. Strange to say Hildreth's¹⁰⁰ is said to be the best but he was never here. Bayard Taylor was ashore about 10 minutes.¹⁰¹

You may wish to know how my housekeeping progresses. We try to keep neat and the Japanese are in many aspects a cleanly people. They wash themselves very frequently, their own clothes never. In all the large rooms and halls and verandas at the palace I think you could not have swept up a thimble filled with dust. Their mats, being their tables, also are exquisitely neat. I expect to send some rolls of beautiful patterns. It will cost here about 10 cents per yard, figures in colors brown etc., quite chaste. We miss good bread and butter, the latter is 55 to 75 cents per pound. Hams are quite high. We get enough sweet potatoes to last a week for 20 cents, using them twice a day, sometimes

⁹⁶ Ōji 王子

⁹⁷ Probably the statue of Amida Buddha, located in Kamakura. It is actually 43.8 feet tall.

⁹⁸ July 1 was the anniversary of the Pruyns' engagement to be married.

⁹⁹ An alternate way to write Fujiyama, 不二山, is a homonym that means "matchless."

¹⁰⁰ Richard Hildreth, *Japan as it Was and Is; A Handbook of old Japan*. Boston: Phillips, Sampson and Co. 1855.

¹⁰¹ Taylor was part of the Perry expedition to Japan. He published *A Visit to India, China and Japan in the year 1853* in 1855.

three times. There are of course many things here very cheap which are dear at home. But I would dispense with all of them for some of our good plain homelike food. Still we have more than enough for our own good. It is not the country for young men unless under good influences. A servant stands ready for everything and it is quite funny at times to hear Bertie calling “boy” to servants double his age. If God spares us to return I hope you will find him in every way improved.

I consider all the letters I write to my friends as primarily addressed to you all at home as they will contain accounts of what I see from time to time. With this view I enclose letters to Dr. Rogers and Mr. Olcott,¹⁰² and many write others hereafter as I hope each week to have an opportunity to forward letters. In this way you can read everything which will prove interesting and I not be wholly unmindful of friends.

I would rather write to you about home and my dear little Charlie and Sue and Towny and all, as from day to day I imagine you occupied, than about these scenes lovely as they are. They would be so much more attractive if you were all here.

I hope yet to see you and little Charlie and Sue in Japan. You would all be contented and improve vastly.

[last pages missing]



No. 5 Kanagawa, July 7 1862

My Dear Wife,

I hope this will be the first you will hear of another attack on the British Legation, because I wish you at the same time to see that I am safe and well.

Colonel Neale is now *charge d'affaires* for England in the absence of the Minister [Rutherford Alcock] who is in England. He arrived in Japan in May. I was then the only Minister in Yedo. The Dutch Minister was 500 miles off at Nagasaki, the British and French at Yokohama. Colonel Neale was immediately taken sick with the measles. He wrote me several letters about the state of feeling at Yedo. There were foolish reports afloat at Yokohama. After a while he wrote me he intended to reside at Yedo, and come up on the 11th June. He brought with him a guard of 30 sailors and 14 officers and soldiers and with all these guards and 585 Japanese guards the sentinel near his chamber door was attacked on the night of the 26th June. His cries aroused Colonel Neale and the corporal of the guard who was going the rounds. The assailant or assailants (if more than one which is doubtful) made no attempt to get at Colonel Neale though it might

¹⁰² Thomas W. Olcott (1816-1886) was the President of the Mechanics and Farmers' Bank.

have been done quite easily, but on his way going off met and killed the corporal. The sentinel who was wounded also died the same day. The British Legation now has nearly treble as many guards, more having been landed from the *Renard* and perhaps from the steam ship of war *Pearl* which went up to Yedo Friday night.

I am quite confident of my safety and the safety of all at the American Legation. On the night of this attack we had a guard of 284 officers and men, all Japanese of course. Since then a Vice Governor is stationed nightly in a room right opposite my bedroom and he has guards with him and at two other places in our hall. You must not take this as a proof of increased danger, but simply as affording additional proof of the desire of the government to avoid the recurrence of any such attacks, which is not likely to come but might possibly occur.

What then was the cause of this second attack on the English Legation?

I do not think it was simply hostility to foreigners because then it would most likely have been made either on Mr. DeWitt¹⁰³ (the Dutch Minister who is now on a visit to Yedo) or myself, as we had only Japanese guards and were not so well armed and numerous as the attackers of the British Legation, who have numerous revolvers. It may be all or a part of the following.

1. I don't think the Japanese like the idea of having British and French sailors and soldiers landed and acting as guards. You know neither England nor France, nor the United States, would allow any such thing as foreign guards to be landed in their cities.

2. There may have been some quarrel between the two kinds of guards. Colonel Neale says he has heard nothing of such thing. I asked him thinking such may have been the case. But Onigero (Tommy) told Bertie that one of the guard had been kicked by some of the English guard and he had been goaded on to revenge the insult. I forgot to say that the only one known to be engaged in the attack was one of the Japanese guards. He was found next day by the government with a bullet in his body and had, after being wounded, committed suicide.

3. It was just one day after the anniversary of the attack July 5 1861,¹⁰⁴ according to the Japanese year and mode of computing time. And it is possible that some one or more of the relatives of those who lost their lives in that attack or were afterwards punished by death may have sought to revenge their death. For though only one so far is known to have been engaged in this attack, some of the guard must have been willfully negligent or the party could not have escaped to his house.

¹⁰³ J. DeWitt was the Netherlands Consul-General in Nagasaki.

¹⁰⁴ This is known as the first Tōzenji Incident, for the temple where it occurred. Anti-foreign forces, largely from the Mito Domain, attacked the temple residence, which had sentries guarding. In that attack, two defenders were killed and ten wounded. Pruyn's report to Seward can be found at <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1863p2/d349>.

I at once wrote a very strong letter to the government which I presume you will be able to read in January and get a good reply which I think is honest. I wrote the letter before the other ministers wrote. It was afterwards agreed they should do as I had done. Mr. and Mrs. Fisher were at Yedo passing a few days with me at the time of the attack, leaving Yedo the next day.

Now, my darling, you must not be alarmed for me. I feel safe. We are all in the hands of God and he willeth all things well. I hope that Christianity may find an entrance here without bloodshed.

But you will see my dear Jennie I should not leave my post now. It must not be said when so many are risking health and life on the battlefield at home, that I proved cowardly here. I have not so far. For two months nearly I was the only Foreign Minister in Yedo. Shortly no one else will be there unless Colonel Neale should remain as he says he will. He will be surrounded by English guards. I will be surrounded by none but Japanese. I shall be very much surprised if I am not the safest, more so than either the British or French Minister. At the end of six months when I get your response to my letter addressed to you jointly I will be better able to decide if God shall spare my life so long. I think I have informed you Bertie and Mr. Kip are engaged in giving lessons in writing English and in speaking to several of the Japanese interpreters. We are all popular and no one I think will injure us. They say here the Americans are all right. And I think we would find ready defenders in our guards who know we do not distrust them, and I think they will be faithful and will not be proof against kindness. The British and French Ministers, Secretaries, and attachés ride around with their own guards and all of them carry sabers and revolvers in their belts. We have been in the street daily, riding at least 500 miles, never carry pistols, swords or any weapons and have not seen an unfriendly look or heard a hostile word. But I am very prudent. Am never out after dark, and always act according to the advice and wishes of the government whenever expressed. Have a pleasant look and a kind word for all our guard who are always pleased to go with us. I have been here since Thursday evening. I came down to celebrate 4th July. All the Americans were here on the 4th and we had a patriotic time, one Virginian and one South Carolinian and Marylander. All union men. Yesterday we had communion at Mr. Brown's. On Wednesday or Thursday I go down by water to Kanasawa and then by land to Kamakura where there is a large idol 65 feet high, then to Onesima [*sz̄*]¹⁰⁵ on the sea shore. A large party of gentlemen and ladies are going. I hope by next mail to send you an account of our trip, which I trust will be pleasant though it is now very warm.

I expect to send by this mail via Washington some more letters. I am glad to see

¹⁰⁵ RHP writes "Onesima" here and in his next letter to Sue Lansing, but after the fact he identifies the destination as Yenosima.

what God has done in our Church. You must say to Dr. Rogers that he must stand firm there. That is his post of duty. I was quite startled by seeing his name mentioned in the *Intelligencer*¹⁰⁶ in connection with Dr. McCauley's Church until I had read the comments of the Editor. I should think New York was the last place in the world for a minister unless he wishes a new congregation every year. And I don't think the Doctor is the man to have so many partings as that involves, however pleasant might be the new arrivals. I would rather retain old friends with all their irregularities etc., even some who have none at all, who have no point on anything except a dull rotundity of feeling.

I hope to have the pleasure of again sitting in my old seat and hearing him, our pastor. I thank you for the sermon you sent. I have read it one Sabbath at Yedo, yesterday here. So you see the Doctor has preached twice in Japan and to very attentive and highly appreciative audiences. I know, my darling, why you sent it and felt the reason better than you could have expressed it. If God had spared our dear boy how I should have rejoiced to make the lessons these contained the rule of our intercourse as Father and Son. But I trust he is with Jesus. It may savor a little of Catholicism but I delight to pray daily that we may be a united family in Heaven and to include dear Eddie and Ellie in those petitions as I do by name often and always in terms. I wish I could more fully have described his last hours. I would have wished these had been less of delirium. But I thank God for his peaceful departure, and pray it may be one earnest of that peace with God which will be eternal.

May God in his infinite mercy permit us to meet again, all the survivors. You and myself, our dear children, Sue and all. But we cannot tell what He has in store for us. But this we know: that His ways are just and true. If we only believe all things will work for our good. How little worthy are we of His kind regard. We are at the best unprofitable servants and the more I live the more I feel that I am prone to do evil and that I have a constant struggle and every day occasion to acknowledge I have sinned. I wish I could feel this more deeply and keenly than I do.

I may be able to send a few lines to dear Sue in this enclosure, though I have been interrupted twice by calls, one of which the ladies are disposing of in an adjoining room. I have remained all day at Kanagawa at Mr. Fisher's house. Bertie and Mr. Kip have gone over to Yokohama where Mr. Fisher's office is. I have all my accounts to get ready and have 13 dispatches ready for Governor Seward.¹⁰⁷ This office is no sinecure. I am very busy and hope my services here will not prove unprofitable to the government. I am popular with all the Americans, which Mr. H[arris] was not and I hope to be as popular with the Japanese as he was.

¹⁰⁶ Also called the *Christian Intelligencer*, this was the weekly newsletter of the Reformed Dutch Church, published in New York.

¹⁰⁷ William H. Seward (1801-1872) was the United States Secretary of State.

And now, my darling, I will close this part of my letter with oh how much of love and longing for you and home. I feel a sustaining power in my knowledge of your deep and devoted love of which I never felt so sure as now. Kisses to Charlie and Sue and yourself from your loving husband,
R.H.P.



Kanagawa, July 7 1862

My Dear Wife,

This is the business part of my letter. I this day received yours of the 28th February, on the 3rd of the 8th of March and nearly two weeks ago of 20th March. Yet Dr. Hepburn has letters from his wife of the last week in April and Mr. Brown yesterday gave me his New York *Intelligencer* containing Dr. Rogers' letters in relation to 1 April Communion. I am disappointed but I take courage and hope and pray all is well.

My heart responds to your and Sue's call "Home." But neither you nor I have the data on which to decide. I know that by remaining here the term of my appointment I can discharge my entire debt. By remaining two years I can bring it under my control. So that with prudence and reasonable industry I can pay balance, when we shall all be in possession of the same facts. You shall learn what I can do and am doing and I see some figures which I trust will be sent of your position then we will ask God's blessing on our own decision and if I can set my face homewards, the sooner the better. Bertie would be willing to start tomorrow. I would if I could see my way clear to discharge my debt. What I mean is this: I do not think it needful to stay here until all is paid. I simply think it prudent to stay until it is reduced to that point I may pay the balance if we have a fair business at the Works. It has stood so long however that I must take means to pay it off soon. Let me say however I wish you first to retain enough to pay what I have used of your property. You will see this is prudent, because finally if I fail to be able to discharge all I should be able to pay what I owe Charlie and your father first. Then we will be strong to arrange balance.

I have by this mail sent to Russell & Co. near \$2,400, which will be applied to purchase a draft on the U.S. and may net you when received say 26 to 2,800 dollars. I have asked them to send draft to your order. Also per Barings Bros. & Co. 529.61 less commissions which I hope will all arrive safely. This last to be deposited with J[ames] G. King & Sons to credit of Charlie and be advised of same. When in addition to this, I tell you I have on hand about \$2,300 of what I have saved not taking out the draft I made on Charlie you will see I am not denying myself to send these amounts home. I see my salary is reduced. I hope however this will be made a full mission and that will

shorten my stay. Take the figures I sent you and Sue and Charlie and I still can do what I said. Now as I will again send this letter direct, I ask you all, might I not to stay in the view of these great advantages? Decide this by your judgment not by your feelings.

I hope Charlie has already received the remittance I sent in May of about \$1080. I shall send, if my life is spared, at least \$2,500 in October and as much more in January because if I should come home I shall have enough to pay passage even by way of Europe of self and Bertie and have a right when I get home to draw from salary while returning which I may have even if God should spare my life to see you all again.

I expect to send off on Wednesday this direct via Marseilles and other letters via Washington.

I received the saddles yesterday, which I will sell as Bertie and I have Mexican saddles, unless I should get a good offer for Ber's Mexican when I will keep Lloyd's as Bertie thinks he will learn to ride better on an American saddle. He has got that idea from Mr. Kip.

Now all this I have kept separate so you may destroy it. Understand, my darling, I only wish to draw this distinction with your property, to keep it intact, so to have the principal neither wasted or lost. I do not consider it wrong to have the income used for our joint support. Only I do not wish people to point at and talk of me as of Dr. J. F. T. and especially to have any chance to say anything of you. As I wish this destroyed I am taking no pains with the writing.¹⁰⁸ God had been good to us, my dear Jennie, in our temporal matters. See how many wrecks there are all around us. Now if we can weather the storm as I hope we can, how much more than I deserve!

Don't write or telegraph to Washington. You might do me serious injury. You will be the first to hear of my return. The application of my recall must come from me. The sole exception to this might be this: should you be taken sick then I wish to hurry home as fast as possible. But I fear my recall without my applying for it could never be so understood as to save me from disgrace. Should your sickness dear make you wish for me then I can stand anything and should wish to come.

R.H.P.



Kanagawa July 8 1862

My Very Dear Sister Sue,

It is very pleasant yet also very sad to receive your urgent calls for my return. It

¹⁰⁸ The handwriting in this letter is uncharacteristically uneven.

appears but as yesterday since we parted and yet at times it seems an age. And when I sit down and measure our separation by distance the formidable figures look appalling, much more now since I have traversed the trackless paths. Oh how I wish you and Jennie were good sailors. I cannot take it on my conscience to say with the whole heart, come! Because it would truly be dreadful if your sickness as I have seen it for hours should be measured by days and even weeks. I have tried to convince myself that your great predisposition to it would surely cause its early disappearance, that you would have one good sound turn and then you would be buoyant and singing like larks and I have tried to inspire Dr. Hepburn with my theory. But while he admits it as possible, he is doubtful as to its probability and entirely skeptical as to its certainty. So I suppose I must come to you and you must miss your first and last chance to circumnavigate the globe. But when can I come. You see I cannot run away from my post now. It must not be said I acted cowardly when at home such bravery is quickening every pulse and vibrating with its stirring details the public heart. So I will ever wait for your joint epistle and may anticipate returning in about one year. If like Rip Van Winkle I could awake tomorrow and find three years had gone, how pleasant would it be if, if, if, if first I had the fruits of a three year mission and also myself and my dear ones at home and Bertie were all well, instead of finding everything moss covered and changed as did the illustrious sleeper of the Kaaterskill. By all this poetry simmered down to plain prose I simply mean that it will be the pleasantest moment I have enjoyed when I can honorably turn my face homewards and begin to number the miles of lessened distance. I am somewhat amazed my dear Sue that I have been able to endure this absence as I have. Phrenologically I possess the organ of locality highly developed. I have always disliked change. I have never seen a change of servants without regret. I always left if possible to others the discharge of workmen when necessary. The old house became a part of me. Is it saying too much that the parting with friends, my dear, darling, precious wife and child, and you who have always been more than a sister, and my other dear friends and this continued parting every day is like a strong grasp on the heart strings?

But I must not selfishly fill this letter with my own feelings. I would wish to direct my words where my thoughts and affections center, to the little circle at home, whence I often imagine the family gathering and it is pleasant to feel that a few kind words are spoken of the far off ones on this island of the deep. And I feel if I should once get back then I would be entirely useless, thoroughly void of all ambition to move or act and only wish to sit down and look and look and that I could be content to hear all of you talk until my weary ears should cease to take note of the sounds.

How short all your letters are and how seldom they come and how slowly too!

Occasionally I should like a good home picture and have Tommy take notes slyly of what is said and then if I could only have daguerreotyped to me a good hearty ringing old fashioned laugh I could almost feel for a moment (shutting my eyes) that I was at

home again. There is no home incident too trivial to prove uninteresting to me. I should delight in a weekly diary. Void of incident it might be, but it would be rich in warm feeling and then you see how it would serve to keep alive the home feeling.

Bertie is now saving money to pay expenses home by way of Europe. I allow him at present \$75 per month and he keeps a regular account and you can tell by experience that he will be a pitiless creditor. It is rather early to plan and fix the route of travel homeward. It may be when the time comes we will say via San Francisco. By that route we might reasonably expect to reach you in 90 days, provided a vessel chanced to be ready here and did not arrive at San Francisco just after the steamer had left. The other way would certainly take more time, though perhaps not so very much and would be broken by stopping at Shanghai, Hong Kong, Penang, Ceylon, Suez, Cairo and Alexandria, etc. and then the Dutch of Albany could be satisfied by a living witness that the Earth is round. This same island of Japan did not appear to me so distant as home now appears. You must sail day after day and count the miles wearily before you can realize the exact distance traversed. The route by the Pacific has the advantage of being much shorter and of freedom from storms and of the prevalence of the trade winds, but it is a long reach from San Francisco to the Sandwich islands and a weary one thence to Japan as you see no land and meet no vessels, those returning to the U.S. invariably taking the northern route.

You will see my writing is unequal. I have been interrupted. Mr. Portman is writing beside me, copying the balance of my dispatches of which I send 12 by this mail, together with sundry letters to London and China. And it is exceedingly warm. Tomorrow I propose taking a jaunt to Onesima. I leave these letters all sealed, one to dear Jennie and one to little Charlie direct via Marseilles and this by same mail via Marseilles. You can see how much difference there will be. If the vessel, as is probable, shall not leave here till Saturday I will be able to send other letters, which I should like to do. I sit down without any idea of what I shall say and almost feeling I have actually nothing to say, but the words slip along and I delight to think I am just holding a familiar talk with you and or the time distance vanishes, although alas the familiar form fails to appear.

I should be very sorry to think that you believe me unreasonable in not responding to your telegraphic appeal, when you consider what would have been my position here ignorant of what had been done with my letter. I could have returned from San Francisco easier than from this place at once because now it will cost the government one year's extra salary at least, whereas from San Francisco it would have been far less. I think however when I have occasion to ask it leave will be given to return and my salary continued till my arrival. I think I have acted for the best and believe Charlie will think, when he sees what I am doing, that I had better stay here in all two years. I dread it indeed but it will soon pass and dear Jennie will feel reconciled when she sees what

advantages will be gained if God shall spare our lives. Only think of 20 being deducted from the formidable array I now have to think of. It makes me rejoice even to think of.

I want you to remember me to good Dr. Wyckoff. He would be rejoiced to hear the sound Holland language spoken as I do so often, and to see it in all letters addressed to me. I read the New Testament in Dutch and hope I may be able at least to understand the language when spoken if not able to speak it with fluency. I hope the Middle Dutch [Second Reformed Church] is prosperous. How with the Dudley Church.¹⁰⁹ I hope that will be saved to our Church. I hear good news from the Old North [The First Dutch Reformed Church] and hope the debt will be strangled by the time this reaches you. Debt will strangle unless the process of compassion is applied directly to its own jugular. What weeks we have had in Albany! I hope goodly words will float in multitudes in their place, though I am sorry to see any of our old families disappear. I see in the *Intelligencer* the death of Mrs. Wilson noticed.¹¹⁰ I will miss many familiar faces if spared to return. How is the General and Aunt Sue and Uncle Chris¹¹¹ and Aunt Sarah¹¹² and Anna. My love to all. Let the General and Aunt Sue come out here and return with me via Egypt and the Holy Land and they will find it will do a vast deal of good to them. Then they will be travelers indeed. This is the country for verdure. No such green can be found elsewhere. It looks like perpetual spring and then such crops! One hardly is reaped before another appears to have sprung up almost ripe for the reaper.

The camellia here bears a nut almost like a pear. From these nuts their hair oil is made. I saw yesterday a variety which has leaves serrated like a saw. When Mr. Hogg¹¹³ arrives I will see what can be done for Charlie's lot on the Troy road and my nursery project. The elm here affords a beautiful wood for furniture like our curled maple. There are 60 varieties of maples. Some I can see now from the window of every hue, crimson, brown, salmon and there are all kinds of variegated cedars which grow to an enormous height. I have some magnificent specimens of the iris. I hope soon to give you a sight of these wonders.

You and Jennie and Charlie must miss your father so much. All your motions were so dependent on his it cannot be otherwise. Bertie and myself you can almost to imagine

¹⁰⁹ The Dudley Reformed Protestant Dutch Church.

¹¹⁰ Maria Lush Wilson, wife of John Quintard Wilson.

¹¹¹ Christopher Yates Lansing (1796-1872) was JALP's uncle. He was the younger brother of Gerrit Y. Lansing, JALP's father.

¹¹² Sarah Bleecker Lansing (1802-1878) was JALP's aunt. She was the younger sister of Gerrit Yates Lansing.

¹¹³ Thomas Hogg Jr. was the United States Marshall assigned to the Consulate in Kanagawa, 1862-1869. He was also a horticulturalist and sent plant seeds and cuttings to the United States during this time. He arrived in Japan in October 1862.

at times as only temporally absent, just gone out to return in an hour or a day. But those of our dear ones who I trust and pray are away in that farther and brighter land, they will never more revisit the scenes they loved, occupy the familiar seats and join other loved circle here. I feel that the most blessed description of Heaven is there shall be no parting there. May we and all our loved ones be gathered there. Then whether one or the other start first to attend that meeting will be of little importance. If only there, at home and forever! Soon more will be there than here. Then when one by one the earthly links are broken and those drawing to Heaven stronger and more numerous.

It will be easier to go hence and be with them and with Jesus. May we all be there! All of those now living and our dear Parents, children and brothers and sisters. I remember you by name morning and night and feel that you do not forget me.

And now, my dear Sue, I must think of coming to an end. You must help darling Jennie bear up in my absence. If I cannot be with her I am rejoiced to know she has so many dear friends who will do all they can to supply my place. I count the days and weeks as they pass and rejoice in another one past and separation lessened. And soon we may be permitted a loving meeting. I hope she will keep her spirits up. And you must all ride out frequently and take air and exercise more than you have done. I should be rejoiced to learn you do this systematically and frequently. I consider it absolutely necessary and ask Jennie for my sake to bear this in mind. And I charge you to see to this. It will do you all good and is indispensable for Jennie and Charlie. My own rides will be more pleasant if I can feel that you at Albany are breathing fresh air and looking at the green fields.

I have written you I think what a good horseman Bertie is. He thinks nothing of riding 30 miles in a day, though we only average about 12 miles perhaps 15. We ride from 2 to 3 hours each day occasionally taking much more time, sometimes nearly all the day, going out early, lunching out and coming home to dinner at 7 o'clock. It is now getting so warm that we will probably ride hereafter before breakfast. Bertie is growing fast, has an immoderate appetite and thus far has not complained of an ache or a pain. You would be surprised to see how much like dear Eddie he is getting. I think if spared to return you will see a great resemblance. He is happy, perfectly contented but I must do him the justice to say I believe he is prepared to leave Japan any moment, and without a regret so if he have any regrets they will be far more than balanced by the prospects of a home soon to be regained.

I think you will say this is a formidable letter. Only try one so close as this is and on such an enormous sheet of paper. And then on as hot a day as this is with your hands sticking to the paper and you will be prepared to put a little value on this.

And now, my dear Sue, kiss dear Jennie and Charlie for me. Give my love to Charlie and Abby and Townsend and little Abby and Eddie and Charlie the soldier if he do not disdain civilians. Don't forget Baby and your neighbors over the way and the Dr. and

Mrs. Rogers and Bessie and Gracie and Fanny. Remember me to Uncle Jacob H.¹¹⁴ and Dr. Vanderpoel¹¹⁵ and also to Dr. McNaughton,¹¹⁶ and all who chance to bestow a thought on me. I know cousin Kate Ten Eyck will. Should you meet Lansing Pruyn and Anna and Emma and Cousin Catherine say I remember them. I will write someday to Lansing and shall be pleased to hear from him. And I will by this next mail I hope send a good long letter to Dr. Rogers. And these letters I will always leave open. Because they are all intended for you and I will repeat my request that copies be made at least of such parts as may be interesting if there be any. As they may be of use if I ever write anything about Japan. And now, my dear Sue, with love and kisses to you and dear Jennie and Charlie I am as ever very truly and affectionately and sincerely your loving brother,
Robt. H. Pruyn



[No date]

I should have told you that the tortoise shell work will not stand our very warm rooms. Be careful therefore that whatever reaches you of that work shall not be exposed to much heat. It will be well to observe the same precautions as to all the work. The lacquer will not crack or be destroyed even by boiling water. But the danger may be that where fastened together the pieces may separate.

The climate here is exceedingly moist. The sea is all around us. We have showers very frequently during the night. Though I think the marvelous freshness of tree and plant and shrub is sustained by heavy night dews. For though we have a long rainy season in June and September, I think it less rainy at other seasons than at home.

You will scarcely be able to appreciate the work I send until you have an opportunity to compare the different qualities. The Japanese are now making for foreigners a cheap but very showy lacquer which is very frail and will by no means compare with their old work either in beauty of finish or durability. I have sent you pieces which are very old. Some made a century or more ago for their own use and which with care will last for

¹¹⁴ Jacob H. Ten Eyck (1833-1898) was a prominent figure in Albany. Although not actually a blood relation, RHP referred to Ten Eyck as “Uncle Jacob H.” throughout his letters. In his letter dated March 12 1863, RHP told his wife that she should feel free to share his letters with Ten Eyck “because I have always felt as if he were almost a relative.”

¹¹⁵ Samuel Oakley Vanderpoel (1824-1886) was a physician in Albany.

¹¹⁶ Peter and James McNaughton were brothers, both practicing in Albany. It is unclear to which one RHP refers here.

centuries.

I hope I shall be able to call your attention to all these specimens. I have some very valuable ones I keep and shall not send till I cease to use them for ornamenting my rooms.

I have however a large lot which I will box up and send by first opportunity direct.

I have also a large lot of straw work which I will send for benefit of our Sabbath School to be disposed of by a fair.

Mr. Overbeck,¹¹⁷ Prussian Consul at Hong Kong, will shortly send you some excellent Chinese tea and some ginger and mixed preserves. The first of a kind never sold in the U.S. Don't therefore be in a hurry to part with it. It costs as much in China as the common kind does in the U.S. It is made by Cheelung from ginger selected when young and tender and put up in clarified rock candy sugar and is delicious. It is all engaged a year ahead by the heavy china houses who have their names permanently on his books for a certain number of boxes which are made for them each year. When you receive it you will be able to see how different it is from any ginger you have ever seen, much of which you know is quite stringy.

It will be sent probably to the care of Messrs. A. A. Low & Co. and I hope you will not be disappointed either in its reception or its quality.

Adieu



[No date]

My ever dear darling wife,

What can I say to you which will give you an adequate idea of my feelings and how my heart goes out to you through the long miles which separate us. The only way in which I can shake off the great homesickness which at times comes on me is to occupy my mind until I can more composedly think of you. I am here at Mr. Fisher's. It is a sad pleasure. Here are the household cares and the home-like table which reminds me of my far-off family table and circle. I am far happier at Yedo because I am not so constantly reminded of home. It is far from pleasant to have all these things thrust constantly before my eyes reminding me of what I long for but could not reach, even if I started at once, for months.

I hope my dear Jennie you do not miss me so often and deeply as I do you. I cannot believe it for you have so many kind friends around you that you cannot have the void

¹¹⁷ Gustav Overbeck (1830-1894) was a German businessman and diplomat.

which I have.

I have written you and Sue each a long letter but now I want a snug little place to put down a few words for your loving eyes. I wish I could cheer your heart by the announcement I was on my way home. But only think more than 6 months have gone! The months of absence yet in store for us may pass more swiftly. I pray God they may have no wrecks to line the shore of the past ocean of time besides which they march.

I do not get letters often enough or long enough my darling. I must remind you of this. See how I write. I care not what you say. Say anything, only write.

I beg you to keep me advised of the state of your health. I can forgive anything but concealment in that direction, which would ever be a sorrow to me. I should never forgive myself if I was here while you were sick and suffering.

I am happy to say that Bertie continues well. I watch him and myself closely but I hope and pray God will watch over us which is far better.

I should like to fill a few more sheets but night is approaching and the fire and mosquitoes are very troublesome.

I have been to church this week. I go up to Yedo if God spare our lives tomorrow morning at 5 o'clock. It is so warm we must take an early start. All my letters I leave behind for the mail which goes on Wednesday. I hope this letter or at all events the ones I send direct will reach you in less than two months.

And now my dear Jennie comes the unpleasant adieu. God bless you and keep you and my dear precious Charley. Love to you and him and Sue and all and kisses my dear sweet precious wife from your ever loving faithful husband,
Robt. H. Pruyne



Kanagawa, July 12 1862

My Very Dear Wife,

The steamer which is to take the mail does not leave here till Wednesday and I have the opportunity to write you a long letter today. Wednesday morning a large party, 23 in all, went to Kamakura and Yenosima. You can trace our route by the map in Perry's book. By boat to Kanasawa, a fishing village near Webster's Island, then by horse to Kamakura, then to the sea shore between Cape Idzu and the cape to the left as you enter the bay of Yedo. I have not the map before me or I would give more particular descriptions. For most of what we saw of note I refer you to my letter to Dr. Rogers. Our party consisted of Reverend Mr. Brown, Reverend Mr. Ostrom, Miss Adriana of

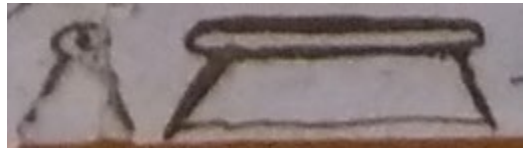
Mr. B[rown]'s household, Mr. and Mrs. Fisher, and Miss Mann,¹¹⁸ Dr. and Mrs. Simmons,¹¹⁹ gentlemen enough to make up the party to 23. The distance by water and land traveled was going and returning about 50 miles. When we arrived at Yenosima we found the two best public houses closed. Through the Japanese boy of one of the gentlemen, we were led to believe it was done to make us return. The best house it was said by the village officer was closed because the proprietor was dead of the measles. Fortunately orders had been sent from Yedo, where I had prudently made known my proposed visit, to the Governor of Kanagawa to send a guard. I at once made known to the *yakunins* that we had come, would not go back and would stop there that night, that the government at Yedo knew I was coming, that whether it was a feast day or not I cared not, as I should have been informed of that before starting, that we did not believe there was a man dead. If there were, we would respect his house and would not enter. If there were not, we would. That we had a doctor with us and he must see the body. Suffice it to say the house was open in a few minutes, our *yakunins* opening the doors and windows and a few minutes our servants had everything in the kitchen in full blast for supper. And the Stars and Stripes were run up over the balcony with three cheers, where it waved till we left next day. But what a night! It was the Omatsuri or great festival day of Japan.¹²⁰ And the village officer had sent me word that we would be honored by an opportunity to participate and until near 3 o'clock there was an incessant noise of drums or tom-toms, singing that forty cats could not excel and the shrill noise of the fifes or flutes. All this time some were actually sleeping, others vainly trying. The second story was in two rooms, one occupied by four ladies, the other by nineteen gentlemen lying on the mats which covered the floor. These mats were well enough. There are mats here like our own, but the kind generally in use are 6 feet x 3 feet and 2 to 3 inches thick, the inside being quite soft. The consequence is that fleas often take up their abode in these snug quarters and when excursionists set an example, the fleas cannot be blamed if now having seen foreigners they indulge a laudable curiosity and give them, it may be not a very cursory, examination. I was wide awake, and it may be my imagination was wide awake, also I certainly must admit the fleas gave

¹¹⁸ Jennie W. Mann, who was later to marry DeWitt Clinton Brower, a partner of Allmand & Co. merchants in Shanghai, in 1864. She is always referred to as "Miss Mann." See her photo in the Albany Institute collection at <https://perma.cc/E99U-YDH2>.

¹¹⁹ Duane B. Simmons (1832-1889) was an American physician and missionary. His first wife left Japan for the U.S. in 1860. He remarried, but not until 1869, then to Maria Antoinette Simmons, in New York, and was divorced from her, after they had become estranged, in 1878. Thus, the identify of "Mrs. Simmons" here is mysterious. Maria Antoinette had accused her husband of adultery, so it seems possible that he, like many expatriate men, had a Japanese mistress.

¹²⁰ See <https://perma.cc/29PR-3DQB>

us a warm welcome and amply atoned by their open doors for the closed doors which refused to welcome our arrival. Now for our pillows. A Japanese pillow is made of wood of the



precise shape of the frame of the case of a stereoscope. I give end and side views. On this wooden instrument of torture is placed or tied a roll made of a bundle of some kind of straw shape like a good sized cucumber. To this is attached about twenty pieces of paper which serve to give fresh clean pillows for forty nights as successively the different sides of the paper can be brought upper-most, while meanwhile the requisite degree of softness is maintained by those which have been used, thus reconciling exquisite neatness with the most rigid economy. Now you know my extreme partiality for a good soft pillow and can readily imagine that my taste must have been hit to a nicety. But as we were on a picnic this gave us all great fun after it was all over. I rose at 3 o'clock to see our musical tormentors leave us and gladly saw their many colored lanterns fitfully gleaming up the steep village street and then tried to sleep and think I succeeded as when I finally rose at 4½ o'clock I actually felt far from sleepy. Night before we had taken a bath in the Pacific from the neck of land sometimes covered I suppose (in storms) which connects the main land and inland. In the morning we walked over the island and had some beautiful views. We purchased here a remarkable species of coral. When I first saw it I pronounced it spun glass. I think I spoke of it in announcing my intended visit. It is shaped like a plume and is as fine and delicate as horse hair. Very few believe at first it is natural. The academy at St. Petersburg wrote to Mr. Max Simivitch, a Russian officer engaged in scientific investigation here on the subject, and he assures me he has seen it taken from the sea. I hope to be able to send you or bring you some fine photographic views of this excursion.

The British Legation came down from Yedo with their two war steamers yesterday. I do not yet understand the precise reasons for this, as I have not yet seen or heard from Colonel Neale. It is said the Captain of the *Pearl* advised it, declining to have any guard and the Captain of the *Renard* wished his men as he could not spare so many from so small a ship and as Colonel Neale had found it necessary to rely upon a British guard which he was to lose, he had the choice of going back to a Japanese guard which he had distrusted or go away from Yedo. He appears to have chosen the latter. Mr. DeWitt goes up Monday to remain until he leaves for Nagasaki next month when I will be alone again. We go up Monday or Tuesday when Miss Mann and Miss Brown¹²¹ will probably go to visit us for a few days. They will be our guard. I have just received a letter from

¹²¹ Julia Maria Brown was the daughter of Samuel R. Brown.

Mrs. Bonney. She and her husband¹²² are at Shanghae to be over by the next vessel, when they will make me a short visit. So you see I am not entirely deserted. Mercy, how much I will have to tell Catherine [Bonney] about Albany. I will be as good as a thousand letters to her. She was unable to come over by the last steamer as it was filled with passengers. But she may be here next week. It appears she has ordered a sea voyage for her health. All the Europeans who are sick are ordered here.

The only drawback to this climate is the extreme dampness. Leather and cloth will mold in a few days. I am obliged to order clothes hung out frequently. But what fields! A few weeks ago the barley and wheat and rape seeds, the latter with bright yellow flowers, were waving over the fields in golden waves. Now all have been reaped and the fields are greener and luxuriant with the sweet potato, bean, corn, etc., etc. I do not know the names of the great variety I see around. The rice fields present the most charming appearance. We have now plums, apricots and nectarines for fruit. Soon we will have melons and persimmons which are said to be very fine, then grapes and oranges which will last some months. The vegetables here are very cheap. You can get enough beans for two cents to supply the largest family. Eggs about 3 for a cent. We have our common potato which is introduced by foreigners and called the American *imo*. The sweet potato is good yet, though the new crop will soon come in. This is called Satsuma *imo* from the place where first grown in the south of Japan, probably first introduced by the Dutch. The American is sometimes called the Perry *imo*, as it was introduced by Commodore Perry. Tens of thousands of bushels are now raised in northern Japan and the Japanese grow them here also. We have the tomato here, raised now by the Japanese to whom seeds have been given. The Japanese pea is hard and poor. Soon we will have good varieties. Cucumbers are quite good. Pears are so hard that Mrs. Simmons told me some she had on her table for ornament she had purchased weeks before. Yet they taste good as ours when stewed. The water here is so pure and delightful you don't need ice. It trickles from every rock. We have an excellent well, with as cold water as any I have seen. The peaches here are very poor. All fruit is picked when quite green. In a few years they will have abundant and good varieties. Our strawberry and currant and gooseberry grow well. And numbers of plants have been brought over. I cannot see anything to prevent all our fruit from flourishing here. Rice is very abundant and on that, vegetables, and fish the whole population subsists and they are a fine healthy race. The women are quite small, but the men are muscular and it is astonishing how cheerful and hardworking they are and how much labor and fatigue they can endure. For six cents of our money a boat can be hired to take a load of passengers from this place to Yokohama 3 miles distant. The wages paid by Japanese

¹²² Samuel William Bonney (1815-64) and Catherine Van Rensselaer Bonney (d. 1879) were missionaries in China from 1851-1871. They were originally from Albany.

for servants is about 60 cents a month. The chief currency among the poor is copper and iron, there are 96 of the iron or copper cash such as the Chinese to one *tempo*, and 17 *tempo* to 1 *itzabu* and 3 of those weigh just as much as a silver dollar. When we were on our excursion I saw the confectioners dealing out for 3 of these cash to men and women and boys a plate of a kind of glutinous substance sweetened with molasses. This was made from a sea weed from which a kind of isinglass for jelly is made. For a few of these cash a good meal can be purchased and probably 5 cents of our money support a family for a day. But if rice was allowed to be exported we would soon hear a tempest as the price would go up at once, two fold perhaps at times 3 fold. Such has been the case with both silk and copper. Indeed at present they cannot afford to make as good silk as before foreigners came, the price of raw silk has risen so much. And so much copper which before was cheaper than iron. But I must not give you a commercial letter. I think it may prove interesting however to devote a sheet of each letter I may send you to such information about this country as may serve to give you an idea of its condition. I do not know as I have stated its population, as I keep no copies of my letters. Indeed, if I did you would not get so many. I fear I would scarcely think them worth sending. I write just as I think, not venturing even to read the letters over and charm myself into the belief for the moment that I am conversing with you. There are a great number of opinions about the population. I find some who put Yedo at 4 million, none less than 1½ million. The Empire at 60 million, none less than 30 to 35 million. The city is a marvel of unevenness. A hill is never cut down; part may be terraced, places cut in its side for a shrine or even a temple. But up and down the streets go for miles and miles. And if too steep for convenient use steps are placed to aid passengers and horses. Our horses would very readily climb a good easy pair of stairs. They very often stumble because their gait is rather shuffling, their feet being very little raised from the ground, but when difficult places are reached you hear the cry of the *betto*, “*Hi hi hi?*” and the horses gather themselves up carefully and pass over the spot with caution.

We have now a great personage here from Keoto, an ambassador from the Mikado to the Tycoon. What his precise mission is we of course do not know but we have been informed officially of his name and are respectfully asked to avoid the inconvenience of meeting him. Our *yakumin* would of course head to another street. It is hoped that the result of his mission will be to settle everything amicably in relation to foreigners. When I tell you I have ridden, of course on horseback, nearly 100 miles in Yedo and have never seen an unpleasant or hostile look or heard an insulting or menacing word, you will see that there must be a substratum of thorough good nature here and an absence of all hostility apparent among the populace. And yet I suppose a feeling of intolerance and hostility might be aroused. Still I can hardly realize that there can be any violent feeling excited on any religious question. You can enter any temple here unquestioned and will be received cordially by priests and people. Indeed they appear pleased when

they see any expression of admiration.

Mr. DeWitt, the representative of Holland, is a good old fashioned Dutchman who was prepared to like me for my descent and I thoroughly like him. We get along very well together. As he is alone I go to his house and he comes to mine to ride in each other's company. He is anxious I should visit him at Nagasaki which I hope to be able to do, if we ever get a public vessel here. I long to see our flag again on a war vessel and I am interested to, as it is arranged a salute shall be given me when one arrives and I will then be the first Minister ever welcomed by a salute. It would have given before and replied to by one of the vessels of France, which was offered, but I refused waiting for the *Wyoming* or *Sabine* hoping one of these vessels will before long make its appearance. I have proposed to Mr. Burlingame,¹²³ Minister to China, to write in a day for thanksgiving and prayer on last Thursday in November which he has consented to do, should, I have no doubt, the news from the U.S. shall be such that we have had and still expect. This will of course include all Americans east of Cape of Good Hope as we are the only Diplomatic Representative of U.S. in this part of the world.

Our 4th of July celebration was fine. It passed off very happily. One Virginian, one Marylander, one South Carolinian present, all Union men. It was pleasant to know we could unite fraternally on such an occasion. We have now two newspapers here, one British, the other American. Till type arrive is all printed from wood cuts and all made by Japanese. I will send you a specimen by first mail via San Francisco. *Punch* which I sent you is printed this same way. You will ask how they can form these letters which they do not understand. It is done by pasting the words on wood and cutting through them. For a good short letter see my concluding sheet,

Affectionately yours,

R.H. Pruyn



Yedo, July 15 1862

My Dear Wife,

I have to send another dispatch to Governor Seward and have a few minutes to spare before the courier leaves to show you how much I desire to write to you by every opportunity. And yet I have nothing special to say. I have had an interview with two

¹²³ Hon. Anson Burlingame (1820-1870) served as the U.S. minister to the Qing Empire, 1862-1867.

Governors of Foreign Affairs this a.m. and am heated and tired. Miss Mann and Miss Brown are domesticated with me. This will suffice to assure you that there is no real danger here, notwithstanding the British Minister has withdrawn. We are to ride through the castle premises at 4 p.m. The presence of ladies here is a great curiosity, plus attracts much notice when we ride out. But there is far less to annoy than there would be at home if foreigners in a strange dress rode out. I beg you therefore give yourself no uneasiness about Bertie or me. If I did not believe we were safe, perfectly so, I would leave. I have no disposition to run any unnecessary risk, am too anxious to see you once more and give you a loving grasp of a hand and a warm embrace. But I feared you might needlessly alarm yourself and therefore add here these few lines. And now, my dear precious Jennie, I only wish to add what I never tire of saying, you were never dearer to me than now. We have fewer earthly objects to draw us from each other and divide our love. Take care of yourself, my darling. Kiss dear Charlie and Sue for me and with my warm love and affectionate remembrance to all once more receive my sad adieu with warm gushing overflowing love for you and my precious boy. Hurriedly but truly affectionately ever wholly yours, R

The British minister you see unfortunately relies upon a British guard. The naval officers would not give him as much as he wanted. He could not rely upon the Japanese whom he has distrusted. Hence his departure.



No. 6 Yedo, July 24 1862

My Dear Wife,

Your letter of April via Washington was received on Tuesday, the sole memento of my being remembered at home except in official quarters. I am indulging the hope that the mail via California will come with a rush and almost overwhelm me with good things. We are all creatures of habit and I am getting entirely used to breakfast without newspapers, but presume my appetite will be at once restored on coming within reach of that cookery again. But it is difficult to get accustomed to the letter or at best two from home in a month. It will require my very long confirmed habit to endure this and I do not think I will be put to the test. I am awaiting with some anxiety your acknowledgment of my letter from Honolulu which will prepare you for the fuller information I gave you in May. At that place I could only speak of what it was desirable to avoid, not by experience of what it was practicable to do. I feel anxious on this subject.

Of course it depends entirely on you at home. If you say come, I will do so, though I can by no means see my way clear. If you say, I shall do so, only so long as may be necessary to get the debt under control. Should I be alone, I am afraid all poor human nature could be relied on to do. Were you, Sue and Charlie here I could stay out my time very pleasantly and that would put me, as the boys say, in clover. But I dare not say come and I wish you to decide that question for yourself. I should wish however to come for you because I think you would need me to keep you up. It will not do, to give way in sea sickness. You must have air. My dear wife you see how anxious I am to pay what I owe. You can scarce sympathize fully with my feelings on this subject, although you saw something of the working of mine. It is a fine thing to contemplate all discharged. Three years would suffice for this. Were you here I should feel all right. But I should be unwilling to have you come alone and should like to meet you at San Francisco. Sue should by all means be with you. Alone you would be poor travelers. Together I would trust you because between you I think you could get up the requisite degree of nerve. But I suppose this must not be. When I see how many gallant wrecks these times have made I am grateful to God who has been so good to me, has provided me with so honorable and useful a position and given me the means, without speculation or involving friends, of honorably meeting my obligations. I hardly expect to see you and Sue here. I dare not ask it, but for fear you should come I say once for all bring side saddles, you can ride out here only on horseback. Oh if you were all once here how grandly healthy you would become.

I sent you by last mail via Marseilles per Russell & Co. about \$2,600 and to Charlie as before \$529. These amounts may be slightly changed by commissions, but I think a little increased. If life is spared in October expect nearly same amount. I hope they will prove serviceable and timely. But in sending the drafts for collection, let Charlie do it through Martin,¹²⁴ not let V[isscher] T[en] E[yck]¹²⁵ or any others at Albany know fully what I am doing or expect to do.¹²⁶ Should the Bank of the Capitol be going again he can easily get along. If not let him be careful how he gives a clue to our busy-bodies. It appears slow to me even at this rate, but it is sure.

I expect to take Misses Brown and Mann home. They have been here all last week and this week and have looked a little over my bachelor household, having silver cleaned,

¹²⁴ Henry Hull Martin (1809-1886) was cashier of the Albany City Bank.

¹²⁵ Visscher Ten Eyck (1809-1886) was cashier of Commercial Bank.

¹²⁶ According to the 1860 Albany directory, RHP was a director of the Commercial Bank, which was located at 38 State Street and had capital of \$500,000. Charles B. Lansing was a director of the Bank of the Capitol, which was located at 67 State Street and had capital of \$525,000. The 1863 directory does not list the Bank of the Capitol, however, indicating that it was perhaps defunct by that time.

a few clothes mended, etc. By the way I think by the first package you send you had better send me and Bertie each two undershirts and four drawers. They are awful here in washing and as we ride so much on horseback our drawers will be short lived. Send also in the same package via C.W. Brooks, San Francisco six of the knit pantaloons and six knit coats of C. H. Adams & Co. I have sold one overcoat here and may dispense of some other clothes to good advantage of the stock I do not need. Our shoes will hold out, we walk so little here at Yedo. Some days we have nothing but slippers on all day. Scarcely ever anything else until we ride. We of course see few people and we are very free and easy with those we do see. Comfort is the first thing attended to here in the east and although this is sought in different ways, we need not be very particular here where clothes are sometimes scarce worn at all.

We are expecting soon a great deal of good news via California but good as it may be I shall be grievously unless with it comes a good bundle of letters from you and Sue and my Albany friends. I am almost daily making calculations as to the time you will hear of my arrival here. I suppose before August.

I long to hear from you again and to hear that you are all happy and content and yet I want you to regret my absence a little. I wish to feel that comfortable as you may be I could add a little to your domestic enjoyments. There are no little events at home of too trifling importance to write about. I wish to hear as much as you can find time to write about and I should long for more.

It is really astonishing how much I find to do here and unless I make it a business to sit down and write and push other things aside, you would not have near as many lines as I am now able to send.

I am pleased to hear Charlie is pleased with Haskell and shall write to Mr. H by next mail. I hope business will prove successful as I am anxious to avoid a sacrifice in that quarter. I cannot of course expect great results. But we shall make great headway if at the end of all these troubles we are ready to go on with increased patronage and sustained by our old friends. And now, my darling wife, I must close. Bertie has had the candle lighted to seal this letter, the horses are ordered saddled to start it on its long journey and I hope it will be carried to you speedily and find all of my dear ones in good health and spirits. Kiss my darling Charlie for me ever so many times. He must take care of himself, take exercise not too much, not work too hard, he must not shovel all the snow, but above all he must pray to his Heavenly Father to take care of him as I know he does. And now this part of the letter is his: I want him to kiss darling Mother and Aunt Sue for me, often and heartily with a will something as I would if home and take care of sweet Mother my sweet little boy. Don't let her do anything which will make her feel unwell. Take her out riding. That will make my rides pleasanter if I know you are among the green fields, the sweet smelling hay and green trees and singing birds.

My darling wife, remember this: take exercise regularly and systematically. I wish to

see you well when I get back, whether sooner or later. I wish to do what is right about returning. I owe duties to others as well as you and myself and I wish to discharge these duties manfully, and you will aid me, I know you will. And now, my darling, Bertie says, "Father are you nearly done?" I have sent him to ask if the horses are saddled and he is clapping his hands. I will write until the last as I dislike to stop though scarcely knowing what to add. I have given the Sabbath School books for a library at Kanagawa. Mr. Brown says the children are delighted with them. There are four scholars from his family and Mr. Fisher's. I gave Cousin Catherine Ten Eyck's books to Mr. Brown for use which I hope will meet her views.

Please give my love to Charlie and Abby and family, to Betsy Brooks, my sister Cornelia¹²⁷ and Alida,¹²⁸ and Susan and Sarah and Anna and all, all. Remember me to Mary Mullen and Bridget and John. I wish them all to remember me. When you attend our meetings say to Mr. McElroy,¹²⁹ and Vosburgh¹³⁰ and Parsons,¹³¹ R.V.R.,¹³² Eugene¹³³ and all our friends male and female that I remember them and ask their remembrance and prayers. And now, my darling, adieu. God bless you and keep you ever with kisses for you and Sue and Charlie from your loving husband,
Robert H. Pruyn

Bertie has come and I surrender

R.C. Pruyn it is time



No. 6¹³⁴ Yedo, August 21 1862

My Dear Wife,

On the 19th we received a large mail, over 60 newspapers and not one letter. Could you have believed such a thing possible? The latest letter from home is yours of the

¹²⁷ Cornelia Pruyn (1820-1864) married Charles Van Zandt (1818-1881).

¹²⁸ Alida Pruyn (b. 1825) married James C. Bell (b. 1819).

¹²⁹ John McElroy, an attorney in Albany.

¹³⁰ Isaac W. Vosburgh (1801-1888) was a hardware merchant in Albany.

¹³¹ John D. Parsons, co-owner of Weed, Parsons & Co. of Albany.

¹³² Perhaps Richard Van Rensselaer

¹³³ Eugene Van Rensselaer

¹³⁴ This should probably have been labeled No. 7, as the previous letter dated July 24 was also No. 6

middle of April. How many were written before, if any, and not received I cannot say. Nor will I ever know if any fail to reach me as they are not numbered. Ten days ago I sent a package for you under cover to Secretary of State, enclosing among others a letter from Mrs. Bonney to Hattie Elmendorf.¹³⁵ But this will probably reach you as soon, the gentleman who had it in charge to mail at Shanghae having been left by the vessel, though his firm had chartered it. Mr. and Mrs. Bonney are now in Yedo and have been with me over a week period. Her health is nearly restored. She rides on horseback, has a good appetite, and to all appearance a new lease of life. It was like old times to see her. She looks about as when married. Perhaps a trifle thinner. But the same cheerful, happy disposition. We have talked of everybody and everything relating to Albany and have been as foolish about old times as if we had been 70 years old. Right down gossips, living more in the past than in the present. Mr. B[onney] is quite pleasant and cheerful, far less sedate and prosaic than I supposed when I saw him married at Cherry Hill. They have had sad news while here. The terrific typhoon at Canton is said to have destroyed their house and they of course feel some anxiety about their scholars, of whose fate nothing was known probably when the brief letter was written which informed them of the storm.

On Sunday we had service at the Legation, our house, and Mr. B[onney] preached from Hebrews 12:2 "Looking unto Jesus." I am inclined to believe it was the first sermon ever preached in Yedo. Mr. Brown may possibly have preached here for Mr. Harris, but I think not. In the afternoon I read again Dr. Rogers' sermon which you copied for me.

In all the papers received by last mail I looked in vain for anything concerning Dr. R[ogers]' decision. In the *Intelligencer* of the 8th nothing was said contradicting the announcement of his acceptance in the No. of the 3rd, and as I saw he was in New York and delivered an address before the Bible Society, this makes me fear he has left. If so and our lives are spared, he will, say before 5 years are over, as did Dr. Vermilye,¹³⁶ he would be very willing to receive a call from our Church and accept. I hope our people have acted right. I do not mean offered more salary, that was impossible and needless if possible. I only mean I hope they showed a united cordial feeling. I sincerely hope for our sake as well as his own he might not have left. Should he have gone, were I home, I would wish to hear Dr. Howard Crosby.¹³⁷ I think well of him, his activity, piety and

¹³⁵ Harriet Maria Van Rensselaer Elmendorf (1816-1896) or her daughter, Harriet Maria Elmendorf (1844-1920).

¹³⁶ Thomas Edward Vermilye

¹³⁷ Howard Crosby (1826-1891) was a Presbyterian scholar. He was appointed professor of Greek at Rutgers (RHP's alma mater) in 1859.

learning. I don't know but what I also might be willing to think of Willets.¹³⁸ I would not be surprised if he were tired of Brooklyn. But I will be spared the trouble and anxiety which others will have to bear this time and only pray that a gracious God may now grant unity of council and fill our pulpit with an able, faithful, and devoted man who shall be wise to win souls unto Jesus. If the Church prove faithful, God will not fail us.

But all this is written on mere conjecture of the truth. I shall be unwilling to believe it until compelled to. But it appears strange that while I was on the Pacific thinking of the Dr. and Church and of you, my darling, supposing everything at home as placid and undisturbed as the blue waters around me, that so unexpected a disturbing element should be at work at home. I know very well that you will regret such a change and as much on my account as any other.

I am not much alarmed at what you say about Dr. Roger's call, because I cannot believe he will be so unwise as to accept it. Were I at Albany he would not. I say nothing now about our Church. It has many things to make it undesirable to a pastor. But where is the Church which has not. But it has the grand element of permanence. The pastor does not see a new congregation every three years and is not put to the necessity of again going over the labor of getting acquainted with their peculiarities of temper and disposition and inclination in order to know how to meet them and do them good. And then again see these, whom he has learned to know, go off just as he began to understand them and feel that a good work was possible.

But I know something by observation and some more by information from good sources of that Church in New York and am sorry to say there is not much of it even now and that much must give less and less every year. Besides I am satisfied the Doctor would not suit them. I heard the preacher they were delighted with. He was a good sound man but his style entirely different. As to the Church it has few strong men. Some of the best have been broken down. The Church is badly located and in five years it will be located just as Dr. Hutton is,¹³⁹ in the transition quarter of New York, the lowest down of all the good Churches. And if the Doctor should go he would never see the hour he did not regret it. So I sincerely hope as I believe he is too sensible to go. I think I understand how he feels and what he proposes and expects. And that he will not get into a Church where he will find everything which is unpleasant in ours largely developed and have an uphill walk all his life. I should of course regret on our account his leaving should he conclude to do it, but I have perhaps not the uneasiness I might have at home. First because I feel he will stay. Second because the Church is safe in the hands of our Lord. It will be sustained if faithful or become like one of the seven

¹³⁸ A. A. Willets was the Pastor of the First Reformed Dutch Church in Brooklyn.

¹³⁹ Dr. Mancius S. Hutton (1803-1880) served as pastor in the Reformed Dutch Church, Washington Square and Washington Place, Manhattan.

Churches of Asia if unfaithful.

It can scarcely be possible the Doctor will leave. I think it would be an act of injustice to our Church, which I should be sorry to think he would commit, and to himself an act of folly. I was about saying as I do not think he is the man that wishes to lose friends as rapidly as he makes them, as would be the case in a Church where the congregation would change every five years and indeed in less time.

I am pleased to hear the Sabbath School is prospering so finely under the superintention [*sic*] of C[harles] V[an] Z[andt]. I know he will prove an efficient faithful superintendent and will do far better than I can do, were I there. No man can be faithful to everything when he is pulled in a dozen different directions at the same time.

I have not heard anything in relationship to the Dudley Church. I pray it may weather all its difficulties. But I fear much for it. When you answer this, say a few words of encouragement if possible. I hope Uncle Jacob H. will find it in his heart to reunite with our Church. I think if he would or decide to do it, he would feel much happier and satisfied. Give him my kind regards. I think of him very often as I do of many others of our friends. He especially always has been a warm friend of mine and has never failed me. I wish also to be remembered specially to Mr. Van Santvoord¹⁴⁰ and Dr. Vanderpoel and Captain Ten Broeck.¹⁴¹

Yesterday we rode about 24 miles and when returning about 7 o'clock I said to Mr. Portman I think we are near home now and then the idea flashed across my mind of our home 12,000 miles off. Is it not strange to think and speak of a home so distant as this? And yet it would only take a little, dear little wife with her companions to make this far distance spot a sweet little home. The dear little wife alone would suffice for me but then she should have some companion of her own sex and remember not come without Sue. I am expecting to hear by November what you all think about my return in view of what I have written. I cannot say in my own mind what it will be. At times I think it will be "Come home!" And then again I think it will be that, with Charlie's advice, you will say it would be wrong to give up so favorable a prospect as I now have. I can do all that I said in that letter and a little better and am still in hopes the government will make this a full mission.

I am expecting to send you by Mr. Hyatt¹⁴² our late Consul at Amoy some silks. He is waiting for a vessel to California and hopes to leave by the end of the month. The

¹⁴⁰ Alfred Van Santvoord (1819-1901) was a prominent businessman in Albany who ran steamboat lines.

¹⁴¹ Cornelius Ten Broeck (1811-1874)

¹⁴² Thomas Hart Hyatt (1809-1881) was from upstate New York. He served as American Consul in Amoy 1854-1861. By the time RHP wrote this letter, Hyatt had returned to the United States.

Benefactor is to go direct to New York and I will try to send Charlie some dogs. The dear little fellow, how I long to see him and often call up his face before my eyes so as not to forget him and yet he is growing a big boy and if God spare our lives to meet again he will have grown so big that I will hardly know him and perhaps I will be grey, though I show no more signs of that than when we parted. I hope you received my notice from the Express Company¹⁴³ of a box retained for payments of charges. I fear it is the box of books and stationery from *Littell's [Living Age]*¹⁴⁴ of which I have heard nothing. How stupid to send the notice here. I hope it will not be lost and that Charlie will tell R.L. Johnson how shabbily the company has acted. Lest that letter may not have reached you, I will say I received a notice that there was a box to my address in the express office New York, on which certain charges must be paid and if not paid the box and contents would be sold. No box or parcel should be sent off with paying charges until it reach the vessel or at all events keeping track of it making enquiries to see all is right, as it will always be hazardous.

I am daily expecting a large bundle of letters. We hope for a vessel from California and the British mail is due. We are anxiously expecting the news of a dispersion of the rebels in Virginia and at Corinth. While we have no doubt of the final result we are very anxious to hear that peace once more smiles on our land. Our news to this date xxx the capture of Norfolk and New Orleans but I suppose that by this time every large city is under the flag of the Union. Charlestown, Savannah, Memphis, Richmond and Mobile. The Stars and Stripes never looked more graceful and pleasant to the eye than now.

Kanagawa August 6 1862¹⁴⁵

I came down Saturday (Bertie being here) to pass Sabbath here (communion) and to meet Mrs. Bonney. She and her husband look very well. It was considered absolutely necessary that she should leave China for a season and she already feels much better. She looks as she did when married. I see no change. I have just learned a vessel leaves for Shanghae tomorrow morning and therefore scribble off a few lines having fortunately brought down what was prepared for a mail which will leave a week hence and may perhaps reach you before this letter which will go by a sailing vessel which at this season against the South West Monsoon may make a long passage. I hope to send

¹⁴³ Although there were a number of Expresses in Albany, this one appears to be the American Express Company, managed by Robert L. Johnson.

¹⁴⁴ *Littell's Living Age* (also known simply as *The Living Age*) was an American general magazine largely consisting of selections from various English and American magazines and newspapers. It was published weekly.

¹⁴⁵ RHP probably erroneously dated this section of the letter. It was likely written on August 26, not August 6.

you letters more worthy of your reading by the steamer next week.

I have the measles among my servants at Yedo where it is spreading very rapidly.

I have seen Mr. Brown's *Intelligencer* which says Dr. Rogers has accepted the call in New York. I don't believe it. I still believe when it comes to the final decision he will stay. And the decision would be so wrong and somehow there is a hankering among the clergy for New York and sometimes even clergymen may not take lessons from the moths which flutter around the brilliant blaze of the candle only to burn their wings. When I am compelled to believe it I will, and not before. I remember what Dr. Vermilye said at our house: he would like to come back to the old Church if he were 10 years younger and if Dr. R[ogers] goes, five years will not elapse before he has those thoughts in his heart if not on his lips.

But this letter cannot be a long one. I am now going to Mr. Brown's to see Mrs. Bonney. She is to go to Yedo as soon as she has practiced riding a little. I expect Mr. Portman down today and will then learn how the measles progresses. I have had it and I suppose all will take it. Two were quite sick when I left Saturday and unfortunately the only two who can speak English.

Mr. Fisher gave a dinner yesterday to all the Ministers and Consuls and is expecting calls today. So I will only have the chance to write a few lines more which I regret the loss as I feel pretty sure my letters of next week will reach you quite as early as this. Bertie is well. He has gone over to Yokohama today. I stayed fortunately and so am able to send this, as a notice was sent to the house and not to the office of the sailing ship.

And now, my dear wife, again over the wide waters I send you love, warm and abiding. I don't say always love me and have me in remembrance. This you do. How slowly and yet how rapidly days and weeks pass. A kind God will permit us to meet again and then this absence will probably be regarded by us as one that will render our future the happier. We will find that we have so much to be thankful for and that with this parting will come the knowledge of how much we can do to make this future full of greater usefulness and happiness.

I have no time to write a letter to dear little Charlie this week. I will try to remember you all next mail. Kiss him heartily for me and Sue also. Give my love to Charlie and Abby. I hope things progress satisfactorily at the Works, that he has not too much on his mind and hands and that what I send may be more useful than my presence. I sent in July to you through my agents in China, I have not yet heard in what form, about \$2,600 and to Charlie as before \$500. As I do not know the precise sum which will be realized I speak in general terms.

And now, my darling, once more I must say adieu. I dislike closing my letters. It appears as if we were parting again. But with my warm love and kisses to you and my darling boy and to Sue, I must close this loving letter.

May God preserve and bless you, and ever fill your heart with his love and the sense

of his constant presence in my earnest prayers. My dear, darling, precious wife, adieu.
Affectionately and faithfully,
Yours Ever,
Robt. H. Pruyn



No. 7 August 26 1862

My Dear Wife,

This business letter I send direct, leaving the bulk of my letters to go by same mail via Washington with two enclosures for Mr. and Mrs. Bonney and one for Miss Brown to her brother at New Brunswick, which when received please forward to destination.

I received on Saturday your letter of May 6th and 12th via San Francisco and last evening your packages of papers and letters sent by Mr. Hogg and I had a feast, for though the letters were old they were warm and fresh and loving.

The burden of yours and Sue and Charlie were "come home." Charlie said in one year, meaning I presume to arrive in January 1863. Yet I saw enough in them to show I had done right in coming here, and to prove I had come to a right conclusion in waiting to hear from you before deciding when to return. Sue in one of her letters says Charlie was just seeing her on some old business matters, that he was worried but cannot help it. Charlie's letter shows that as late as March he was so doubtful of his position as with Cousin Bob to go to J.V.L. Pruyn and after the assurance of both those gentlemen he had nothing to fear, his mind was easier. I am now thoroughly thankful that in a few months more I can relieve him from every dollar of liability for me and what I ask in return is that he shall not sacrifice the Works but at least keep them alive till I return and I will promise you I shall, even if I do not abandon them as you wish, not suffer them to mar our enjoyments or impair our domestic comforts. You know how much I brought with me and you can see therefore how much I have used and how much I have saved.

I now have on hand furniture on which I have paid (bear in mind every dollar here is worth if sent home \$1.20 at least)	\$425
I have on deposit here and in Shanghai	\$1750
I have cash on hand in safe	\$2150
I have sent in two sums per Barings, to be deposited to Charlie's credit with James G. King & Sons in May \$1068 in July \$529	\$1597

I have sent to Russell & Co. to be invested in bills on NY or to	
be sent you on London as they think best	\$2384.87
I will send if my life is spared in October say	\$4,000

Perhaps a few hundred dollars less as it may be well for me to keep a larger sum on hand than heretofore. In other words, if my life is spared till January, I shall have sent you and Charlie enough to take up my notes with his endorsement at the Schenectady City [Bank], Mechanics and Farmers [Bank], and Bank of [the] Capitol, and by July enough to relieve him from every obligation for me. Should not you and I make some sacrifice to secure this? Should not I at least? Now if Charlie will save the Works see what we can do. Especially if you and Sue can come to me.

You will remember in your letter sent by Mr. Hogg, you gave some figures of what was given you. I can save as much more during the life of my appointment if things do not change. To show you how this will be done I will send you a table in my other package showing the advantage I have under the currency. It will contain two columns and be all headed *itzabus*: 1. column will show amount of dollars paid by me, 2. the number of *itzabus* received from government, 3. the number of *itzabus* saved by me to pay expenses, 4. number sold by me, 5. number of dollars received on sale, 6. the profit if any on sale. This table will show the results for May, June, July, August, September and October which last I have in advance. The only allowance which you must make is that as *itzabus* are unusually high now I have not reserved enough to carry me through the month of September and October. As soon as the price falls off I will buy some *itzabus* and will have to spend say \$300. I send this table in this way to guard against accident. I will send another table headed Mexicans. 1. column will show salary, 2. amount realized by purchase of draft. You will understand that on all I save and send you, a profit is realized on exchange purchased on either New York or London and that all I keep on hand will be subject to that increase when I return except what is needed for passage money and that I expect of course to get back \$425 for furniture. I should add that I have expended about \$2,500 *itzabus* for bronzes, lacquer ware and other curios, silks, etc. for presents. I bought them as chance presented at this early day as my return might be hurried. You have now in detail a statement of my financial affairs and I hope you and Charlie will be satisfied that I have made a good use of the large amount of funds I started with and realized on my draft from you in San Francisco. The government gave all officers, Ministers, Consuls, naval officers etc. a limited number of *itzabus*, weight for weight, in exchange for dollars. After January this is liable to be changed and each 6 months thereafter if the government chooses. But they have done it since July 1861 and I think no change will be made. You will understand I did not buy in May as much exchange as was in my power, as I then thought it judicious to keep more Mexicans. I hope you will have no difficulty in understanding all of this without a

detailed statement. I think it would be well for Charlie to manage his business confidentially with Martin collecting drafts etc. and he had better make a payment on account xxx note there from time to time.

I should also charge Martin to say nothing even to Mr. Corning¹⁴⁶ on the subject. The information I give is for no one but you and Charlie and Sue.

I have said I wish all you have kept separate from mine. I make one exception. If you have at any time any savings, take my stock from Commercial Bank and have it put in your name reserving there enough however to qualify me as Director, \$2,000. Or if Charlie prefer, take my share of houses he and I own in common. I wish also to say I want to have you paid for your share of your Father's property advanced me. Also that Charlie has some notes of mine given your Father which he had surrendered to me, but which I thought it judicious to keep alive. Those notes should be in your possession, as if any accident happened to him, it would require explanations which it would be better to avoid. Let them be kept yet, but put in an envelope and preserved by you. The advantage of the Commercial Bank transaction I recommend would be to lessen what I have there of liability and keep our joint interest the same. It might be judicious to sell some of the stock. Advise with Charlie and J.V.L.P. They may think it judicious to buy some more New York Central which would increase your income considerably. The one being at a premium and the other a discount and both yielding favorably the same dividend.

I hope Charlie will be satisfied to have me remain here so as not to arrive home before the spring of 1864. If he can make up his mind to it. See how much better it would be for me to remain my full term. How easy it would make him as well as myself. To be sure it would involve the necessity of his overlooking the Works for an additional 2 or 3 years. But by that time he would have no anxiety. I will take them off his hands entirely and a life of ease would be purchased with a few years of care, diminishing each year he was in sole charge. But all that he must he decide. I cannot determine for him, I can only see that I must stay for some time or we will have the old story over. I can do so much better here for him and myself that he cannot do otherwise than consent to at the very earliest return in a year from January.

Now this I do not wish, indeed I cannot, remain separate from you. And you will have to determine whether you can venture on a sea voyage. Should you come I wish to say once for all that when I write you I mean you and Sue and Charlie, the dear little chicken. Sue and you and I are one now. She belongs to us and we belong to her. Charlie will have enough left to lean up and live for the short time we will be away and we will have only one little sister. And I should feel very unwilling to have you come without her and she will never let you if she can realize fully what a serious thing it is to come

¹⁴⁶ Erastus Corning (1794-1872) was the president of Albany City Bank.

this distance. You must not be separated.

You ask why did I not let you know so that you could have joined me at San Francisco? I expected each week to sail. Vessels were said to be ready and then destinations changed and I was kept from day to day in anxiety and doubt. I did not dare telegraph for you.

The way for you to come then would be via California, cheaper, more comfortable, and safer. And unless long delayed in San Francisco much the quickest route. The best vessel on the Atlantic side is the *North Star*. I cannot say much of the officers. From what I saw and heard when I came over on her some of them were rather licentious. All these vessels have women of the town on them frequently and then ———. I have heard that Captain Tinklepaugh¹⁴⁷ has the best officered vessel in this respect. When you sail, you should take medicine before sailing, a dose before landing on the Isthmus, a dose after starting from the Isthmus, one before landing at and another before leaving San Francisco and another before landing here. This will save you from fever and the sickness arising from change of climate. Would that I had been advised of this simple presentation before leaving Albany. You could telegraph to Mr. Brooks to advise you if any vessel would leave shortly for Japan. But when at San Francisco, if none were bound here, it would be for you to decide whether time would not be saved by going first to Shanghae. Mrs. Hepburn will come here most probably in the spring. Peter Monteath¹⁴⁸ has a friend in New York who can give her address. I think I wrote you Bishop Kip wished you to go to his house [in San Francisco] if you came to Japan. Another great reason why you should come via San Francisco is that I would wish you to go home, if you proved good sailors, via Egypt and Europe and so you will have gone round the world. Think of that Dickie Charlie! Besides you can have no idea how smooth the Pacific is, and how free from storms, and Mr. Brooks could arrange for your stopping at the Sandwich Islands and that would be great relief and give you a chance for xxx. With reference to clothing, you would require flannels, a good supply of underclothes and a few gingham, etc. Silks are plenty, good and cheap. You would only require the material for making such as hooks, eyes, etc. Plenty of stockings and shoes and above all two side saddles. I have one for little Charlie. I would venture to send also, though they are not used here, a cheap two seated wagon with a double and single tongue. And she must not be offended to be spoken of in this connection: if she dare come bring Baby Brooks. Now as to furniture, you need bring none. I have no carpet but they can be bought here about as at home and so with bedsteads, etc. But you and Sue will not be sorry if you bring your own good pillows. I have as yet used none of your napkins, or linen (bed or table). I use those I purchased of Mr. Harris. You need have no fear

¹⁴⁷ Edward Lewis Tinklepaugh (d. 1878) was the captain of *Northern Light*.

¹⁴⁸ Peter Monteath (1811-1879) was a wholesale grocer in Albany.

about it being safe here. I will send you in my other package an extract from the Hong Kong Press (British) which, smarting under the recent attack at the British Legation, and my having the audacity to remain here, says I have an understanding with the Japanese government that they are to protect me and then they will have no war with England. I think they will protect me. And I do not believe England will make war because here two sailors have been killed. Should war come all foreigners will be regarded with hostility. No distinction will be made. As it is, I think I am more popular with the officers and people than Mr. Harris was, and not less certainly but probably pull as much so with the government. I have quarreled with none of their high officials as Mr. H[arris] did and I feel sure the government is perfectly satisfied with the change. I am also happy to say that every American here is perfectly delighted with it. All this I can say to my dear little wife, but it would be unwise if not boastful to say it to others. But I am wandering from my subject—your coming here. If I only knew how you would stand the voyage! I should so dread to have you sick all the way! If I were with you it appears to me you would not continue sick. But in sea sickness a prodigious effort is needed and an outside influence is needed and yet I would feel easy with you and Sue together. You would so encourage each other to fight against it after the first day. Which by the way reminds me. Take a few lemons with you. They are difficult to get on the steamer and a few apples for Charlie. And don't eat much fruit on the Isthmus and don't sleep on the Isthmus. If the boat arrives early in the evening they wish the passengers to go to ashore. They will say the passengers must go. You need not. We did not. I am fully satisfied it would be one of the best things you and Sue could do to reside here a year. The climate is delightful. It is very healthy. You would ride on horseback at least 10 miles each fair day and I could have the pleasure of seeing you both as you looked 20 years ago. Say to Charlie if he will spare either of his boys to come with you, I can allow the same as Mr. Kip now has from me in advantage of exchange which will meet all expenses. We can all live here for less than \$3,000, indeed for less than \$2,000 now and less than 3 when we get in new house which by the way is not commenced yet. Mr. Kip proposes leaving next year and Charlie may rely upon it, especially if you come, that a voyage round the world and a year stay here will develop and form his son C. more than three years at school.

No candies will keep coming here. Bertie and I want nothing if you come except a few drawers, undershirts and socks and collars. You can bring some Castile soap. Seidlitz powders¹⁴⁹ put in bottles glass stoppers and some granulated citrate magnesia put up by Gosnell of London for the East. I got some at San Francisco. We have enough other medicine, except you might bring a few blue pills.

¹⁴⁹ A laxative and digestive regulator, the active ingredients of which were tartaric acid, potassium sodium tartrate and sodium bicarbonate.

27 August

There is a good deal of regret expressed by the missionaries here and Mr. Bonney that you desire me to return. This is very flattering. But I say there are enough good men left in the U.S., if they do me the honor to regard me as such. But unfortunately as in the case of Humphrey Marshall¹⁵⁰ who was drunk all day and blasphemed dreadfully, the poor heathen Chinese have seen little in some of our officers, naval, consular and diplomatic, to commend Christianity to them. Mrs. B[onney] says she knows you would wish me to stay if you knew what good could be done here. In this connection I would say I had a bitter pill to swallow yesterday. The foreigners have a race course at Yokohama and are now raising money to put it on permanent footing. The Consul for Holland sent me yesterday the subscription but with the French Minister's name on for \$100 and many others for the same amount. I sent this letter. Bertie shook his head and I feel it will make a stir at Yokohama had I weakly yielded. The next step would have been perhaps to appoint me judge or steward or to some honorary position and how could I have then disapproved what I had encouraged?

I have received your favor of the 25th enclosing a subscription list for Yokohama races.

I know that in England and the United States such amusements are regarded by many good men as entirely innocent. Yet as in my judgment there are many evils almost necessarily attendant on or growing out of them, I cannot subscribe to them or otherwise encourage them without a sacrifice of consistency.

While feeling it to be my duty to say this with all frankness allow me to say I fully accord to others the same freedom and judgment I receive to myself.

To De Graff Van Polesbroek Esqr. I am very truly etc., etc., etc.

But to go back to the subject which I always do with conflicting feelings because I fear I may be urging you to take a step which will cause you too much suffering! I say to you very frankly that rather come to me and be sick nearly if not quite all the way I would gladly, had I such knowledge, start home tomorrow. You and Sue should see Dr. Newcomb and get duplicates of whatever you need in his line. And when starting from San Francisco if the vessel has not a full supply you will get such little things for your use as Mr. Brooks will advise. No money passes here but Mexican Dollars. I will pay for dear Charlie the money he laid aside for the missionaries and send back the bills to

¹⁵⁰ Marshall served as Minister to China from 1852-1854.

be added to my next remittance. I will enclose them in the package via Washington. You will therefore at San Francisco get Mexican Dollars for all your money. You need take little money with you. Mr. Brooks will cash your draft to pay your passage from that city here, and after paying your passage at New York you will only need say \$100 to \$200 to use in case of accident. You and Sue will need to buy in New York one of those carpet camp stools for each of you which will be for sale on the steamer. With reference to this route I should also have said after leaving San Francisco you do not sail below 21° of latitude and will not therefore suffer from heat as you would on the overland route, besides having fewer changes by at least half. By the Cape of Good Hope you would cross the equator twice. But, my darling Jennie, while I can scarce hope for your presence I would write a day if by these little suggestions I could spare you a moment's pain.

August 28th

Alas! I had written this far when Mr. Hogg came up to see me. He had been a few days at Yedo having left San Francisco June 28th. Dr. Hall was to have come on the same ship, but he had been obliged to leave his wife, who had been sick the whole way, at Aspinwall and just as he was leaving San Francisco he received a telegraph from her concerning her condition which, in connection with a new partnership which had been formed here by his old partner, induced him to return to New York. I have asked Mr. H[ogg] whether it was sea sickness, but he says, she was near her confinement so perhaps we are all at sea again.

But my dear little wife what pleasure did your sweet words give me. I have forgotten whether I have said so, for I never read my letters over. If I did they might not be sent. I prefer you should take them just as they come from my heart and pen and intended for a little chat or conference. And see how I give good measure so as to compensate as far as possible by quantity for deficiency in quality. Although you will not get full measure this time, riding rather cramps my feet and I have not been on horseback for four weeks except once to return to Yedo, then had four sores, two on each foot, almost like boils, starting from mosquito bites, my blood being in rather bad order. But blue pills and diet have about set me right and I expect to ride out on Saturday again. We are now well and Bertie has a frightful appetite. But he says he is growing. I suppose so. I know his appetite is. There is no room fortunately for further growth there. That I think has reached its limit of capacity.

And now, my darling, I am waiting with some anxiety your letters in reply to mine of May which I have reason to hope reached you in July. Because when these are received I will be able to form some idea of what my movements will be. If as I suppose you will have concluded that I had better remain at my post then I will be resigned to it, even though accompanied with the assurance that you dare not venture on a journey

which I dare not ask you to make. Should your message be come home, I will ask to be excused even though doubting the propriety of your decision, because ahead of that I see the bankers. Charlie writes me in January not to draw on him or the firm. He writes me also not to take any contract in the name of the firm. Does he think it possible I would have done such a thing? I have sent an order home for a horse power and lathe. If he regards that as a contract all I can say is I hope he has turned it over to others and refused to execute it. It is possible the government may on Saturday, when I was to see the Ministers, they having invited me to meet them, which is an unprecedented thing, have me an order for rifles cannon and ships to be made in the United States. If they do and advance the money I will send the order to some person to be executed. But if indeed, it be necessary to make his mind easy to say so, I will say I neither will nor do I think it is proper to agree with the government or any individual here or elsewhere to make or sell for the firm or in its name an article to the value of a pin. I think it best you should give him this assurance.¹⁵¹

By this mail a package will go forward with letter No. 6 to yourself and letter to him and Sue and little Charlie and Haskell and enclosures of Mr. and Mrs. Bonney to R.V[an] R[ensselaer] and the A[merican] B[oard of] C[ommissioners for] F[oreign] M[issions].

I will write soon as a possible a letter to Dr. Howe. He wrote me a very kind letter you remember on the eve of my departure from Albany.

I hope in your next letter, which please number then I will know if any back ones are to be expected, you will give me news of the condition of the Church financially as well as spiritually. I will try to send by this mail a letter to Dr. Rogers. Will show my opinion of Dr. Rogers' change. Let me hear how Albanians are getting on. What of G.C.D?¹⁵² and Theo Townsend?¹⁵³

When Charlie makes payment for me no one need know whether you or I provide the funds. My drafts he had better realize through H[enry] H. Martin, who alone should be cognizant of them. Or perhaps he may find it best to do it through J.V.L.P. who might send some direct to New York or Boston. I am very anxious to have all kept from Mr. E[rastus] C[orning] and V[isscher] T[en] E[yck], the first by reason of his public position, the latter of his gossiping propensity.

The steamer which will take this letter is to sail Monday. I will keep this letter as well as the others open till the last moment so as to add a few lines to each.

¹⁵¹ Shortly after writing this RHP *did* contract with the Japanese for armament and ships and sent the commission to Charles Lansing and Thurlow Weed in Albany.

¹⁵² Perhaps George Dawson, of Weed, Dawson & Co.

¹⁵³ Theodore Townsend (1826-1905) was a Director of the Albany and Schenectady Turnpike Company.

August 29th

I have had a great triumph. You will remember that the Japanese government have refused permission to their sailors shipwrecked to return to Japan from other countries a few years ago, compelling some who had been brought here by the *Morrison* to go away, in fact banishing them. Eleven Japanese sailors have now been received and after nearly two months' hard work I have induced the Jap government to pay for their passage to Japan and to send me a present for the captain of the ship *Victor*, who picked these sailors up at sea.

And now, my darling, when are we to meet that dreadful sea sickness! Would you not get used to the motion of the vessel? You get sick every time you go to New York and on the cars. But you only have time to get as far A. then you stop and after an interval commence with A again but if you once progressed as far B, C, D, E, F queue, would you not get used to the motion of the vessel and be a regular tar?

God bless you my love, dear to me whether here or home, never dearer than now. Kiss darling Charlie for me and Sue, our Sue remember, give my love to Abby and Charlie and Townsend and Baby remember me kindly to all enquiring friends and bear me in your heart as your ever loving husband who never forgets you and would be oh how delighted to see you and clasp you to his heart.

Robt. H. Pruyn



No. 6 continued
September 2 1862

My Darling,

The mail goes tomorrow morning by Her Majesty's Steamer *Renard*. I have finished all the letters I can send, including a very long one to you which goes direct and now sit down to have another chat.

Just as I had finished the first sheet of this and the letter to Sue your packages via California arrived with letters of 6th and 12th May and they were oh how welcome. Still I take back nothing about letters. We thirst for them. We do not expect to get them as rapidly as you get ours. For we have the advantage of starting ours to reach a mail which once started is regular, while your letters, either at Shanghae or San Francisco are delayed for an opportunity to send them on. I wish therefore at least weekly to have a letter from each of you both ways.

We had a little of an excitement at Kanagawa. Miss Brown's marriage is said to have

been celebrated by her father the missionary of our Church with Mr. Lowder,¹⁵⁴ a young man under age attached to the British Legation, December last. There is to be a young Lowder soon, who will probably for a time be loudest. Young Lowder has been stationed at Hakodate. His father was Chaplain at Shanghae some years since and was drowned there. His mother is to marry Sir Rutherford Alcock the British Minister here, now absent, who is to return in the spring with his wife. Three days after the marriage he called on Mr. Brown and said if the parties were married he would separate them.

I am happy to say my feet are well. I have not been on horseback since my return from Kanagawa, but shall be able now to resume my rides. This letter I cannot make very long as I shall have to send a special messenger to get it in the mail this afternoon. It is now 8½ o'clock a.m.

We have enjoyed remarkably good health. Bertie's sickness to which he alludes in his letter to Charlie was brought on by over exertion or exposure in riding. He had a slight fever and head ache. I gave him first a colonal and opium pill and then an opium and camphor pill and that was all. I have taken a few blue pills and citrate of magnesia for the blood and with this exception God has blessed us with perfect health.

Indeed as one of the English Legation said a few days ago, he never saw a more healthy country. Scarce any of the foreigners here are sick and none of the residents have died except a child of Mr. Goble,¹⁵⁵ one of the missionaries, of *cholera morbus*. There are a great many deaths in Yedo now. They are very careless here. The Japanese eat no fruit ripe. Everything is picked green and measles and *cholera morbus* are making great havoc among them.

It is pleasant to write to you. When I begin I can continue all day. The great drawback is 3 months may elapse before you see these lines. That is a long time to wait for the sound of one's voice.

I shall now hurry off this letter and if the vessel be detained send you another package, which I hope to do this week.

And now, my dear wife, comes the unpleasant part of the letter, reminding me of

¹⁵⁴ John Frederic Lowder (1843-1902) joined the British legation in 1860 as a translator. He later became vice consul at Osaka and acting consul at Kanagawa. After leaving diplomatic service in 1872 he remained in Japan until his death, serving as a lawyer.

¹⁵⁵ Jonathan Goble (1827-1897) was a missionary of the American Baptist Free Mission Society. His daughter, Dorinda, was not yet four years old when she died within twenty-four hours of first exhibiting the symptoms of cholera. Her death and burial is noted in Francis Hall's journal entry of August 30 1862. In his biography of Goble, F. Calvin Parker writes, "In Edo, where an epidemic (of cholera) raged out of control for six weeks, 225,000 deaths were reported, including 50,322 children. In the Yokohama-Kanagawa area, only about nine hundred died, apparently none of them Westerners except Dorinda." (*Jonathan Goble of Japan: Marine, Missionary, Maverick*, p. 116)

our farewell at New York and each time I write the concluding lines, appearing to me like a fresh leave taking, for it assumes so much the appearance of reality while I write as to forbid my realizing that 12,000 miles intervene.

Once and then again I must say good bye. God Bless you and keep you, strengthen and fortify you and fondly save you. My very dear wife at this distance receive the pressure of the hands, a warm kiss from the lips. Give dear Charlie a good sound hug for me. Repeat it on Sue and give them both my warm loving remembrance and remember me with love to Charlie and Abby and all this family, to Baby Brooks and all enquiring friends, to the General and Aunt Sue, Uncle Christopher and Aunt Sarah and cousin Anna. But I must not particularize now, you know them, Cornelius Ten Broeck, Rufus K. Viele¹⁵⁶ and all and all.

And my darling wife, now as ever with a time-abiding love, I am yours never more than now. Is it not well to part to ascertain how much we love? Let us extract all the comfort we can. Your loving husband, my dear darling wife,
R.H.P.



Kanagawa, September 18th 1862

My Dear Wife,

A few days since I received via California your sent letter of April 18th and Sue's of same date. How strange it sounded to hear your appeal for my return after 3 months absence when 5 months had elapsed since they were written! Oh how I long for our meeting here or at home or anywhere as from time to time your welcome letters reach me. Not that I do not wish for, hope for, wait for those meetings at all times. The fit is a little more severe when these little missives make their appearance! How is it, letters of the date of April 18, papers addressed by yourself as late as June? The papers were most joyfully received because your writing assured me of your remembrance of me two months later.

And now, my darling, you will think I am often at Mr. Fisher's. I am here now unexpectedly and unwillingly and return to Yedo tomorrow. While Mrs. Fisher and her father and Mr. and Mrs. Ostrom of our Amoy mission were on a visit to me, and on Sunday last, a party consisting of Mr. Marshall¹⁵⁷ and Mr. Clark¹⁵⁸ of Yokohama and

¹⁵⁶ Rufus King Viele (1813-1891) was a bedstead manufacturer in Albany.

¹⁵⁷ William Marshall was a merchant in Yokohama.

¹⁵⁸ Woodthorpe Charles Clark (1834-1867) was a merchant in Yokohama.

Mr. Richardson¹⁵⁹ and Mrs. Borrodaile¹⁶⁰ of Hong Kong (the latter a sister of Mrs. Marshall) were riding on the Tokaido, or great highway, about 3 miles from this place and met the Secretary and some retainers of the Prince of Satsuma.¹⁶¹ The party was unarmed. After moving in single file nearly half way through the train, they were attacked by order of the Secretary. Mrs. Borrodaile fortunately escaped without injury, losing her hat and having some of her hair shorn off, riding full speed nearly seven miles. Messrs. Clark and Marshall were badly wounded, but succeeded in reaching this place where they were attended by Dr. Hepburn and are now in a fair way of recovery, but I regret to say Mr. Richardson was murdered, having received 20 wounds. I send you papers which will give you the details. The Dutch Consul General Mr. DeWitt and myself had an interview with the Ministers on Monday and early on Tuesday left Yedo for this place to meet our colleagues who are residing in Yokohama.¹⁶²

I continue very safely at Yedo, where with my guard I consider myself in no danger, indeed as I say I am safer there than here at Yokohama. Bertie was at this Consulate when this happened, having desired to remain here when Mr. Fisher etc. went to Yedo with me.

And now, my dear wife, I wish you to feel no anxiety on my account for I truly have no uneasiness for myself. I am, I feel assured, quite popular with the Japanese. There is no possibility of intentional assault and little probability of an accidental one, as I never stir out at Yedo without a strong guard, nor does Bertie, and here I am cautious. Indeed, I now have succeeded in getting a strong permanent guard night and day for this Consulate. They do not move out with Mr. Fisher, but 20 officers are constantly here. At my Legation I still have a guard of 400 men around the home. And when I ride out, from 15 to 40 men accompany us, accordingly as one or more go out. So that if we have occasion to divide, each would have an ample armed escort.

And now don't you see, my darling, that in this time of calamity here or at home I must serve our country. When so many brave men are falling at home you would surely not have me desert my post here, even if more dangerous than it is. Since writing the above I have dined with the British Minister, meeting Admiral Kuper,¹⁶³ etc. I went to and from Yokohama over the bay in Mr. Fisher's boat and got back at midnight and

¹⁵⁹ Charles L. Richardson (1834-1862) was an English merchant based in Shanghai.

¹⁶⁰ Margaret Watson Borradaile.

¹⁶¹ The "Prince of Satsuma" i.e., the Daimyō, was Shimazu Tadayoshi 島津忠義 (1840-1897).

¹⁶² This became known as the Namamugi Incident, after the location where it took place.

¹⁶³ Augustus Leopold Kuper (1809-1885) was at this time the Commander-in-Chief, East Indies and China Station in the British Navy. Later he commanded the British frigate *Enryalus*, which led a squadron of seven warships to demand a reparation from the Daimyō of Satsuma for the murder of Richardson at Namamugi.

was escorted to his house by about 20 *yakumins* bearing 9 lanterns. Now these guards do not expect they or I will be attacked. But I am willing to use even unnecessary precaution, that I may assure you.

And now, my dear, say nothing to Mr. Weed or anyone else about my recall. That can all be managed by ourselves when determined on. Here or home, should this war continue, I must serve or be pointed at henceforth as one who acted cowardly when so many were brave. You say in your letter of April that Charlie says he has given me all his plans. I do not know to what he alludes. I know of none given. As his letters are at Yedo I cannot refer to them. As you speak of Cousin Bob in the same communication I presume his interview with him and J.V.L.P. is referred to. Although I was pleased of course to learn the result arrived at, I had already written that the effect on the whole was unpleasant as showing Charlie's mind to be in such a state of doubt as to need the assurance of the others. How often will those assurances be necessary? That is the question which oppresses me at the time and makes me feel that the best and only sure course is the one I have supported. There is light, unmistakable. I shall send the first of next month, if my life is spared, drafts which will realize if exchange continues as by last advice which we have from California to July 31, say 5 to 6,000. If I can get a draft today I shall send about 2,000 this mail. I sent by Russell & Co. drafts on England to amount of about 2,400 which they advise me left Shanghae August 19 to be sold by their correspondents and proceeds remitted to you. Also same as before a little over \$500 to be deposited to Charlie's credit. You may expect in January, if my life is spared, 3 to 4,000 more. I calculate that by July he will have no liability for me whatever. Can he not in view of this save the Works for me? Can he not spare you and Sue for me and so enable me to place him and myself and the Works in the conditions I have indicated? Will that not be better than for me to return and have you annoyed and Sue annoyed as for some time you have been. The very fact of the handsome provision which your father has made for you and which must not be wasted for these old matters would create an impatience for their more immediate settlement. In times of peace and prosperity I would not fear if at home. You will understand however these remarks as based on the uncertainty of business and national affairs. I again urge that my Cleveland and Pittsburgh and Michigan S[outhern] & N[orthern] Indiana stocks shall be sold when J.V.L.P. advises. The house on State Street I should be pleased to have.¹⁶⁴ I can send enough to pay for it as you see is necessary. The commercial debt I have suggested should be lessened by your taking the stock from your spare funds. How much you can make available for this I can only roughly guess. I do not wish you to do this however

¹⁶⁴ The Pruyns had been living in a house on the corner of State and Chapel Street, but had recently moved to 52 North Pearl Street. RHP mentions the State Street house often in his letters, urging Jennie not to sell it because he had a sentimental attachment to it.

at the expense of any aid Charlie may need for the Works or himself. I have not heard what has been done with the Bank of the Capitol. Had this one little item been communicated I could have formed a better idea of his position than from all that has been written. I regret to have to occupy so much room with these details. But the property we have is so large and is capable of becoming so valuable as to occasion me thought. I fear that there will be many financial wrecks on the termination of the war. But I know Charlie will be prudent and I rejoice to think that what you and I can spare from our resources will come to him so seasonably.

The letters received before the last were not dated and had no postmark. I think they were written after those of April 18. I would again beg that you number all your letters hereafter and do not spare the dates. Also that you send at least $\frac{2}{3}$ of all via Washington. I think at present the route via Europe the most reliable as everyone here has letters of at least one month later date.

I do want you here my dear, but not without Sue and my little boy. And yet I do not wish you to come even with them to sustain you unless you feel quite well assured that your sea sickness will not be so continuously dreadful as you have it on short journeys. But how can you have this assurance. I must not be too selfish. So you see I want you here and I wish you spared the journey. Remember, should you come, the precautions I have suggested: medicine before landing and after leaving each place. You want no dresses but gingham and calicoes or lawns. Gloves won't keep coming, except white, others spot. Plenty of flannels. 2 or 3 pair of those Shaker linen gloves for me and one coat, blue cloth, rolling collar with army buttons for me. This would have been more serviceable for me than a stiff uniform coat, a good ordinary dress coat, ample sleeves and collar (rolling), only of blue cloth and national buttons, 2 or 3 on sleeve. It does no harm to say this even though you do not come and I do not stay. I need nothing else but drawers. Unless indeed you bring some good short linen for pants for Bertie and me, and some cloth for pants and a coat for him. He is growing so fast you would scarce know him.

I said in my previous letter that Mr. Kip did not expect to remain much longer and I could therefore give Charlie Lansing a good chance if his father would allow him to come with you. Towny would of course be the best. But his father cannot spare him as I can well see. Then after a short stay here we can return via Europe and thus see Egypt and the pyramids, Jerusalem if you please, and circumnavigate the globe. Think of that! By the way don't forget side saddle and if you please a small Rockaway wagon, if you think you would prefer that mode of going about. There are no wagons here and there might be some objections but I can remove them. And oh what delightful rides there are. Then a little saddle for Charlie. You see, if you come, there is the "if" again, do so via California. With a good ship, taking out the delay at San Francisco which might be abridged if you telegraphed Mr. Brooks, you would get here in about 60 days of actual

traveling by this route and all without going into the hot latitudes except for a few days at Panama and before and after reaching there. I am writing so particularly and at such length now because I wish it to be final. I cannot take it upon my conscience to urge you too much to come, because I am so extremely doubtful as to your ability to come safely and comfortably. Were this element removed from my calculating my course would be plain.

In a few weeks a vessel will sail to San Francisco by which I hope to write and send you some pottery for self, Sue and Abby which will probably reach you in advance of this letter. Though now having of course long dispatches to prepare I hope to send you all some letters by this same mail via Washington or perhaps in another parcel direct but will mail this so as to be sure this will be started in due time. When I am at Yedo it is difficult at the last moment to reach the vessel. All letters are brought to this place by coolies walking or running. And the time occupied differs all the way from 4 to 8 hours.

And now, my darling wife there is just room to say a few words in way of remembrance to friends, which I hope to more at length in a special letter. But to Charlie and Abby and Towny and the children, to Cornelia and Alida and their families and all and Sue and Betty, to my dear little Charlie and to you yourself, my loving faithful little wife, would I could send a ship full of love. My heart goes out to you. But what I write, diluted by distance and cooled by time, reaches you months after written. It is a hard way, my darling, to kindle, strengthen and increase love. But I think, and I know I feel, I never loved you so much, so well, so truly and deeply as now. With kisses to yourself and dear little Charlie whose letters were so welcome and which I hope now to answer and warm loving embrace from you dear husband I must close.

Every truly yours.

Robt. H. Pruyn



Kanagawa, September 19 1862

My Dear Wife,

I have probably made you heartily tired of descriptions of Japan, its scenery, its people and its institutions. It will be a relief to hear something of the foreigners who are impressing their peculiarities on its shores.

In my letter of yesterday I informed you Mr. and Mrs. O[strom] had visited me at Yedo returning on the 16th. We rode here leaving the Tokaido or "great high way," and traveling through beautifully wooded lanes over hill and valley in the interior, coming slowly for the sake of Mrs. O[strom] who had a pain in her side and occupying about 5

hours in the journey. Much to my surprise the following day Mrs. O[strom] introduced to our community a guest in the shape of a daughter. I had not the slightest idea until after the event that I had such a narrow escape from being the individual in whose house the first foreign child was born in Yedo. And I had an equally narrow escape a month since.

As you will hear the affair, perhaps garbled and exaggerated, I had better give you the scandal myself. It has been for some time understood that Miss Julia, the daughter of the Reverend Mr. Brown our missionary, was engaged to a young man named Lowder, connected with the British Legation. His mother, the widow of an Episcopalian Clergyman formerly of Shanghae, has recently married Sir Rutherford Alcock the British Minister now on leave of absence in England. Mr. Lowder was until a few days ago at Hakodate where he was connected with the Consulate as student interpreter. Miss B[rown] was in the employ of our Board receiving \$500 as assistant missionary. You will have heard she and Miss Mann were on a visit to my house. While there one afternoon we took a ride of nearly 30 miles and Miss B[rown] was shortly after quite sick, could not sleep etc., etc. Miss Mann informed me of this and that Julia was liable to attacks of brain fever. I naturally supposed she had ridden too hard and too much and I dosed her pretty sharply with laudanum. And after about 48 hours she slept well and became quite tranquil and well. About two weeks since Mr. Lowder came down from Hakodate and then it was announced that the gentlemen and Miss B[rown] had married in December last and it became known that Mrs. Lowder expected to be confined in a few days. So that when I was curing a nervous head ache and warding off the brain fever, a certain young gentleman who has since made his appearance, was then debating in his own mind whether he should not honor Yedo as the place of his birth. I suppose my laudanum may have set him to sleep and made him forego and perhaps forget his intentions. At all events he left that honor in reserve for someone else. Meanwhile I say I must have a physician's certificate before any other visit or have some assistance on hand for such cases if I am to be thus exposed.

And now comes the sorest part of this affair. You see it was quite necessary to give so respectable an antedate to the marriage as December. But unfortunately Mr. Brown who had performed the ceremony had just before that time given a pledge to Mr. Alcock who was opposed to the marriage that the parties should not be married with his consent till Lowder was of age. And his character was at stake for the violation of that pledge. Under those circumstances he felt obliged to say that Mr. Lowder had made such statement, that it was false, that he had redeemed the pledge he had given and only married the parties to save the honor of his child a few days before. Then again there was an act of Parliament which prevented this from being a legal marriage in England. So finally the British Consul and British Chaplain determined it was right the marriage should take place with all the necessary formalities and to Mr. Alcock's displeasure. It

was accordingly celebrated again last Saturday and on the succeeding Monday, a son appeared and is a genuine *lounder* as I suppose his lungs have already shown. You can readily imagine that this sad event, while disheartening to Mr. Brown, had made a great stir in this small community. At first the feeling against Mr. B[rown] was very strong and he felt his character as a man and influence as a Minister were likely to be seriously impaired. The truth had to be made known.

I have thus given you a brief statement of the sad affair, which you of course will only use so far as may be necessary for the vindication of Mr. B[rown]. He is in no sense to blame and is entitled to the sympathy of every right feeling person.

We have had several cases of cholera hence, mostly in vessels recently from China where it has been quite severe. The captain of the British man-of-war *Ringdove* died after one day sickness.¹⁶⁵ I attended his funeral Tuesday. There has been great sickness at Yedo. It is estimated that within a month one hundred thousand of its inhabitants died. First measles were very prevalent. It has not shown itself for 20 years. Of course adults were attacked. And as the people eat vast quantities of unripe fruit and vegetables and great imprudence was shown during and immediately after the sickness, the mortality from that disease was frightful. Afterwards, the cholera appeared in China and this government was alarmed. Orders were issued against vessels which have not been enforced because unreasonable. Whether at Yedo any real case of cholera has existed we of course know not; here some genuine cases have shown themselves. Some days at the cemetery connected with our temple we had as many as fourteen funerals in a day. Bear in mind the vast number of temples, each with a cemetery attached, and then you can form some idea of the great mortality which prevailed. But the worst has passed and I suppose only the ordinary diseases will prevail hereafter.

During the excitement of this sickness I saw and heard on several occasions while here some curious proceedings. At Yedo I had not witnessed them, because I had not of course been out at night. A crowd would be found gathered in front of a house where sickness had appeared beating on tom toms and making hideous noises, falsely called singing, to charm away the evil spirits. Processions were met by me going from house to house with the same noises. Whether this was in every case to cure sickness or used as a preventative before its appearance I am uncertain. But I pitied the poor patients. The remedy was as bad almost as the disease and sufficient of itself to place those who were well on the sick list.

I had a few days ago at the Legation two cases of *cholera morbus* I suppose. They were dignified by the name of Cholera. I had some preparation which Dr. Simmons is selling extensively and which he had presented and I sent a bottle out by Portman. The persons were well the next day, whether because or in spite of the medicine I do not know. The

¹⁶⁵ Robert George Craigie (1826-1862) commanded the *Ringdove* 1859-1862.

consequence is that there is a great demand for the medicine in Yedo.

It is still raining quite hard but I hope I shall be able to get to Yedo tomorrow. I have to see the Ministers again on Monday at 9 a.m. I learn today the steamer may not start till that day. If so I may be able to get another package ready for this mail. I will open the one sealed up and enclose this which I had proposed to send separately. All the ministers will visit Yedo next week. Mr. DeWitt talks of going down to Nagasaki till November and then I will be alone again, as the British and French Ministers will only remain two or three days.

Bertie and myself continue to enjoy excellent health. From Sue's letter I should judge you do not go out enough. Nothing like the air. I have lived in the open air all day, except when at meals. Sometimes I write on the piazza. Indeed all the people live here out of their houses and I am getting to be thoroughly Japanese in this respect. Now if you do not come here, walk out, ride out, sit out and get good fresh air.

September 20 1862

The weather is still rather unfavorable, it being cloudy and threatening rain. But I shall go up today. I take the Reverend Mr. Gibson¹⁶⁶ of Souchou China with me, a missionary of the Presbyterian Church and Mr. Hyatt, late Consul at Amoy and little George Fisher. Bertie and Mr. Kip and Portman accompany me. The steamer will sail tomorrow if not detained till Monday for Mrs. Borrodaile. If detained I shall try to send you a few lines from Yedo.

I have had no letter from Dr. Armsby.¹⁶⁷ I hope to write to him by next mail. I regret to hear of the sickness of Mrs. A[rmsby] and Gideon.¹⁶⁸ Mr. Frelinghuysen's death¹⁶⁹ I had seen announced in the *Intelligencer*. Great changes are taking place. While unnoticed by the multitude as they are effected, they make in the aggregate a vast difference in the relations and aspect of society. It takes a large amount of writing to cover sheets like this. It is almost literally a sheet, and when I sit down I have no idea I can find anything to say except of ourselves.

Once again I have to say adieu. May God bless you, my darling wife. Now that I have so many opportunities of self-communing I feel how far I have come short of what I should have been as a husband and father. I cannot recall the past. Would that I could. There are some dark shadows over it—many, alas too many. May God give me

¹⁶⁶ Otis Gibson (1826-1889) was a pastor from upstate New York. Gibson was actually a Methodist, not a Presbyterian.

¹⁶⁷ James H. Armsby (1809-1875) was a physician who lived at 669 Broadway, Albany.

¹⁶⁸ Gideon Hawley Armsby (1842-1881) was the son of James H. Armsby.

¹⁶⁹ Theodore Frelinghuysen died April 12 1862. He was a politician from New Brunswick, New Jersey.

the grace and strength for the future. And may we live to enjoy many happy years in his service with our love chastened and principled and elevated by life's discipline which has come from a Father's loving hands. My darling, with kisses for you and my dear little Charlie and Sue, whose value to you and him I cannot over estimate, and with love for all endearing friends I sign myself again your loving husband,
R.H.P.



No. 7 Yedo, October 16 1862

My Dear Wife,

Your letter to Bertie and Sue's also arrived this day via Washington and were oh how welcome as showing you were well as late, shall I say rather, as early as the 7th of July. I should judge by your letter received that an immeasurable quantity is somewhere, but how many I can form not the most distant idea of, as from all numbers are missing and from some dates. I had intended to give you a list of those received and will probably do so at the end of this letter. But will now say that directed to Japan we have received one mail of March, one of April, two of June and one of July. I think this, with the one set of letters without date received at one time, constitute the full list. This last mail brought not a line for me. Perhaps in a few days, as another mail is expected, being on its way from Shanghae, I shall get a full supply. Then as Bertie's letters are mine and I know you are doing more than I can reasonably expect I shall not complain. Letters here are at premium as no one but you and Sue ever thinks of writing to me. Besides yours I have received two letters from Dr. Rogers and one from Charlie since my arrival. Besides a blank. I forget one from Cousin Bob.

[two or three lines cut out of letter]

...China. Letters however will be more likely to reach me regularly via Marseilles, because many more ships arrive from Shanghae than from San Francisco. It is well to send occasional letters that way because when they do chance to arrive, then upon the departure of the vessel for Japan they bring very late intelligence from home. I should recommend however for the present that you send your letters via Washington, occasionally sending a good long one by way of duplicate via San Francisco. The number of this letter may be incorrect as I have sent many from Kanagawa, and have not kept a memorandum of the numbers. I would rather remember or use a number twice than make a mistake the other way and lead you astray by causing you to look for

a letter which has not been sent.

Before your letter arrived we had news from California as late as July 31, and I believe a few New York papers of as late date as July 9th but I had not seen the death of Theo Rogers announced.¹⁷⁰ I enclose a letter to the Doctor. I say nothing of his leaving us. How can I now? And of what avail would it be? Had I been at Albany it might have been different. I think it would have been. He has done wrong. I think he knows it and feels it before this. He has not written since his decision was made. He wrote in January of the call (this is confidential with you) and that he had given an answer which would prevent them from coming again. I think he has made a sad mistake for himself and his own happiness and usefulness. But it is done. We will hope it is all for the best.

[two or three lines cut out of letter]

You must open the boxes with exceeding care, or will you knock some frail things so pieces. And then carefully take out each box, because you can hardly find anything so small as not to contain something smaller. I wish these things kept by you and Sue till I get back and then we will distribute this lot and such others as I may send. I have sent now because this chance has occurred to send direct. Besides, when I leave I neither wish to buy or send off articles in haste. Many of the articles sent are of great beauty. The ship will probably reach New York in February, perhaps earlier. It left here the beginning of the month. I have sent a letter to the owners and one to the Collector. I hope the goods will be entered free of duty. If any duty is to be paid I have asked Messrs. A. A. Low Brothers to write to you or Charlie. I have also sent to dear little Charlie two little dogs. Abby another one. Not Charly because he was of the same family as Abby. Charly and another dog furnish amusement to Ber and though I wished to send the others I could not grieve Bertie so much and therefore substitute one presented by Mr. Portman to my dear darling little boy. I hope they also will arrive safe and he will have the pleasure of seeing far off strangers.

I will also send a box by the vessel to San Francisco which takes this letter in the care of Mr. Hyatt of Rochester who has been lately acting for his father as Consul at Amoy. I cannot say yet what all will be in the box. Two of the window curtains which it will contain I wish sent by you to Harriet Weed. In another box will be four pieces of mourning silk for summer, two black and two purple. Also for you and Sue each a dark silk dress, purple and blue I believe, also for each of you a plain black silk. Also for you twenty one yards of a beautiful dove color which I particularly wish you to keep as I one day hope to see you wear it. Also a beautiful dress which if you won't keep I want

¹⁷⁰ Theodore Rogers was the eldest son of Ebenezer Rogers. He was killed in 1863, serving in the Union Army.

you to send with my respects to Mrs. F. W. Seward.¹⁷¹ Mr. Weed will take it to Washington. Also a plaid silk, cheap and dark for you, and a considerable number of crepe scarfs for presents to any you choose, and a beautiful pink crepe for a dress for little Abby and any little girl besides you choose. Now there's a list. Don't be frightened. I will hold up now awhile as I will know you have something to wear.

I will send you on a separate paper an idea of the cost of these things here. Silks have now advanced being twice or three times the price before foreigners were here. I think however the price is still far below what such articles cost at home.

I should have said also that you will find in the boxes sent by the *Benefactor* a large quantity of silk waddings. I have it in all the bed quilts I purchased of Mr. Harris and it is a luxury to have bed quilts so exceedingly light and yet so warm. This will be useful to you also for your dresses where cotton wadding would be used. Keep it carefully however. It is getting scarce and will soon be very high priced. I have not put it down on my list of articles to the Collector, using it as I did for packing. But it is very valuable. I will put a few samples in the box I send with this letter and at a future day, if my life is spared, some more and some silk covering for a few quilts so that we may all have a good and useful quilt.

You see I am writing a sheet which you will find it difficult perhaps to read but you will see by my mail I have large claims on my time. I have already prepared 13 long dispatches for the government and the probability is my time will be even more occupied. The *Storm Cloud* which takes this is to sail Thursday. Mr. Fisher's adopted daughter is to be married Wednesday evening. For the purpose of attending that wedding and receiving a large sum from the Japanese government I expect to go to Yokohama perhaps on Tuesday. I will write as much however as I can spare time to do and will at once send other letters via China which may reach you a few weeks later than this.

20th October 1862 6 a.m.

My darling wife, Mrs. Schoyer¹⁷² of Yokohama and Miss Adriana who has been with Mr. Brown but is to leave in a few days to connect herself with our Amoy mission have been here for a week. Having left this morning I am early at my letters and will have a few good hours to prepare for Thursday's mail.

And now my dear, unless this war is at end, you see even if I were home, you could not have me with you. In some capacity for very shame I should do something for my

¹⁷¹ Frederick William Seward (1830-1915) was the son of William Seward. He was married to Anna Wharton Seward (1836-1919).

¹⁷² RHP misspells the name here, writing "Shoyer" instead of "Schoyer." Mrs. Schoyer was the wife of M. Raphael Schoyer (1800-1865), an American businessman who lived in Yokohama.

country in times like these. The mothers, wives and sisters who have parted with so many dear ones to go to the battlefield. Some of them, and how many, also, forever, have not suffered them to go without a pang? What could you say against my going were I home except that you did not wish me to go. We would have no homes, especially such happy homes as our country boasts, had we not a good government which has always afforded the amplest opportunity for the development of the material resources and the moral and mental faculties of our people. And such a country is worth preserving. I would have gone in the Army at first had I not known that the disease I had would not be aggravated by being in camp and that I was not really fit for active duty. To this should be superadded however the dread I had to bear the responsibility of the lives for a thousand men and I perhaps unfit for the command of a regiment or a brigade.

Well then, while I am writing these lines, you are perhaps reading the account of the attack in June at the British Legation and the murder of two British seamen and you are full of apprehension for Bertie and myself. Nor will you feel more assured when a little later you read of the murder of Mr. Richardson, another Englishman, on the Tokaido or highway near Kanagawa, and the desperate wounding of two others. But you will see, even admitting my great exposure here, my chances for life are finer than on the peninsula before Richmond. But I really begin to think I am not a coward. I am either brave or else too ignorant to know when I am in danger. But you must not be anxious for me. I am safe under the protection of this host and we are all under the protection of the Mighty One who rules over all kings and potentates and controls every government. These attacks in Japan are made by lawless persons just as murders are committed in Europe or America. And as I always have my guard and Bertie also, night and day, at home or abroad, I feel quite safe. And as the government is about putting a very large sum, hundreds of thousands of dollars, at my disposal and under my control, you see it will be under heavy bonds to keep the peace.¹⁷³ And as I once before have said when I return and meet those who have borne themselves bravely at home, I shall not feel as one who has ignominiously shirked duty and danger. Duty perhaps because of danger.

I feel anxious of course about this rebellion. I have been reading for a month past Joshua & Judges, Samuel & Kings and the many records of God's actual positive, and of course successful, interposition in the conflicts between Israel and the heathen. Encourages me to believe that he will give victory to our government. But whatever the result we know that His glorious and merciful purposes will be accomplished.

Now for another aspect. I feel sure that even Charlie sees by this time that if only

¹⁷³ This is the first mention that RHP makes in letters to JALP of the funds for the warships. He explains further in the next paragraphs.

he were to be considered I am better here than at home. The business must be moderate at the Works and his oversight of it cannot tax much of his time or mind. Were I there I could only worry with him if he be worried, and if serviceable at all only be so by helping to keep him in good courage and heart. Here I can aid him effectually. What I save and remit will soon place him at ease, at all events do more towards it than I could do at home. For I will by January have saved five times as much nearly as his estimate.

Then again how much depreciation of property will take place we cannot tell. To provide for all contingencies I wish some of what I send without fail to be applied to what I owe Sue and your estate. And I shall like to have one or two hundred dollars paid to our Church by January. I owe \$500 subscription. There is a mutual account for advances I made which will fully meet my other subscriptions. I think we will be balanced except the \$500. Lansing Pruyn at all events has a copy of the account up to the day we ascertained balance. If half be paid this year and balance the next I perceive it will be best. I enclose a small sheet showing remittances. Hereafter I will do the same, stating only amount and name, so that if seen it will not be known what it means. I hope the result will prove satisfactory thus far. It makes me, I assure, feel as if a load was being taken off my shoulders. I wish you and Sue paid at once because if you and she are taken care of you can also help Charlie. What you get from me and what you save you can also help me on by taking my Central Stock or some of my Albany Insurance Stock and applying on my debt there. While everything is so high I think it will be well to sell my Michigan Southern and Cleveland and Pittsburgh. Let Charlie advise with Mr. Olcott and J.V.L.P. about all these matters for me. I am too far distant and things may change before my letters reach you.

I will probably send by first mail via China \$200,000 which is to be paid on Wednesday by this government as an advance for two steam sloops of war and one steam gunboat, also a few thousands for other purposes. I empower him and Mr. Weed to see to proper work being done but send Charlie the money. Now this will be of great advantage and I wish to share in the commissions etc. which will be fairly derived from this but if he is so much worried that he cannot attend to it, the next best thing I suppose will be to put J.V.L.P. in his place or if he please add J.V.L.P. to the commission.

I will send an authority to that effect but I would prefer to leave it as it is. J.V.L.P. at all events can be employed as Counsel and see that all the papers are right. I have sent the money or rather will send it because I wish to feel that everything is safe. Perhaps I shall be able to get it ready for this mail but think it will not be possible unless the vessel should be detained. From this order many thousands of dollars can be realized. I put Mr. Weed in for many reasons besides those of a private and personal character. His relations with Governor Seward and the President are very close and confidential. He knows vast numbers of builders and can get the government to assign an office to see that all is well and fairly done. Besides he can aid in getting the vessels at a moderate

cost and if successful here I am prepared to expect many vessels more will be ordered. Indeed the government says this is only the commencement of what they require. You will, I hope, be pleased to learn of this order. It proves I stand well with the Japanese government for they do not send an officer to superintend the work. Everything is left to me. And then again with this sum in my hands, and the large additional sum which by March will be three times as much, they will be largely interested in my safety here. They will be under heavy bonds to keep the peace. Viewing it simply in this light you will feel much easier and have no fears on my behalf if indeed you have any now. And Charlie will have only the responsibility of seeing the money is faithfully applied. And by its deposit etc. will have an opportunity of showing our true friends that we remember them. It will be well however not to overlook the Commercial [Bank]. We have large interests there and if God spares me to return I will be strong there in more ways than one. And let Charlie remember the Schenectady Bank. I have had no better friends than Mr. Olcott and H. H. Martin among the banks and Mr. Cady¹⁷⁴ at Schenectady. I speak of the Commercial [Bank] in the supposition they have retained me as a Director. If they have not I should like to have our stock gradually, when it can be done to advantage, transferred to the [Albany] City [Bank]¹⁷⁵ and Mechanics and Farmers [Bank]. Mr. Olcott will aid with this and will, I think, be glad to have me.

You can't tell how delighted I am to be able to show some gentlemen that Robert is "himself again." I don't think that in the long run any of those gentry can get the advantage of me. But I would return good for evil.

As I have said so much about business on this sheet I shall exhaust what I think of on such matters.

You will see I have not received a reply to any of my letters from Japan. I expect to do so next month, but not till the end of it. I don't know therefore what you think of my further stay. It appears to me to be necessary however in view of the pecuniary difficulties of our country. Until the war is closed we cannot say what shape things will take. We cannot say what we will have. You have a handsome property. What will it be 6 months or a year hence? We cannot say whether and when business will revive. We ought not to sell the Works now. We should not do so until we can do it to great advantage. I feel I am doing so well here, that Charlie should be satisfied and perfectly willing to keep them and wait till better times. I say again therefore save them. I do not wish the house on State Street sold. I will buy it. I am attached to it. It will soon be very

¹⁷⁴ Jay Cady was one of the Directors of Schenectady Bank.

¹⁷⁵ J.V.L. Pruyn was the Vice President of the Albany City Bank in 1860. H. H. Martin was the Cashier.

valuable. I am willing that the part actually occupied by Gladding¹⁷⁶ and Andrew shall be sold for \$1,000 or even \$800 if thought best. As to the disposition of your Father's property, Charlie need not be afraid to act. Whatever you and he and Sue does will satisfy me.

I should advise you to keep your [Albany] City Bank stocks. It will advance greatly. Commercial Bank stock you had better advise with Mr. Olcott about. 3 to 5 thousand of that transferred to Cleveland & Columbus stock might be well. That road has no debt. Mr. Olcott knows all about it. I think he will be a safe adviser as also H. H. Martin.

I wish Charlie to keep from others what I am doing. It may be well however to say something to Martin in view of the situation of my note at his bank. I hope to see my debt reduced \$15,000 by the spring and a large sum on the way for a further pull on it. Then with what will be realized from the commission I send, one year will put me entirely out of debt.

It is true, my darling, I am paying a high price for all this. With you and Charlie and Sue here I would be satisfied. But then you know it would be no improvement to be in the army. You would hear from me if well more frequently, but I think the days would be as long as weeks are now. So we will accept with thanks or at least with resignation what we have and want for better times.

Now a few words about our own wants and I will try and find more agreeable subjects. I wish you would send by the way of California at least half a dozen good pairs of drawers. I wear them summer and for horseback riding. I think I asked you to send a few pair of C. H. Adams knit pants and coats. I wish you also, unless cloth has advanced very much, to send some cloth or cashmere, good and strong for Bertie for pants and coat. I have more than I want. A little good white flannel would be acceptable. That is all I can think of.

I send you a box by Mr. Hyatt of silks as I have written. I have had the silks opened and dried and repacked. It was fortunate I did so. Mrs. Schoyer told me if not thoroughly dried they would spoil and she attended to it. She said the purple had already spotted a little. I hope now they will reach you in good order. I also send by him a box containing a large shell bowl for you and for Sue and ten small ones. Give a pair to Aunt Sue Gansevoort¹⁷⁷—she bought you something (if you choose). Also to Anna Lansing. The box contains a few specimens of porcelain and so open it very carefully or you will smash things. I have a large number of things for you. The vessel is small and I can't send more of them now. May send some more things in a week or so. As a general rule I wish to keep these things till my return. I will give you an idea of prices on a separate

¹⁷⁶ Daniel P. Gladding and George W. Gladding were painters whose business was located at 93 State Street.

¹⁷⁷ Susan Lansing Gansevoort (1805-1874) was the second wife of Peter Gansevoort.

sheet. I may send you more dresses than you want. Keep these. We will be able to afford all this and more. We will, in a short time, I hope, be guarded against any contingency we can now anticipate. I am now determined to drop all these matters in my letters to you. You can understand all I would say and wish you to know and feel.



Kanagawa, October 25 1862

My Dear Wife,

I came down to attend Miss Fisher's wedding. She is the adopted daughter of our Consul and was married to Mr. Allmand,¹⁷⁸ a merchant doing business, here on Wednesday.

I have sealed up in another envelope an unfinished Yedo letter and send other parcels which will explain themselves. The silk braid or cord I send costs one cent a yard. They have all colors. I send you by Mr. Hyatt two packages, one containing two embroidered Japanese dresses, the mode of making up which I shall hereafter explain, and a lot of heavy braid. The narrow Bertie and I use for neck ties. [If] there is none that you want keep it for me. Mr. Hyatt may be compelled for want of room to leave one behind. He can tell you. I will not know till late this afternoon.

Should he have to pay any charges between San Francisco and Albany please pay him. I have not an opportunity now to give you a statement of articles sent in the boxes of which two large ones are in his charge.

The prices contained on the two lists he has are very incomplete. I will give you a more full one. The currency needs to be explained and many other things to enable you to judge. Don't part therefore with any article on the basis of that cost.

Bertie and myself are in very good health as you may guess from the photographs we send you, although we do not send you as full a supply of letters as I had intended. We have had two weeks rain and while so good a chance was offered for writing, as I had guests all the time and an extra supply.

Mrs. Ostrom has named her little girl Helen Lansing after our precious Ellie. I shall let the Japanese make for her a handsome present in silver. They make things well and cheaply. Mr. Fisher has just had made some napkin rings weighing one dollar each which we paid only 6 bits of our money for making (each), similar to some he had which cost

¹⁷⁸ John Allmand (1837-1878), owner of Allmand & Co., based in Yokohama. Allmand had been a private secretary to Commodore Perry on his expedition to Japan. He remained there, going into business, for many years, eventually returning to his native Norfolk, Virginia.

him East at home \$6 each. I shall have spoons or forks made for Helen Lansing Ostrom.

I send you a \$10 gold piece because it will not pass here. I bought it for \$8 to oblige the holder, which you see gives 25 percent advance of what I paid. You can imagine that dear little Charlie's Bank Bills would not be very current.

I find I can buy white flannel here \$1 per yard. You can see whether it will be an object to send any. You had better substitute for Bertie some good stout linen drilling or other summer pantaloons stuff. He is growing out of everything. Money will buy anything in China but articles from Europe and America are monstrous high at some of the ports, cheap at others. As we have to buy here or at Shanghai or San Francisco everything is very high. A stove which would be worth at Albany \$4 to \$6 sells here for \$30. That is a sample.

But then prices here for food are low. Only think of 5 or 6 oranges for 2 cents. Grapes the most deliciously sweet and rich in color like our Catawbas, for one *itzabu*, a basket of fruit 6 to 8 pounds. We eat as much as we wish twice a day, for breakfast and dinner. We have now ripe figs and persimmons as large as oranges. Rather too sweet for my taste. The oranges are not quite ripe. They will soon be excellent, cheap and plenty.

I had intended darling to have given you two good sheets more and tried to make my letter more agreeable. It is now compounded of dogs, birds, cannon ships and clothes and money all good in their respective places.

Has our Church a pastor? Have they thought of Howard Crosby? I have never heard him. But he is well spoken of. I hope to send Uncle Jacob H. a good letter by next mail, giving my views about matters and things.

The ship sails earlier than was intended by the Captain, and Mr. Hyatt will be here for the letters in half an hour and I must finish little Charlie's letter. The mail has closed. But Mr. H[yatt] puts my letters in his trunk.

And now my dear, again adieu. When shall we meet? I will be better able to answer, if our lives are spared, when I receive your joint proclamation which I will look for soon.

Meanwhile give my love and kisses to Sue and dear little Charlie. Remember me to Charlie and Abby and all the usual list. I will furnish you one to add to every letter. There are few of our friends I do not think of between all my letters.

We have a great many British etc. here not friendly to our government. But we are all hopeful.

I pray God may keep and bless you, my precious wife and my dear Charlie, and Sue and all. With my warm kisses and from the depths of my heart,

Your loving husband,

Robt. H. Pruyn



No. 9 Kanagawa, November 8 1862

My Dear Wife,

Your dear letter of July which arrived this week gave me great comfort. I was sure you would approve my decision, though it differed from your wishes, when you saw the question of duty from my standpoint. When you say you give me a year in Japan, do you mean from this time? I fear it must be so. So many changes have occurred since I wrote and even since you wrote and many are likely still to occur as to indicate this as best. The closing of the Works and their probable sale, and at all events my great value here to all concerned, country and family, combine to take away the motive for return, and to add to the force of those who formerly influenced me to remain, besides furnishing others equally potential. The whole question resolves itself into one purely personal to you and myself, affecting others only so far as they will be benefitted by our prosperity and happiness.

I see before me here a career of usefulness and honor. All that is wanted is your own dear self. Do not misunderstand me. I am not misled by ambition. I have no such aspirations. With other prospects at home I would be perfectly willing, indeed happy, to leave here tomorrow. I only mean that if I am to stay it is well I have the prospect which is so promising. Had I against my convictions listened to you and Sue's plaintive appeals while yet in San Francisco, you see I would have committed a grave error. I knew that my place was not home at the time. I cannot see my paths of duty now clearer in that direction. Whenever I can see it as you do, I shall act promptly and with great pleasure in the direction of your wishes. So great is my confidence that your judgement will approve my course that my disappointment in not being able to meet your present wishes will disappear as your approval arrives after you have examined the subject from my position and I also from time to time am enabled to survey it from yours.

By the time this letter reaches you a full year will have passed since we parted. How long an age and yet how like yesterday does it seem. It has been an eventful year thus far, one of the most eventful in our lives, full of sad and bitter and yet in many respects pleasant memories. The dark curtain which overhangs is fringed with silver gleams of mercy. The irrevocable past cannot be changed by wishes, only prayers. Would that it could! How much, very much do I see that I would desire changed! How little of which I can faintly even approve, nothing heartily.

I pray our merciful God and Father my dear darling Jennie, we may soon meet again and that many happy years of a more perfect and sanctified union may be granted to us. And that with our dear children left us we may have a home again.

I never feel more sad than when I am here at Mr. Fisher's. I hear children's voices and the voices of women in my own language. Outside and at Yedo it is like a deaf and dumb man and worse such a man among strangers, where no ray of pleasure from the eye or smile of sympathy on the face greets the eye. The hand receives no pressure of love and the moving living crowd have no more sympathy with you than the magnificent trees and flowers under and amid which you move.

And now, my dear wife, this may reach you just about New Year. I trust it may. It comes with it my sweetest memories, my warmest sympathies, my most tender love. I wish you, my darling wife, my precious Charlie and sweet sister Sue, a Happy, Happy New Year. To all my dear relatives and friends say for me the same. Give them my warm greetings from this distant idle. I cannot even recite here the names of brothers and sisters. I include all Charlie, Abby, Cornelia, Alida, Mary¹⁷⁹ and all, all, all.

I hope that you will see much in the order I send Charlie to assure you I have been prudent and conciliatory here and that I have the confidence and friendship of this strange government. I can say to you, my darling, I think I have it in a greater degree than Mr. Harris had. I could give abundant reasons for this. So far as the other ministers are concerned I have it a hundred fold more than those of France and England combined. You need have no more fears for me. Here and elsewhere, even in London, New York or Albany, accidents may happen and one may suffer from violence. But with 500 men constantly on hand to protect me and this government interested so deeply both pecuniarily and through friendship in my safety I feel more safe than I would do in many of the capitals of Europe. I go up to Yedo on Tuesday in the *Wyoming*, again to be the only minister there for days and weeks and months, except perhaps for a stray day or two, and six Englishmen wish my protection at Yedo and my hospitality there. It is on the American Minister they must rely for the chance to see Yedo. I told Colonel Neale today if I had not room I would make room for any friends he desired at any time. How will this sound in London if indeed heard there. God bless you, my dear wife and boy, R



Kanagawa, Monday, November 10 1862

My Beloved Wife,

Owing to the rain, the *Josephine* which is to carry this to San Francisco could not complete the loading and did not sail yesterday. Early tomorrow she will leave on the

¹⁷⁹ Mary Hewson (Pruyn) Rochester (1834-1922) was RHP's youngest sister.

trackless path toward home. I will look longingly toward her as I proceed to Yedo in the *Wyoming* where with business and the entertainment of our Naval officers I expect to have a busy week. It now happens that, not knowing till my arrival here of this opportunity to send letters as the vessel stopped here on her way from Shanghae, that I have neither time nor opportunity to think of what I desire to say. I am obliged to send dispatches to the government and duplicates via China and I am now waiting to go on board *Wyoming* to read to Captain McDougal¹⁸⁰ my instructions to Weed and Charlie (both those I send copies of to Governor Seward, and those marked private) and I expect my morning to be fully occupied with ships so that you will be obliged to be contented with a very meager letter.

I feel sure that when you heard of the affair at the British Legation you felt I was very much exposed here and that the murder of Mr. Richardson did not reassure you. Without intending to cast any importunities upon the sufferers on those occasions it is proper to say that a very strong impression exists here in many quarters that both attacks were the result of imprudence on the part of the sufferers or some of their associates.

Foreigners here unfortunately are too apt to depreciate this people and some are inclined to bully them. So extensive is this that even the clergy becomes belligerent.

A case in point: the Reverend Mr. Bailey¹⁸¹ is the British Chaplain here, having arrived a few weeks ago and taking Mr. Brown's place in the service of the British Consulate at Yokohama. A few days ago he went to where a chapel was being built for him, which has so far been superintended by Mr. Brown and gave some directions as to work. The man to whom he spoke, an aged harmless and inoffensive Japanese carpenter whom Mr. Brown has known for two years, gave him to understand as well as he could that if he would speak to his employer or Mr. Brown that whatever was right should be done. The Parson began to punch him in the side with his stick. The man was sawing and raised his saw to ward off the blow as he says. Mr. Bailey understood he was to be attacked and after some time the poor man was handcuffed by some of the British officials and taken to the Custom House where he was knocked down by some officious Japanese. His employee called on Mr. Brown next day saying we have never had any trouble with you and believed the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ was a good religion but I don't believe that high priest up there has any religion. The Parson was informed by Mr. Brown that if he continued beating his servants as was also his practice, the life of himself and family might not be safe.

Another: yesterday it was charged that a Japanese had stolen from a Frenchman 60 *itzabus*. The French Minister took his guard armed and went down in the Japanese

¹⁸⁰ David McDougal (1809-1882) was a U.S. navy officer. He was the captain of the *Wyoming* from 1861-64.

¹⁸¹ The Episcopal Chaplain was the Reverend Michael Buckworth Bailey (1827-1899).

Quarter and arrested the man, amidst a storm of epithets in Japanese of “fool, fool” etc., etc.

You must not be surprised if collisions occur either with the French or English. A feeling of exasperation is rising against them which they do little to allay and much to increase. The only danger to Americans is they may not discriminate and either by accident and unwittingly injure Americans or perhaps visit upon all foreigners the sins or folly of a few.

Meanwhile I repeat I am personally and officially popular with the Ministry and all the officers and have given offence to none even the most humble. And I think beside the government will guard me well. Policy interest and friendly feeling all contribute to give me assurance of this.

No one place in the world exists where Americans occupy relatively so strong a position as in Japan.

And now, my darling, again I will close intending if possible to get in the mail a few lines more.

With love and kisses to you, my loving and beloved wife, to my darling boy, and dear Sue and all from your loving husband,

Robt. H. Pruyn



No. 10 Kanagawa, November 10 1862

My Beloved Wife,

I have this day sent you a package via San Francisco which will probably reach you a month before this. I now write a few lines while waiting for a document to reach me from Mr. Fisher's house, having waited over at Yokohama so as to write up to the closing of the mail to San Francisco, and this mail for Shanghae will probably close before I can reach it with anything from Yedo.

I only write this because I know you would be disappointed on opening the large and promising envelope to find not even one little line for yourself.

Say to Charlie if by any accident the package enclosed for him in yours does not reach him, he will find the public instructions for him sent in duplicate as a copy to Governor Seward, but as it is signed by me, he and Mr. Weed could use it as an original. I also enclosed the power to substitute J.V.L.P. if Charlie is unwilling to act.

Bertie and I enjoy good health but I am getting old. My leg below the knee has been a little sprained I think and one of the cords pains me a little. But a few days will bring

it all right I think. We are very prudent because sickness in Japan could be a luxury rather unpleasant to indulge in and I pray God he may spare us here and my dear ones at home from its visits.

I had better say again be careful opening the boxes on the *Benefactor*. They are closely packed and every little thing almost contains another. These articles as Japanese things sell in England and the U.S. are worth at least \$1,500.

Another vessel, a steamer, is expected to leave this month for San Francisco. By that I hope to send you letters more worthy your receiving. Those now sent have been much hurried and I hardly know what they contain. I am therefore at a loss to know what to say to you now.

I don't know that Charlie's letter was any bluer than it should be. I have always supposed however that at the worst I would realize something out of the Works. I shall be satisfied whatever you agree to, only don't give persons a present for taking them. I cannot be here and at Albany at the same time. I think I could find government work or someone who wants government work to buy them and have advised Charlie to speak to Mr. Weed. It is a poor time now to sell except parties can be found who have contracts and wish means to execute them and our Works would afford facilities.

I wish I could drop business when writing to you.

I have sent Russell & Co. \$5,000 to remit you by purchase of draft. You will probably receive advice of same about the time you receive this and it will produce about \$6,000. (Nov 24th)

I wish I had Charlie's letter. It is a curiosity of its kind. When I return to Yedo I will lay it aside to send you also a sweet letter from Cornelia.

I had intended to send this when I began it via Marseilles but have changed its direction as a better opportunity is presented.

You ask me in your letter received last evening, "Are you safe?" I think what I sent last mail and that which I send now will fully reassure you on the point. Though I know that at this very time of writing you are probably uneasy in view of the attack of July at the British Legation and the murder of Mr. Richardson in September.

The package I had intended sending Charlie via Shanghae with this note I also send via San Francisco.

I think you will find the letters enclosed with this of immoderate length, almost tiring even your patience.

But as I have two sheets yet to fill I will let this note go with an unwarranted appearance on its face, an empty space.

Ever your darling, R.



No. 11 Kanagawa, November 20 1862

My Beloved Wife,

Since my last letter, which I sent you via San Francisco by the *Josephine*, we have had a series of most favorable events as affecting our relations with Japan. The *Wyoming* having at length arrived, I was enabled to bring to a successful issue the question of the salute. On the seventh instant the Japanese flag ship hoisted the American flag and gave me a salute of 17 guns, the first salute ever given to a minister in Japan or by Japanese. This was returned by the *Wyoming* which hoisted the Japanese flag.

On Monday we went to Yedo in the *Wyoming*. The Ministers were next day invited to visit the ship. The third Minister with a host of dignitaries came on board on Thursday. The *Wyoming* fired a salute of 17 guns which was returned by the Japanese steam ship of war *Kanrinmaru*. The Japanese visited every part of the ship and were highly delighted. The whole affair was a decided success. No minister has ever before visited a ship of war of any country. Bear in mind that the second Minister to the United States is far lower in rank, standing eight or ten on the list of officials to whom I will allude as receiving us the following Monday. The next day the chief officers of artillery and marine went to the ship and witnessed the boat practices with howitzer and also the arrangement of heavy guns on ship which had also been shown to the Minister (I give his name Enaba-Shobo Shoyo¹⁸²) the preceding day. At that time, I should have said, a present of poultry, oranges, grapes and other fruit was sent on the *Wyoming*. On Saturday we had an official interview with all the Ministers. I was attended by Captain McDougal and six of his officers and our Consul at Kanagawa, Colonel Fisher.

As it had got to be an old affair for Ber and Mr. Kip and the number was so great, they did not go. We had a pleasant visit. Captain McDougal was presented with a sword and two pieces of silk and I with a bottle of *saki* and some fruit and a box of paste (like that of figs) in return for a trifle I had sent one of the Ministers—some bread and butter, which he had seen for the first time when on the ship and had admired. I then managed a matter which has been in dispute till now, which had been nearly decided last January, but some difficulty intervened: a national salute which was then and there fired at 21 guns. This was fired yesterday by the *Wyoming* with the Japanese flag at the fore and returned in fine style by the fort at Kanagawa, so that I have had the honor to have the first Minister's salute and the U.S. the first national salute, this last with their reservation.

¹⁸² Inaba Masami 稲葉正巳 (1815-1879). He was a "junior elder" (*wakadoshiyori*) in the Tokugawa Shogunate. This is one of the very few Japanese officials whose name RHP notes.

After Mr. Heusken's murder all the Ministers but Mr. Harris left Yedo.¹⁸³ One of the conditions of their return was that a national salute should be fired when they returned. They accordingly went up. On that day all the forts at Yedo commenced firing early in the morning at sunrise and fired all morning. When the minister arrived they stopped for a few minutes and then the fort at Shinagawa fired the salute and then in a few moments all the forts fired away again till sunset. The consequence was no one in Yedo but those in the street knew that any salute had been fired. I preferred the salute should be fired here in sight and sound of our English friends and where it could be known to more Japanese coming from distant places. At Yedo the ship anchorage is 3½ miles off and the forts far from shore and the salute would have attracted less notice with the Japanese. The wonders have not stopped here. No foreigner has ever been admitted to see their arms and witness their drill. I was invited to see all this on Monday. With Captain M[cDougal] and Colonel Fisher, Bertie, Mr. Kip and 4 officers of the *Wyoming* we went to their artillery ground, a large field you will see on the map, lying on the bay beyond the rise. There much to my surprise we were received by the third Minister, by the Chiefs of Marine and Artillery, by the admiral and nearly a hundred generals, governors and high officers. We were handsomely entertained and a present of porcelain made Lieutenant Young of the *Wyoming* and a large hamper of fruit, grapes oranges and persimmons, to all the officers. Then the Military appeared, a regiment of infantry, a company of skirmishers and 100 artillerists with a battery of 6 Boss guns. First we had firing as skirmishers and then the field battery fired shot and afterward shell at a target, then blank cartridges simply and by sections and whole battery. Then we had company movements, and firing by company, afterward by division and then the whole regiment. Their drill was by the tap of the drum. Their marching, firing, and all their movements were well done. Indeed Captain McDougal and also Colonel Fisher, who was at Buena Vista, both said they never saw better. We then witnessed their firing at a target with rifled 12 pounders which the United States had given and also with smooth bore and some of the officers of the *Wyoming* also fired. All the presents made by the U.S. were exhibited and we also saw a rifled 12 pounder made by the Japanese. The shot used in the rifled guns was also made by them. It was altogether a very pleasant and satisfactory visit. A favor was extended to us which was unprecedented and many years may pass before another nationality has the chance we had. The field contained almost 200 acres. Colonel F[isher] thinks 300. We were on the ground all day, having left the Legation at 9½ and returning after 5 o'clock.

But to give you another instance of the good position we occupy, I would say the

¹⁸³ Henry C. J. Heusken (1832-1861) was a Dutch-American interpreter for Townsend Harris. He was attacked by samurai from Satsuma on January 14 1861 and died the next day of his wounds.

Prussian merchant steamer *Scotland* arrived here last Saturday under command of an American and deposited her papers with the American Consul. But entry was refused her and properly at the Custom House because the treaty with Prussia does not go into effect till January. Messrs. Walsh, Hall & Co., an American House to whom the ship was commissioned by Russell & Co. of China, another American House, wrote me on the subject. I received the letter while at dinner and at once wrote the ministers urging admission on the ground of courtesy to Prussia and to prevent loss to American citizens. I also sent for a governor of foreign affairs. One made his appearance next morning before 8 o'clock. I stated the case to him, urging all the arguments and said I should be pleased to see that their friendly act was made known to the Prussian government. The governor said this was unnecessary. It was sufficient the vessel was sent by one American firm to another, was commanded by an American and was going to San Francisco, and that he would report what I had said to the Ministers. We left in the *Wyoming* that afternoon and the *Scotland* was permitted to unload the next morning, the ministers having sent orders to the Custom House in advance of the letter to myself, which arrived late in the evening, it taking time of course to translate and prepare so formidable a letter.

This case was embarrassed by the fact that the *Scotland* had once before been here under English colors and sent back by the British Consul. I go more at length into this narration [~~large section crossed out~~] Cordial relations exist between the Ministers and myself [~~crossed out~~]. Their relations with Mr. DeWitt are pleasant and friendly, hardly so with the Minister of France and England. There is more or less distrust in these quarters, growing out of the foreign guard and the want of confidence shown by them in the good faith of the Japanese government and their dispositions and ability to protect their countrymen.

I have no objections to have the account of my visit to the Tycoon or any of my letters read to any of my friends, nor would it be improper if Mr. Weed should publish extracts from some, not indicating, however, the quarter from which they came.

I send with a few choice grape vines presented by the government some seeds of trees collected by Mr. Hogg and some acorns picked up by myself in Shiba (the Tycoon's Cemetery). They are of an evergreen species and perhaps may grow in our latitude. I wish you and Charlie to plant a few of those picked up by myself. I would like to have some of the acorns and their seeds given to Mr. Olcott for our cemetery. Some may grow there, especially if planted in some sheltered spot. They are generally I believe of the pine cedar and *arborvitae* varieties. The grape vines will be well worth your care. It may be well to entrust them to someone who has a professional gardener. I have sent a quantity to the patent office, or rather to the Agricultural Department, to which Mr. Olcott (through Mr. Harris) and Mr. Learning also had best apply. I do not know how many Mr. Hogg has taken from the boxes and put in my package. They are from the

government and brought in from the province of Kosshu. I think they are of the variety of which I have eaten a ton this summer and fall, in color like our Catawba though richer and sweeter than our Isabella. Take measure to have them multiplied. Please give General G[ansevoort] one if there are any to spare and everyone Van Rensselaer.

The flower seeds here are not worth sending. The chrysanthemums are magnificent (and the hydrangeas, too) of variegated colors in some and only one color in other varieties, all of them in size like our dahlias and full as beautiful. I have some roots and may find time soon to send forward what roots are worth sending.

The best fruit next to the grape and orange is the persimmon, of which there are two varieties, one sweet, the other harder and rather tart. They grow to a very great size and are well worth introducing into the U.S.

I have now come over to Mr. Fisher's office and determined to keep on writing till compelled to stop till the mail closes, but look at my package and then bear in mind I have four for the Secretary of State, three for the Collector at San Francisco, 1 for the superintendent of Agricultural Department and 3 letters for San Francisco. My fingers ache, and I will close this so as not to be too much hurried and will send you another little letter which I can slip in at the last moment and at once seal up this large package with other enclosures to Messrs. Brooks to forward. So I will get a little relief for my fingers and at the same time brush away the accumulating letters and be at leisure for dinner and the letter to you. It is now 5½ o'clock and the mail closes at 7 o'clock.

With love and kisses to Sue and Charlie my dear precious boy and an outpouring for yourself. I am ever yours,
Robert H. Pruyn

2

You ask can you ride all over the city? Yes, everywhere. The only restriction is self-imposed. I do not ride after dark. Some very trifling exceptions have occurred where we have trespassed a few minutes. One other which proved very pleasant occurred in this sense. After my letter of the 10th was forwarded I returned to Yedo accompanied by our young gentlemen and Mrs. Schoyer and Miss Mann. The horse of the latter stumbled and threw her over his head. As it was the first of her mishaps on horseback, she was in a quite a tremors and though unhurt a little timid and we rode for a time quite slowly and all the way more carefully than normal. We had started an hour after the time fixed and our 18 miles which should have been accomplished in less than three hours including ferriage of three stops, trespassed on four hours. The consequence was that all our ride in Yedo was after dark and it chanced to be a festival night in the quarter through which we passed. The sight was truly beautiful and unparalleled. The *omatsuris* as they are called are observed chiefly at night. Painted lanterns are placed on upright posts before each house and in each quarter a large staging is erected occupied by

musicians, mimics, masquers and sometimes actresses. As we rode to the Legation through streets thus lighted and passed cross streets brilliant with various colored lights and thronged with the population it reminded me of some scene in the *Arabian Nights Entertainments*. Mrs. Schoyer exclaimed "I would not miss this for a thousand dollars. Won't I astonish the French minister when I tell him that we have actually passed through Yedo on an *omatsuri* night." As we approached the Legation more nearly we entered a large space occupied by staging and filled with people and many colored lights. I was startled a little to see a rush towards us as if by the whole mass. I quietly said, "Close up!" But the movement was soon explained. Officers and attendants were sent forward to meet us by the commandant of the guard at the Legation who had received notice of our approach. By those lanterns were borne, which were handed to numbers of our mounted *yakunins*, who placed them in their belts and thus with waving lights we continued our ride. The mass making way for us, arms passed fairly touching the stage on which four gay actresses were engaged, who left their audience while all united in gazing at us. Not a word was uttered. All was pleasant and gay and thus our ride ended. Everyone knew who I was because another turn brought us to the street in which the entrance to the Legation opens.

While thus fearless and safe when absolutely necessary to be out on extraordinary occasions, I never presume on it, but am ever on my guard. I am thoroughly satisfied no accident can happen to me which the government can guard against and I know of no quarter from which any danger is or can be apprehended. I can say to you I am personally popular and our people have thus far had an immunity from the disasters which have befallen those of every other nation having a treaty with Japan. Mr. Heusken, though in American employ, was a Hollander and rash and stubborn, bidding defiance to the admonitions of Mr. Harris who predicted the violent death he met. The Americans have thus far observed every precaution I enjoined. The French minister accounts thus for our popularity and the unprecedented favor shown our officials. He says the Japanese expect to be visited by fleets from France and England and called to an account. Therefore they commence to be courteous and extremely kind to Americans thus rendering it easier to observe the same conduct to the other nations when it shall become necessary to change their conduct and become conciliatory and cordial. This is Frenchy to say the [next page missing]



Bertie has just left the room and he should have the opportunity of

adding a line. He is perfectly well.

No. 12 Kanagawa, Japan November 23 1862

My Beloved Wife,

I do not know whether you would be more disappointed in not receiving any letter by this mail via Marseilles than you will be when you open this letter and seeing the date find that you have already had letters in your possession of the same day more than a month, as I trust will be the case with those sent via San Francisco. And yet when a few days since I received from that city a batch of your letters running all the way from April to July 27th, I found all of them fresh and interesting. It was sufficient to know that at the last date you were all well and thus all the letters were fresh and interesting as a novel only far sweeter and real. Since that, direct via Marseilles, I have received your letter of August 5th and through the Department on the same day that of August 15th and though there is a fearful chasm between that day and this I hope and fear not. I hope and pray daily we may be permitted all to meet again and that many happy years of united association and love may be still in store. And I hope and pray may a merciful kind and loving God grant this and every earthly blessing to us all and whenever these earthly scenes fade in our eyes may they be succeeded by those of a higher and better world.

I hardly know what to say here because I wish to tell you everything so much earlier than is likely to happen by this route. And as I do not wish to repeat I will even talk of ourselves. I was happy to see the news hopeful and cheerful and I am pleased to see that you think I have decided rightly in remaining. This conclusion, at war as it is with your own feelings, confirms me in the conclusions to which I had arrived, not without a struggle yet still with little hesitation and without a particle of doubt as to the correctness of the decision. I wish I only could have the same thoroughness of conviction on the subject of your coming here. When this reaches you more than a year will have passed since we parted. A sad and eventful year will have intervened. Yet the dark clouds which have contained so many of its hours have been fringed with some silver threads and through their darkness gleams of heavenly light force their way. The side hidden now from our view may be all irradiated with heavenly light, and when we shall see even as we are seen and know as we are known, what now appears to us dark and mysterious may be shown to be as kind as they are wise. For we know this: our Heavenly Father doeth all things well. This will reach you darling when the shadow of these events will be hanging heavily over you, when every Christian grace will need to be called into active and constant exercise. The mercies left us far outweigh those—not taken away, only transformed for a brief season and the cup of thanksgiving should be overflowing while that of sorrow and tears is drying if not exhausted of its bitter

contents.

May the year in which we shall have entered be one of the brightest we shall ever have enjoyed on earth and as we approach nearer and nearer the end of our journey, may all our years be more happy because we shall be more fitted for heaven and because our Heavenly Father shall perceive that fewer lessons are needed to wean us from Earth and its temptations.

This mail will be taken to Shanghae by the *Wyoming* which leaves at daylight and Mr. Fisher is only waiting for this letter before sending the letters to the consulate. I dislike however to stop writing, for to the usual motive to hold on to the last is the additional one furnished by the sight of so much of this sheet still a blank. When I am writing to you it seems more as if I am with you, talking only with my eyes closed. Could I hear the music of your voice, feel the pressure of your hand and of your lips, then I could lay down my pen without the feeling that we are parting again and without a farewell. So you see when I commence writing it requires a greater effort to cease than to continue writing. That will account for the inordinate length of my letters. I send you no short, small, signed, lady-like looking letters but such as will atone by the quantity of their contents for their quality. If not made of spices and perfumes and fruits I will be satisfied if they contain bread even without the butter which is a luxury here and beef without the plum pudding for which I have so much fondness to entitle me to be called an Englishman from which now more than ever I would be spared. For if ever Englishmen have shown the cloven foot and behaved unworthily it is now. They have with few exceptions exhibited neither generosity nor manliness but a disposition to sneer where they could not even hope to equal and to triumph over calamities when under similar circumstances as in their Indian Rebellion they had every sympathy of our hearts enlisted on their behalf.

As I cannot give my darling boy a letter by this mail I cannot forget him. A little corner of this letter may therefore be called his own and then as in a garden I would plant a few choice flowers which he may pluck and some trees which may bear a little fruit for his use when they shall have reached our far off home. I suppose he sent me that Albany City bill for which he has my thanks. I should like some day to have a good photograph. I had intended to send some handsome views of Yedo to him but alas they are left behind at Yedo. May darling Charlie be a comfort and staff to you dear Mother. I am happy to know you remember Ber and me in your prayers. God hears and will answer the prayers of one of his dear little ones. May you be a lamb of his fold and never stray from its serene enclosures. God bless, keep and ever love you my darling, and whatever and wherever we may be while on Earth, may we all be safe at last in Heaven.

And my dear sisters Sue, Cornelia, Alida, Mary, and Abby. God bless, preserve and ever love you. Accept my warmest love. I often have you in remembrance. My dear Sue

don't let Jennie come here without you. I am so uncertain as to what she will do I almost fancy I hear her footsteps. I know there will be only a step between her decision and action and therefore now I repeat this.

With my love to Aunt Susan and Sarah and Anna and my best respect to the General Uncle C[hristopher], Cousin Bob and all relations. Kind regards to Uncle Jacob H., Dr. V[anderpoel], Messrs. R[ichard] V[an] R[ensselaer], W[illiam] McE[lroy], John O., Eugene V[an] R[ensselaer],¹⁸⁴ Cousin H[erman] T[en] E[yck], wife and Leonard, and all the praying members of our Church who hold me in remembrance as I delight to hear. R[ufus] K.V[iele], M[aurice] E. V[iele],¹⁸⁵ D.N. and all the members of the families of those named, receive for yourself dearest and best the deep abiding entire love of your dear husband from an overflowing heart.

Robert H. Pruyn

[In the left margin of the third page:]

Father stricts me but I have room enough to send a thousand kisses and much love to you and Aunt Sue and all, Your affectionate Ber.



Kanagawa, Japan, November 23 1862

My Beloved Wife and Dear Sister Sue,

I do not know whether I informed you that Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Ostrom, our missionaries at Amoy China, have named their infant daughter "Helen Lansing."

Having been requested to select a name for the child I gave Mrs. Ostrom the choice of your own, my dear wife, and that of your sainted mother and of our dear Ellie. I know you will share in my pleasure in the selection made. The remembrance of your mother with her angelic character and sweet and willing manners is one which often now comes up before me, oftener now even than amid those friends whom she loved and who loved her, and these scenes which were graced by her presence. While the form and memory of our darling Ellie stands before one as that of a Heavenly visitant who made Earth brighter for a season and then returned to her appropriate residence and enjoyments.

I enclose you a copy of a letter addressed by me to Mr. and Mrs. Ostrom. I adopted this form of acknowledgement, because being missionaries and having no opportunity

¹⁸⁴ Eugene Van Rensselaer (1840-1925)

¹⁸⁵ Maurice Edward Viele (1823-1903) was a prominent business man in Albany.

to consult them I thought it best to give them the choice of articles as they will doubtless prefer the useful to the ornamental. They make silver work cheaply here if a pattern is given, but even more cheaply and far better in China. This together with the risk of loss if sent by you from home decided me. As our friends are faithful missionaries of our own Church and in view of the name given and received by Helen Lansing Ostrom, you at least will I fear think I have not erred on the side of generosity.

I send you a copy of the letter, not because it is a good one (for like all of my letters it was written with a dash) but simply for the reason that as you are participators it may please you not only to learn what was done but how it was done.

Since writing the above I have attended services on the *Wyoming* where Mr. Brown preached at 11 o'clock a very excellent unwritten sermon on the last clause of the 47th chapter of Luke 7. Last Sabbath I was alone in Yedo, Captain McDougal and the other gentlemen having gone out and Bertie being for the day at Mr. Fisher's. It sounded good to hear genuine good singing on board the ship. We had some books and very many voices joined particularly when singing "All hail, the power etc., etc." The *Wyoming* leaves in the morning and I will send you a few lines that way, though this and the other letters I propose sending on Tuesday by the steamer *Scotland* to San Francisco. There will not be so great an interval in the receipt of letters from me.

I was delighted to hear of your purpose to visit Watertown and thank Cousin Bob most heartily for overcoming the inclination you have to grow to the house. I wish I could feel, as I was taking my pleasant and healthful rides, that you were taking more of country air and needful exercise. Mrs. Fisher says I am much more grey than the day she first saw me, but if you shut yourself up and I go riding at the rate of 2 hours every day we won't know each other. So I again insist upon your taking frequent rides. Go out on the country roads, get good wholesome air and plenty of it and you will do good to yourself and Charlie and me also and all around you.

I know you have enjoyed your visit and only doubt if you stayed long enough to give you a good thorough invigorating draught of country air.

I feel disposed to lecture you individually and collectively. Distance saves me from retaliation or if attempted, it will be so diluted by the time it reaches me as to be divested of power to harm.

I have asked that copies of some of the stray letters I enclose for your edification may be kept. As this would involve much expenditure of time and labor, perhaps, my friends to whom they are addressed would in most cases favor you with copies. They may contain facts which may prove useful by way of remembrances hereafter. I hope my letter to Dr. Armsby herewith enclosed may do much good to the medical faculty. I think it worthy of a place in the State medical transactions, but the faculty are proverbially so jealous of each other that I cannot expect even so simple an act of justice.

I have sent this morning by the way of Southampton direct to Jennie a long letter

which will reach you in all probability a month after this, but it will serve to fill up a chasm which would otherwise exist.

Last Saturday I received via San Francisco letters dated in April, May, June and July to the 27th of the last of said months, on Thursday of last week your letters of August 6th and the same day the letter of August 15 sent through the department and last evening your letter of August 8th sent via San Francisco. I need not say here but will in another sheet what comfort they gave. My dear darling wife and sister and child, again and again God bless and protect you is the prayer of Husband Brother and Father, R.H.P.



[Note: this copy seems to be in Ber's hand, not RHP's]

Legation of the United States in Japan
Yedo, November 20th 1862

My Dear Mr. and Mrs. Ostrom,

It was not made known to me till after you had left Japan that you had named your little girl Helen Lansing, a name which was one of those suggested by myself. It was the maiden name of the mother of Mrs. Pruyn, a lady endowed with every Christian grace and virtue, and of my dear child and only daughter, who is now with her, a member of the family in Heaven.

I can only wish that your dear child may be gifted with the loveliness of one of her namesakes and live to attain the excellence of the other and adorn the Christian character, in life and in death, as she did.

I have desired to present your child in the name of my wife and her sister with some trifling yet durable memorial of those whose name she bears. As I do not know what will prove most serviceable and acceptable and little opportunity is afforded here to make the purchase, I enclose my check on Messrs. Russell & Co. Shanghae for fifty dollars Mexican with which I desire you to have made in China such articles in silver as you may deem most useful and desirable for your child. Please place on them with the initials of your child those of my wife JLP and of her sister SYL or so much of the same as may find room.

With my best wishes for the happiness of yourselves and child
I am very sincerely and truly
Your friend, etc.

R.H. Pruyn

My Dear Mother,

I have a very sore thumb so you will please excuse the ‘orrid writing
Ber



Kanagawa, Japan, 6 o'clock p.m., November 24 1862

My Beloved Wife,

I have sealed up a formidable package of letters to your address which will be forwarded by Messrs. C.W. Brooks & Co. by express with a large bundle of silks and a small one of vines and seeds. And now, having sealed up all my public documents and letters to San Francisco, I sit down with aching back and fingers to have a quiet chat with you, keeping this as the last letter to be put in the mail. Fisher has left his office for dinner at a friend's. I will take one at 7 o'clock, and you and I are alone.

In your very cheerful letters of August you speak of a year's absence. You will see, my darling, when this arrives that my year will be extended to at least a year here in Japan from my arrival, according to my present best judgement, founded on the unpromising aspect of public affairs at home, at least a year from this time in Japan—a long time as I write this, but diminished by at least two months when you shall have read these lines. My heart aches as I now read the record of events. What has transpired, known at this time to you but a blank to me? I am pleased to hear you say you will rely on my judgement. I believe if you and I shall be spared to compare notes we shall be found to agree in our judgement of what I shall meanwhile consider my duty. If this savage war and rebellion is not crushed out soon what will become of property and values at the North? A wreck will be found floating in the tempest tossed sea almost as sad as that which now looms up so darkly from the southern horizon. I know now what in my judgement is best. It is, as above stated, whether to change for the better or worse, the tidings now on their way may materially decide.

Of this, rest assured, the bias is strong in favor of home and thither my steps will take me as soon as I can feel that duty and inclination are not at war. The accuracy of my judgement in April and before that in March, when it would have been so pleasant to have turned back, makes me feel more self-reliant now. It was hard to see those words "come, come," turn up everywhere and yet it was pleasant too. I would not have

changed it and yet I feared you might think I was thoroughly selfish and wished to consult my own pleasure to the sacrifice of domestic ties and happiness. All the pleasures and enjoyments here would be outweighed by a few tranquil hours at home where I wish to see if it is possible for me to keep away from the thousand and one duties, self-imposed and assumed, which ever occupied so much of my time.

I still feel that were it possible you and Sue and dear Charlie could be with me, that it would be well my entire term were passed here. It would be best for us all and yet I cannot take it on my conscience to urge it, as I fear you might be entirely exhausted by the dreadful sea sickness which now it pains me more to know afflicts you, than ever it did before. Because now it stands and with magic wand bids you back.

I have just resumed writing after dashing off a few lines for my darling child. I did not wish ever to seem to forget him. And my time is now drawing to a close for it is $\frac{1}{4}$ of 7 o'clock.

Bertie is over at Kanagawa at Mr. Fisher's house. We will return to Yedo tomorrow to live alone for a long time. Mr. DeWitt, the Dutch Consul General who was occasionally there, having left for Nagasaki. He has been quite sick.

His sickness had its origin in the island of Java where he resided many years and where often a fearful dysentery prevails. Two young gentlemen will accompany me. You see I am not often alone. I intend to give all Americans here a chance to see Yedo.

I am sorry that Charlie is so uneasy about Townsend. The best plan he could have taken would have been to obtain for him an office in the militia. Then if called to go he would be entitled to that rank. I suppose the question has been settled before this. But then there may be another call. The Union must be preserved. Were I home, grey as I am, I would go and fight for it. Could not resist. Here I can only pray for it.

But I am glad I am doing good service to my country here. I have no easy position. I shall make it effective and productive of good results with God's blessing.

And now my sweet wife, we must again part for a season, and that God may bless and spare the lives of you and dear Sue and sweet little Charlie is more than the daily prayer of your loving faithful husband.

Robt. H. Pruyn



No. 13 U.S. Legation, Yedo, November 30 1862

My Beloved Wife,

A few minutes since I received a letter from Yokohama informing me that a steamer would leave for Shanghai tomorrow. Although the same letter announces that a vessel

will be dispatched for San Francisco in December, which may bear a letter which will overtake this, I will not forego the opportunity.

You will see I am again at Yedo, the head of the only foreign household in the city of millions. I am glad it is so. It involves no real danger, though invested with very great and putative imaginary ones. I should be ashamed to return from a port of inglorious ease, to meet those who had exhausted health and strength in the camp and left limbs on the battle field and others who mourned because friends and relations and companions cannot, all having sacrificed life, limb, or health in defense of our country in its hour of calamity and trial. I hope at least justice will be done to me at home. I see the English papers say all the foreign ministers have left Yedo. This is true if I am not foreign, otherwise a base slander. Please see that our papers correct this slander in good strong terms.

I think the evidence you have recently received of my position with this government will reassure you. I think either the *Standard* or *Kinderbooker* said I would soon own Japan. This was very extravagant language. But all the foreign ministers combined cannot outweigh either my popularity or influence. I may be permitted to boast a little when I only wish to give quiet to a dear little affectionate wife who fears perhaps I'm among cannibals and so I will say that if the Japanese government today had the offer made of Mr. Harris' return at the expense of my departure, it would most vigorously remonstrate, and simply because they have found one equally reliable as a friend, but more equable in temper and always the same: considerate, cautious and prompt. And yet I have used plain and bold language when necessary to do so. I have not yielded anything for which I have ever contended and should my dispatches be published you will see I have told good wholesome truths in terse Anglo-Saxon language.

I enclose a letter to Lansing Pruyn which you may deliver or not as you see fit. One object I have is to find a good companion and associate to Bertie, as Mr. Kip will leave in March if not before. Should young Lansing wish to come it has occurred to me that Uncle C. Abraham might desire here to seek a renovation of health. Yet let me say the country is quite damp. Leather will mildew almost in a day. I doubt, my darling, after all, if it is the right place for those whose lungs are affected. And yet today we have the Japonica in bloom in the open air and the rose and chrysanthemum and green fields and trees everywhere. It is a paradise, a perfect garden and if Eden was not located here when the curse fell on our first parents, all the beauties of this primeval home were transferred to this outermost isle of the Earth. I will only say if you choose you may send me any young man whom you would wish to have as a companion of our boy and I can give him a safe and pleasant home, a good chance to see the world and if he desire it in all probability a good situation here. My business to Russell & Co. will be worth \$10,000 this year and to other large houses very much and I can have influence with many of them. I am willing to abide by your selection. In saying this I am at present

calculating about leaving here in a year subject to such change in my purposes as the future may necessitate. And then my visitor may circumnavigate the globe.

I am happy to say that I received on Friday your letter of September 1st, and I should remark here that while occasionally a letter via San Francisco may reach me sooner than through the government, it will rarely happen. One way there is a regular snail, the other no certainty of one for weeks. A letter may chance to strike a vessel just leaving for Shanghae, perhaps Japan, but the chance is very remote. From here it is otherwise; a vessel leaving here for San Francisco will be likely to give you news in 60 days. Your letters are more comforting because more comfortable. They no longer partake of the character of the "Irish mail." And while they do not say "Come," they bear that invitation by their mere arrival as legibly impressed on them as if written with the pen. My darling think of it, one year nearly more, one and a sixth of a year when this shall have been received and imparted. When we meet again you will have to get rid of sea sickness and move with me whenever I am obliged to travel. We must be perfect Siamese twins. This is one of those day dreams in which I now indulge.

It is well my dear I am hopeful and cheerful. Talk of worrying and excitement at home! What is more wearing than doubt, anxiety for the future depresses and exhausts far more than the very presence of evils worse than those apprehended. We get news and like a sensation story with "to be continued" staring us in the face with large capitals, we are left in the midst of a battle conjecturing the worst for two weeks until another mail arrive to extricate us from one doubt only to plunge us in a darker and deeper one.

But as I only intend to write you one sheet at a time of my royal octavo epistles, I will stop this strain and speak of more personal matters.

I hasten to say before I forget it that the tortoise shell work I sent you is likely to warp by heat. Don't leave it too much in a hot and dry room. Perhaps it would be well to observe that precaution as to all the articles of wood and shell. We have no hot air furnaces here.

You speak in your last letter of that too highly celebrated and too much abused boy Tommy and are sorry he is in my household. I forgot I had not informed you the government took him away and I, by Mr. Harris' advice, made them send him back. He is a quiet, inoffensive boy, quite studious. Does not take a drop of wine or liquor and is as harmless and inoffensive as anybody can be and as good as a heathen can be. It is one of the cases where distance does not lend enchantment to the scene.

I send you our password just as it was handed in this evening. You see we live under martial law. No one enters or leaves this house, even the servants after sun down, without the password. I have a regiment around me of at least 500 men, with 20 to 30 guard horses, sentinels all around, a vice Governor in command in the house, sentinels drinking tea and smoking all night on one of the verandas and in the hall. The word "*takee*" which means bamboo, is pronounced *takee*. The Japanese is written with a brush

by one of the guard. The words “waka” and “take” by Masuda,¹⁸⁶ one of the interpreters next to Tommy and Bertie, wrote the English words “Young and Bamboo.” Masuda usually gives the English words but he had omitted them this evening.

But, my dear wife, time and space both draw to an end and I must send off this letter.

What you say about the Church liking J.D.W. is all well. But he would make no Pastor for our Church or he has altered much. I read today aloud Dr. Halley's¹⁸⁷ sermon, a very fair one. I could fancy precisely how it was delivered.

And now, my darling, with oceans of love for yourself and Charlie and Sue and all my dear friends I am once more obliged to part with you. Each letter is ended sadly for that reason. I could more easily write on. We feel rather blue about war news. We are in the midst of the battle of September 19, undecided though victorious. God will be with the right. That is enough. I don't despair. He rules on Earth as well as in Heaven. Adieu, God bless you and ours. R.H.P.



My Dear Wife,

I send you and Sue each a fine black silk (purple hue however) which will last a life time, also some ordinary silks for your use and two pieces of crepe silk, narrow, for a dress for Baby. I also send two pieces of silk, same pattern as yours and Sue's but of a different color, for Lansing Pruyn. He requested me to send some for Anna and Emma. I gave in other letter to him a statement of the cost as it actually cost me.

To enable you fully to understand this, bear in mind I receive from the government a certain amount of *itzabus*, weight for weight, which gives me for \$1040, say 3100 *itzabus*, while they are now passing for, say, 2288 *itzabus* to the same number of dollars. This brings the prices of things down to me and yet you will see I could sell mine at a profit if I did not spend them.

The dresses I send you and Sue cost me 64 *itzabus* each. The black and white plaid cost together 47½ *itzabus*. The common large plaid 12½ *itzabus*, the small plaids, thin silk, cost each 12 *itzabus* and the dress for Betsy twelve *itzabus*. The sewing silk cost 16 *itzabus* a pound. I will give you the cost of braids some other time. Now to all this you must add one fifth because it costs that to get Mexican dollars here. At this rate I have made out what the silk of L[ansing] P[ruyn] cost, asking him to pay you. Should he not like the silks take them and in my name send to F[rederick] W. Seward, one to his wife,

¹⁸⁶ Masuda Takashi 益田孝 (1848-1938) became a translator for Townsend Harris at the age of 14. He later was a successful industrialist and entrepreneur.

¹⁸⁷ Ebenezer Halley (1801-1881) was the referent at the Third Presbyterian Church in Albany.

and one to Mrs. Lincoln.

I wish you and Sue to accept these dresses as New Year's presents. I have not your letter here. You wrote for something for Betsy and the girls (Mary etc.). Perhaps from what I have sent now and at the commencement of the month you may make a selection.

You had better not part with any of these silks particularly if no duty has been paid. The best ones I sent you at the commencement of the month cost \$1 per yard. Add to this 2 bits and you have actual cost per yard. Small plaids \$6 per dress, say \$7.50, allowing for exchange and merchant duty. I only add $\frac{1}{5}$ for exchange in my letter to L[ansing] P[ruyn]. The actual rate in New York is so that you only get 60 cents here for each dollar you pay in New York. I simply take exchange on England and call it $\frac{1}{5}$. Perhaps you can get all this through your head. Keep those silks you don't want till we meet and I will explain all. There are some trifles in the bundle for Charlie such as fish lines and pole which may amuse him to think of but not use, and a little tray and heart of camellia.

I hope you and Sue will be pleased with your dresses. I think they are exceedingly beautiful as also those for Anna and Emma Pruyn. You will have to charge L[ansing] Pruyn within a dollar or so of one half of any duty which may be paid (if any) by Mr. Brooks. I have asked him to advise you, say, one half of express charges in addition.

Should Anna or Emma wish one of those light silks sent you of the dollar kind the cost should be including charges, if no duty was paid, say \$1.40 or \$1.50 per yard. Let me know how cheap these are and what is the price of sewing silk. The thin binding I send you costs 5 cents each piece. The common narrow thick braid about six cents per yard. The finer costs more, I forget how much. The price I will send from Yedo. Don't be afraid, I am going to stop buying now, but send on if you want anything. Don't send money here. If you wish Ber to have any from you say how much. I will advance it. He is getting a good sound sum together to travel back through Europe. I suppose I must have over \$600 for him.

I think you had better get an insurance of say \$1,000 or \$1,500 on the articles I have on board the ship *Benefactor* owned by A. A. Low Bros. and now on its way to New York, where it is expected to arrive in February having left here early in October. The Albany office will probably take the risk. Messrs. Low & Co. can tell the class of the vessel which I think is A. 1.

I could not replace these articles for that sum even with *itzabus* in my favor as they are.

Hold on to them. We will distribute presents on my return. I have as many more articles on hand. We will have an old curiosity shop.

I am perfectly willing you shall sell the mirror. The house I wish. I will send money to pay off the mortgage but let other things be taken care of first.

This is a business letter which please keep quietly to yourself and Sue. I only wish you were here. Oh for the wonderful lamp of Aladdin. Sea sickness presto, be gone.

Things look blue at home. I dread now to open a mail. I cannot think but a change, glorious change must soon come.

Affectionately yours,

R

I learn from Mr. Hogg he had only put 3 vines with the cuttings in my package. I will send hereafter for General G[ansevoort] and E[ugene] V[an] R[ensselaer]. You had better give these for me to Mr. Dingwall and he can multiply our joint account.



No. 13 U.S. Legation, Yedo, December 7 1862

My Beloved Wife,

While riding yesterday on the Tokaido, on my way to Kawasaki half way between this and Kanagawa, I met a messenger bearing me your very welcome letters of August 28 and September 10, with two Albany and 3 New York papers of August and September and two California papers sent by Mr. Brooks of as late date as October 10. The public news was very encouraging, as I look upon the grand rebel demonstration northward, which was so gallantly repelled, as one of the last expiring flickerings of the candle of rebellion.

Your letters made me very happy, showing you all in good health and spirits, although I regretted to learn you had received no letters later than May 28. You must however bear in mind that by regular mail you cannot expect letters short of 90 days and generally a longer time may elapse as the letters may be delayed so as not to reach Shanghae till after the departure of the mail from that port and possibly by failure of connection at other ports. When we chance to have a vessel direct for California, you may receive letters in sixty days, or even less. I even indulge in the hope that this may be your good fortune with those packages of letters forwarded that way in October and November by the *Storm Cloud*, *Josephine* and steamer *Scotland*, the latter conveying also a bundle of silk to care of C. W. Brooks & Co. to be forwarded you by express.

I would here advise that while you write a few letters each month via San Francisco, you forward your letters through the government, except such as contain important confidential matters, which had better go by steamer via Panama or by steamer via Marseilles, according to their urgency, the latter being more reliable because there is a regular mail, while the former may ensure me letters in from two to five months as chance may determine.

As Charlie will be so much relieved, he can easily spare you and Sue. He will receive

from me what I have said and much more. I believe you will all be benefitted by the journey. And if Townsend can be spared by his father he can be spared to come with you and I can provide for his support and more if need be.

December 14

I this morning received your letter written at Watertown. I was rejoiced to hear of that visit as I know you need change of air and relaxation, and if you do not think of your own health, my darling, don't forget Charlie's. He needs an extraordinary amount of good wholesome exercise, not violent and spasmodic but regular and systematic.

I notice your enquiring in this last letter, "Do you feel safe?" And you ask me to be perfectly candid. I suppose by this time you need no such assurance. I know you must have felt uneasy. I then say I step as far from apprehension as I would at Albany. At one place I might suffer by an attack for plunder or by the entry of a thief in here by some bigoted or drunken enemy who made no discrimination as to foreigners, viewing all as enemies. But surrounded as we are by watchful guards on duty all night and every day, I think there is no real danger. You know what C[ornelius] Ten Broeck said to Charlie as to the danger of crossing the Atlantic; Charlie returned safe, while he was nearly killed by a brick which fell from scaffolding. I do not suppose there is wholistic safety anywhere, else no lives would be lost by violence. But I fear nothing here, and I think my confidence will not be misplaced but that God may spare you and me and all of us to meet again. Once for all I will say therefore you may rely on my being prudent and watchful. Should I at any time change my opinion as to my safety I shall promptly advise you.

I believe I have already written I have no objections to you reading any of my letters to friends. I do not wish my letters published in the papers bodily because I am prohibited from acting as correspondent. But there are very many facts etc. which are not of a political character which could be extracted and published with propriety.

In the articles sent by the *Benefactor* there are such numberless little things I cannot describe them. I now only think of these things to allude to. 1. Many of the small ones in granite valuable. 2. These are some round porcelain and copper inlaid beads. Some are quite common, some very fine, which please keep. The large lacquered (black and gold) box which contains 5 compartments one above the other, has three covers, one packed separately, one on the top and the other in a shell placed at the lower part of the box in which it is enclosed, so that you can divide it into 3 boxes if you please. Keep all. I think you had better keep what I send for distribution on my return.

Bertie continues well, cheerful and contented. If we were all united here, he would be contented to remain a long while. I hope Sarah Armsby is well. If anything should happen to her I would be afraid we would lose Sue. I think she must have looked inviting. I hope however she will never [have] that done however. I would never be able

to get to bed. Visits would be prolonged so much beyond midnight. I hope the Doctor will have my letters published in the *State Medical Transactions*. If so I shall furnish some more useful medical information. He can use them at all events in his lectures in the Medical College. They would certainly attract students, I mean the letters I enclosed for him on the medical practices of Japan.

I wish you to say to Charlie that if prices for ships should be high now, it will answer to have one of the sloops hurried up for the Japanese government and the others contracted for more leisurely. I shall write about this via San Francisco and if the parties here are not disappointed in the arrival of the ship expected to be here soon on its way to that port he will hear from me about the time this reaches you. I will send an order also for Sharpes Rifles and Maynards Primers. Let him make engines at the price of each so as to be prepared to act with dispatch. Also enquire the price of a machine for making the Maynard Primer.

As to the Works, I will also write my views. Do as you please, don't needlessly sacrifice them. I know that if I were home I could sell a lease to government contractors at a good rate. If Mr. Weed is home when this reaches let Charlie see what he can do for them.

I am sorry I have no particulars as to Commercial Bank and V[isscher] T[en] E[yck]. I am not surprised to hear he was implicated. Same way with G[ilbert] L. W[ilson].¹⁸⁸ They were much together and he got some advantage on Central Rail Road business, I always thought from Wilson. I was surprised at his death to find things so sorry and thought T[en] E[yck] was either very fortunate or very wise, which in the world's judgement is about the same thing. I should like to have the city news articles cut out of the daily papers and sent in each *Littell's [Living] Age*. The papers are sometimes opened at Washington and the Albany papers come in the same enclosure as the Washington, some of them at least.

I cannot give you a long letter this evening, because my messenger must start at least by daylight in order to reach before closing of mail at Kanagawa.

I think the best thing our Church and Dr. Rogers could do would be to resume their relations. I suppose it is possible and the doctor would do the wisest and best thing he ever has done. He will never enjoy himself or succeed in New York as he anticipates.

It is now within a few days of a year since we separated. It will be at least another year before we meet if it depend on my return. This war will put things back so much. If the Works are sold, no business matter can require my return, and if you can bring yourself to come out, I would prefer not to do so at least till 1865. Why should I, except for your sake and little Charlie's? Look at my situation and prospects here. They should not be lightly given up. Can't my family join me? Remember Sue is part of it, at least

¹⁸⁸ Gilbert L. Wilson, who was a director of Merchants' Bank of Albany (1860 *Directory*).

until she marries. I will not have said this had you not given me the description of that affecting meeting. I will stipulate Charlie shall have all he wants and as fast as he wants it for myself and him. And he may do what he will then about selling the Works, if he do not bring me a debt there. I never, however, put them so low as he does. Why does he continue the iron blinds advertisement? I have written about that and would really like Haskell to give me some information about this business. How was the inventory for year's business? Anything is better than to be in entire ignorance of what has transpired. He should be able to get a good deal of business out of this order of ships. The boilers might be built at Albany. He could arrange that with the contractors. If he did not wish to undertake it he might make use of it to leave to those who did, or sell at a good round price.

But my darling, I must close. And I do so the more readily because I expect a letter, which I hope to write at once, will reach you before this does and I will make it long and good. So my dear wife, with my fondest love and prayers for you and my darling child and sister Sue and Cornelia and Alida and Mary and Abby and all friends, I am with weariness of absence yours as wholly as if were not 15,000 miles separated.

R

When I send letters direct the postage is priced just the same as when to the department. That accounts for so many having that address.



U.S. Legation, Japan, Yedo, December 30 1862

My Precious wife,

One year ago this day I left Albany to commence a worldwide journey. It appears an age ago and yet at times like yesterday. How vivid is my recollection of what was said and done. The very words I addressed your father appear yet to echo on the air. I appear to feel the presence of his hand. In two days a year will have passed since we parted, a year which has dragged its hours slowly and even painfully along and yet what a short span after all as you look back upon.

Its arches lengthen out like those of a bridge and yet you have to measure it by events to form anything like an estimate of its real extent. And yet how full of sad memories. We would be rebellious and sin if we said there were not some pleasant memories mingled with them. There has been a silver lining to the cloud. And though thick clouds have surrounded our horizon out of these and over these God's bow of promise has risen majestically and unfolds to our view its brilliant and harmonious radiance.

I am now preparing to wish you and do now wish you and my darling Charlie and dear Sue and all my dear brothers and sisters a Happy, Happy New Year. May God in his mercy give us this year a smiling Heaven above us, with no clouds to darken its serene beauty, no storms of sorrow to leave their wrecks behind. And whether our separation endure for its entire period or even longer may God in his infinite love grant we may all meet in health and happiness rejoicing in His love reigning in our hearts.

Will not your heart be gladdened to receive Bertie's letter, to know that in this heathen land he has found a precious savior. He intends to go down tomorrow and hold a final conversation with Mr. Brown with a view to communion on Sabbath. I hope he will commune with us. Such is his intention and the necessary papers I hope will reach you so that his name may be entered in the records of our Church in April.

Is not this more than a lining to the cloud? Is it not a radiant orb in and by itself?

And now, my dear, darling wife, it is midnight. I have had a hard week's work and on Christmas a most dreadful toothache which made me feel miserable, home sick and all over sick.

But I am now well and can say Bertie is developing magnificently and making a man.

Adieu, my darling. Kisses for my dear precious boy. Kisses for dear Sue. Love to all and for you, my dear precious wife, never more dear than now, the fondest remembrance and the deepest love of your husband.

Robt. H. Pruyn

1863

Kanagawa, January 1 1863

My Darling Wife,

On this New Year's day over land and sea with its thousands of miles of inexorable distances I wish you a Happy New Year and Charlie my precious boy a Happy New Year and dear Sue a Happy New Year and Charlie and Abby and Townsend, all my Brothers and Sisters and dear Friends. The words do not reach you quite as soon as if uttered at home. They are as warm and heartfelt.

The vessel which takes this sails in a few minutes. Bertie and I have come down, he to see about teeth and to talk to Mr. Brown about joining the Church. He has left his letters at Yedo. Has sent for them and they will go by *Timandra* Saturday.

With love and kisses for Albany, a Happy New Year and the choicest of blessings from your loving husband and father, my dearest wife and child,
Robt. H. Pruyne



Yokohama, January 2 1863, 3 ¾ p.m.

My Darling Wife,

I find the *Timandra* leaves this evening. This letter I send to go forward by first mail, the other package by *Timandra* to be sent forward by different vessel from that which carries the letter per *Emily Banning* to California. The order of these packages reaching you will depend however entirely upon the sailing merits and good fortune of these two vessels leaving within so short a time of each other.

I continue writing though having nothing special to add. I will leave for another letter further descriptions of Japan.

I had a pleasanter New Year in some respects than last year. I had not the parting with you, my dear wife, to go through with. I had not indeed at that time the recollection of

sorrow then hidden in the future, now prominent in the past. But these sorrows we will receive as mercies in disguise. And then one year of our separation has glided by. So this year has been in that respect more pleasant than its predecessor. It is one year nearer that first New Year which I hope we shall have the pleasure to pass together and oh, will it not be bright and beautiful if God preserve the lives of our dear children and ourselves?

My dear darling wife, Mr. Fisher is standing ready to take this letter and put it in the mail so I must stop.

With love and kisses for yourself and my dear boy and Sue,
Adieu R.H.P.



Legation of the United States Japan
Kanagawa, January 2 1863

My Dear Wife,

I have an opportunity to add a few lines as the *Timandra* will not leave till 10 o'clock or perhaps 12 o'clock tomorrow.

I enclose a letter for Mr. Peltz which please forward. You will understand to what I allude. I am ashamed of the letter almost. It was written in great haste and the conclusion looks unlike my letters, even when no great attempt is made at neatness. But it must go as it is. Please say to Mr. P[eltz] I owe him a letter and hope soon to pay that debt. But you cannot imagine how I am hurried now. Tomorrow the 2nd installment of the money for war steamers is paid. I am engaged *entre nous* in negotiating a treaty for which Commissioners have been appointed and three meetings have been held and somehow or other labor follows me here to ease loving Japan. Here where I expected nothing to do I have everything to do.

Tomorrow I may find time to add a few lines. Please show Mr. Olcott the stereoscopic views I send of the Tycoons' Cemetery. The smaller views were taken by a poor young man, son of a missionary in the Sandwich Islands, Mr. Gulick.¹⁸⁹ I had the pleasure of getting the *Ringleader* to bring him here for half price and Mrs. Alden collected the money at San Francisco. I say this in order that if anyone wishes any of them they may send for them. He charges 12 bits for them not mounted.

I will send Mr. Olcott a set which I had promised. He has six views of Tycoons' Cemetery which completes that set.

Please say to Dr. Armsby they have a crab which measures 11 feet from tip to tip of claw. I will try to get one for the colleges. Mr. Gulick now has one of that size. It may be

¹⁸⁹ John Thomas Gulick (1832-1923) was a photographer and missionary.

interesting to you to say that Barnum's manufactured mermaid had its origins in Japan. They make them here first rate so that you cannot tell where the real fish (tails) end and the manufactured part (head) begins. If the Medical College would like one I can easily obtain it. They abound here.

They do say they have monkeys with feathers. I have seen them without them, but having instead a kind of long wool or hair. They have some chickens here with black bones and flesh. I have seen these and I believe they are of the hairy variety.

If a painter like [Frederic E.] Church should visit Japan he would not only make a future but an enduring reputation. The only difficulty he would meet would be that his landscapes could scarcely be regarded as real. Look at the photographs I send, even those in my little enclosure. Are they not picturesque? Compare them with the gables and roofs and chimneys in Albany or New York. See what lines of beauty, what elegant combinations of tree, roof, monument and pagoda.

I cannot write all I feel. It is the country above all others for the poet and the artist. And the time will come when the tourist will visit Japan as fully as they now do Switzerland and other parts of the continent. Before that happens and long before, I desire to be snugly seated at Albany with wife children and friends beside me and oh what yarns I will be able to spin of Japan until you shall say, "Robert go to bed," which I will now proceed to do as it is 11 o'clock and there are some strong indications that Mrs. Fisher, whose youngest child is of Charlie's age, will not be able tomorrow morning to say it is the youngest, with which delicate announcement of a future event I will close this epistle.

Good night and adieu. The rest tomorrow if my life is spared and time is given.

R



Kanagawa, January 2 1863

My Dear Wife,

Last evening I saw the receding sails of a vessel which was rapidly bearing to the shores of America "A Happy New Year" most fervently wished for you and my precious child and Sue and all my friends.

This afternoon or tomorrow, I am yet not advised which, another vessel follows in the same trackless pathway.

Whether this mail will bring you letters from Bertie I cannot yet say. He has gone to Yokohama. He has had a present from Mr. Verbeck¹⁹⁰ of one of the most beautiful ponies

¹⁹⁰ Guido Verbeck (1830-1898) was a Dutch political advisor, educator, and missionary. He had spent considerable time in the United States.

you ever saw. It came from Hakodate on the island of Yezo. It is only as high as my breast and no horse in Yedo yet seen has been able to keep up with him. In the races here last year it came in second. Bertie is of course proud of him and delights occasionally to dash ahead. This renders it necessary for some of the guard to accompany him, which they have to do at a gallop. This is done with great good nature amidst the laughter of their companions who delight to see them thus put to their speed. Bertie has a package of letters at Yedo. For these he went to Mr. Portman yesterday, who, misunderstanding his wishes, sent a parcel of useless old official letters. Should he return in time I will be able to enclose a few lines from him at least.

It is of course my purpose to remain over Sabbath, when we have Communion, and then return to Yedo from which it is a great trouble to leave. I had not been about for five weeks when I came down to spend Christmas here.

I yesterday received from the Ministers a letter handsomely expressed, wishing me a Happy New Year, which I send you as a curiosity.¹⁹¹ Please have it framed with a neat frame. I will send you a translation when I see Mr. Portman who has remained at Yedo. I will also send Dr. Sprague by next California mail a letter which I have placed aside for him to add to his autographs. My letter you will please have smoothed and framed full sized. You can have translations neatly written and placed below in same frame.

I send you some stereoscopic views of scenes in Japan and some larger views of which I have duplicates, which I preserve in an album. I have many more which I hope someday to show and describe to you. The photograph which I sent yesterday, which was designed to exhibit myself in uniform and which I had taken for the Ministers at their request, I send simply for the purpose of showing what a miserable photograph can be taken.¹⁹²

I never can write so satisfactorily at this place as at Yedo. I am more liable to interruptions whether at the office or at the house. This is the only place where I can receive visits, and with those which are official, and those which are merely friendly, and the time occupied in returning them, my time is pretty well taken up.

As soon as I close this I go over to Yokohama; the boat is now waiting for me. When I ascertain at the Consulate the exact time of the departure of the *Timandra* I can see whether I will have the time as well as the inclination, which latter is strong, to send you another less wandering letter. Meanwhile, so as to avoid the possibility of a failure of what I have written going forward I will close and in another cover send what I may be able to write afterwards.

I wish, my dear wife, many quarters could be added to those which have passed so that I were ready to send my trunks and possessions here on board bound for home instead of these poor lines.

¹⁹¹ The Japanese at this time had not yet adopted the Gregorian calendar. Their New Year message, thus, was exclusive for Westerners. The Japanese New Year in 1863 was on February 18 in the Gregorian calendar.

¹⁹² See <https://perma.cc/FMA2-XD63>

You are right in one thing. If at home I could not be so poor spirited as not to be rendering some service to my country. The very fact of my having been in our militia service so long would seem to qualify me more for active duty and render it less possible because less honorable to stand idle.

God grant our country may come out of this conflict purified by her trials and if scarred and worn, at least with the wounds of honor and the lessons of future greatness, glory and usefulness ready for grand and immediate development.

Adieu my dear wife, receiving for yourself and precious Charlie and dear Sue and all my friends who remember me my love, and best wishes and for yourself Sue, and dear little Charlie. Warm affectionate loving wishes from Father, Brother, Husband,
R.H.P.



Kanagawa, January 3 1863

You will be rejoiced to see the letter from Reverend Mr. Brown, in relation to Bertie. He speaks to me of him in the highest terms and thinks he is a boy of fine promise. May he be spared to us, my dear wife, and we for each other!

I shall after Sabbath advise Bertie to send an application in due form for admission to our Church, with the proper certificate from Mr. Brown.

I am glad the *Timandra* was delayed yesterday so that this letter might go forward.

I have barely time to get it in the mail and as I seal this Mr. Fisher will close the bag. Love and kisses for dear Charlie and Sue and for you, my darling wife, from
Your husband



Kanagawa, January 5 1863
No. 3 of 1863

My Dear Wife,

On the first and 3rd of this year two vessels left for San Francisco bearing my hearty loving Happy New Year to you over five thousand miles of the Pacific and over our grand continent. While they are speeding on their way with the prospect of reaching you in sixty days, these lines will belt the Earth going hence on Wednesday toward the setting sun, not to reach you till long after both packages hastening eastwards have been received and read.

Those letters will have proved blessed messengers bearing to you the tidings that our

dear boy has found the Savior precious to his soul in this heathen land fulfilling thus the words of the promise "If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost part of the sea; Even then shall thy hand lead me and thy right hand shall hold me." I have spoken to Bertie about sending a certificate of Mr. Brown accompanied by his application to our Church, particularly on the grounds of his influence upon his companions. He prefers delaying the application there until his return. If you agree with me as to the propriety of completing his membership now (bear in mind it is now informal there being no regular Church here) you can advise him so without alluding to my letter to you.

By day I feel the distance between us more than in the evening. Then when standing beneath the glittering stars, seeing the North Star and the Great Bear with its pointers and Orion and archers and Sirius, all of which became more familiar companions on our Pacific voyage, they look just as at home, as if occupying the precise relations to me as when standing at our old corner of State Street. It is only when the eye rests upon the earth that I can realize I am so far off. And yet as if to make me feel less a stranger here, the first snow of the winter is now falling. It will however neither be deep nor long, for all around me are green fields and green trees and within sight are trees bright with the dark crimson Japonica and laden with the cumquat, a small fruit like the orange and which you have often seen in Chinese sweetmeats. It looks however as if I might be able to gather a good sized snow ball and is by no means an unwelcome sight, being the first snow I have seen since we left Albany. It freezes a little each night, but the morning sun takes the frost entirely out of the ground and our weather this winter is like that of a beautiful October day.

Let me give you a little more idea of our marketing a Yedo. We have had roast oysters daily for lunch. Fifty-cents a week will pay for all of these and oysters for dinner two or three times beside. Four crabs cost one *tempo*, 2 cents, good sized fat ones better than those at home. Small sweet oranges, fourteen for a *tempo*, large ones 6 for a *tempo*. Mr. Brown has purchased from a boat 27 oranges for a *tempo*. Lemons are just as cheap. We are never without fruit. We found oranges on our arrival in April and now you see them by the thousands. Grapes, to my sorrow, have about disappeared. For two or three months we had them in excellent order and great abundance.

There is at this time considerable commotion in the foreign community on the subject of danger of attack. I was aroused at four o'clock by information that two Governors of Foreign Affairs had come down from Yedo to see me. The subject of their communication was simply that rumors of the gathering of horrible bands of *ronins* had reached there and that they were scattered in bands of ten or so. But that they cannot say as yet whether any credit should be given to the rumors. They have sent down a government war steamer to take me up to Yedo, preferring I shall not travel by the highway until they feel reassured. So you see they are vigilant. And although it is to be regretted any necessity for the exercise of such vigilance exists, I feel safe in the vigilance and good faith of the government. I expect to go up Wednesday and feel safer in Yedo

where I am still entirely alone, than here where the British and French ministers are each of them surrounded by armed soldiers and sailors with three men-of-war in the harbor. Here or rather at Yokohama they are always in a fever. Merchants have sent specie on ship board. I only allude to this because you are liable to hear exaggerated reports from other sources. But it is only a repetition of what we have had all summer. My own impression is that the causes of uneasiness will be diminished rather than increased and that we soon expect the foreign community to be less sensitive to these reports, which after all may be repeated more frequently because they are seen to prove so annoying. All I can say in addition is we take every necessary and possible precaution and I think the government is exceedingly solicitous and careful for our safety, perhaps unnecessarily so. I should say that the word *ronins* is equivalent to our word "vagabonds," or persons without employment. So that you see it is only a chance attack, such as one might be liable to sustain in London or New York, is what the government would guard against, feeling that if made it would here cause a stigma to attach to the government itself which elsewhere it would only be regarded as an act of individual malice for which the government of any other country would not be held in any degree responsible.

I therefore repeat what I have said to you before. I feel that we are safe at Yedo and particularly there because there we are known as Americans, necessarily better known than here, as there none live but Americans in our Legation while here we are liable to be confounded with other nationalities.

So little time has elapsed since I sent large packages via California that I have little additional to say. I only write now because a steamer is about leaving for Shanghae, which if suffered to depart without a letter to you might cause too great an interval to exist between the time of the arrival of my letters. I hope therefore to resume weekly letters at least and occasionally via California to have opportunity to send supernumerary packages. It by no means follows that you will receive letters each week. Their arrival at Albany must be contingent upon the length of too many voyages and the meeting of too many mails. The arrival of a vessel a day later at Shanghae may cause a delay of one mail and this liable to be repeated in England. I have been congratulating myself today that more than one 80th part of 1863 has already gone, when this reaches you only think one quarter will have passed. Think, my darling, how much more and many more anxious separations exist now. I hope that ours will be in the future, an event which will form a source of comfort, though regarded now with so much sorrow. At the worst, it will be less than a cruise of a naval officer or some partings even in times of peace of army officers from their families. So keep up a good courage, my darling. Time flies. As it flies may it bear on its wings nothing but health, happiness and blessings for us and ours.

I may have time tomorrow when the mail closes to send dear little Charlie a few lines, though I cannot send such a letter as I desire now to send him each mail. I want more time to brush up my ideas.

How do you like the appearance of my cavalry? Imagine them all dressed in silk and

satin which many a belle would gladly desire for an evening dress and you can better understand how gallantly they are arrayed. They are fearless riders and each one is armed with two swords, one of exceeding length which takes two hands to wield.

And now, my darling, again comes the parting, the necessity of saying farewell. At this time I desire to remember Mary and Bridget and John Mullen¹⁹³ and Haskell and Brown,¹⁹⁴ Pettit¹⁹⁵ etc. and indeed all without going through their names.

I should have said in answer to your letter saying Dr. Rogers had probably written to me about his going to New York that I have had only two letters from him, the latest of the date of March. I imagine he cannot easily put in writing anything which would satisfy himself, much less anything he knows would be satisfactory to me.

With love to Abby and Charlie and Townsend and the children and love and kisses for Sue and dear little Charlie and for you my love. Again receive the adieu of your absent but neither forgetting nor forgotten husband.

Robt. H. Pruyn



Yedo, January 17 1863

My Dear Wife,

Your letter of October 25 reached me yesterday and you can hardly imagine with what avidity the home news is always read. When I saw your handwriting, that in the direction simply is an evidence of your continuance in life and health and then when opened I read of friends and home instead of a people, as you do, in whom you are interested simply because they are strange and of a country which, however beautiful, it may be you would cease to think of much if I had turned my face homewards.

I hope as the congregation appears so united and so well pleased you may succeed in getting Mr. Clark.¹⁹⁶ Sooner or later I feel certain all will end right. I have always felt as if something in Dr. R[ogers] could have been improved and while now he has chosen to part with us I shall neither magnify his virtues or his faults. A change may not have been for the worse for us. At least one will hope so.

¹⁹³ John J. Mullen is listed as belonging to the 7th artillery in the Albany Directory of 1863.

¹⁹⁴ Identity unknown. There are dozens of listings for "Brown" in the 1860 Albany directory.

¹⁹⁵ James Pettit (also spelled "Petit") was the superintendent of the Church of the Messiah Sunday School of the Universalist Church in Albany.

¹⁹⁶ Rufus Wheelwright Clark (1813-1886) was a graduate of the Andover Theological Seminary and Yale Divinity School. He served as pastor in Washington D.C., Portsmouth, New Hampshire, East Boston, and Brooklyn before moving to Albany in December 1862 to be the pastor in the First Reformed Church.

I should like to hear the debt was paid and you will please at once pay the Church the balance of my subscription.

The letters of Sue and Charlie to which you referred in the letter of October 8th (I think) have not yet reached me, but (I presume) will struggle along yet.

What a sad thing, the death of General Mitchel is!¹⁹⁷ It grieves me deeply. He would have done well I think in his new field. His ability was good and I think he would have been cautious and successful. But this war must make sad horror in all our families and black must be the dominant color.

I should have said to you that in the articles sent you were some little balls or beads of inlaid porcelain very fine, some were common but you will readily distinguish the best.

Last Sabbath I read for our Yedo Church Dr. Campbell's¹⁹⁸ sermon and found it good. Generally Spurgeon¹⁹⁹ is our preacher, as I have two volumes of his sermons which are very excellent. There are several series. Get the volume which contains the sermon on the Ark, you will like it.

Bertie and I am happy to say continue in good health. He is in good spirits and contented as the owner of two horses should be. I wish his pony was in Albany; it would be worth several hundred dollars there. You say well, he used not to be contented with old Whitey. He was too slow. Ber's horse is very fast and Bertie himself is always asking me to go faster. I like to ride slowly for the sake of the air.

We had another murder in Yedo today. The door keeper at the new legation grounds was attacked and killed by three men. All the parties were Japanese and there is no specific cause in this attack except the murdered man chanced to be at Gotenyama.²⁰⁰ Bertie and the Dutch and Prussian Consul now with me were there three hours after it happened but we did not hear of till evening.

Everything is quiet here. I shall send Charlie the order for rifles in a few days, perhaps an order for some machinery which can be made at the Works.

I continue to stand well with the government. They advise with me frequently in matters affecting others and I am daily gaining strength with them. When I come home I hope to bring a large order. This is *inter nos*.

Mr. Kip is still here but will leave I think in March.

I am glad to hear Townsend is pleased. But he would be better here. If the ships are

¹⁹⁷ Ormsby M. Mitchel (1810-1862) was a major general in the Union Army. Before joining the army he was a nationally recognized astronomer, hence the reference to his "new field," i.e., the military. He died of yellow fever in late October 1862.

¹⁹⁸ John Nicholson Campbell (1798-1864) was the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Albany.

¹⁹⁹ Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892) was a British Particular Baptist preacher. He was well known for his sermons, many of which were published.

²⁰⁰ Gotenyama 御殿山 was the area in Edo where the new British legation was being built. RHP implies here that the attackers were against foreigners.

sent before I leave, let him come in one of them. And there will be a chance for Lieutenant Landford or Robert Townsend to bring them out if they chose. About this I will write more hereafter. This is not intended as one of my regular letters. I write hastily, the coolie waiting to take the letter to Yokohama. The same mail may carry longer letters. But as there is a chance a vessel may leave tomorrow I do not wish to take the chance.

Charlie will have to wait for a letter this time. But I wish I could pinch the little fellow. I felt quite blue the night before last. These spells occasionally come on me. But I know it is right for me to stay here. I feel you are satisfied of it yourself. A week, a month, a year passes rapidly. I wish it were passed now, and quarters, salary, etc. drawn and ready for a start. But how foolish, it would be just as easy to wish myself at once home.

And now, my dear Jennie, farewell till tomorrow. Kiss dear Charlie for me and Sue and give my love and remembrance to all friends and, above all for yourself my darling, receive my ardent love and way over the water my undying love for yourself and my precious boy.

R.H.P.



No. 3 Yedo, January 18 1863

My Dear Wife,

The letter I sent off yesterday I now learn will not leave Japan till Tuesday morning and may therefore reach you by the same mail as this one. After having had an opportunity to send recently letters by two different vessels via California, it appears rather slow to be obliged once more to send by the way of Europe, but it may be some months before I shall have the pleasure of writing a letter with the expectation it will be read by you in sixty days thereafter.

We are now really enjoying a Japanese winter and it appears hard to realize the fact. A few of the trees of the vast number which abound are divested of their green mantle. Bare limbs are here and there, monuments of the season. But to a person not aware of the season, they might well be mistaken for dead ones. The wild Japonica is in bloom. Flowers are seen everywhere, the sacred bamboo, which abounds in temple grounds, is gay with crimson berries amid its dark green foliage. Men, women, and children crowd the streets with bare heads and limbs and at midday the sun is unpleasantly warm. It is May in January.

Have I written about earthquakes? You would say that in a country where they have more than a dozen shocks sometimes in a month, people would get used to them and not be alarmed. But I suppose the contrary is the case, the older inhabitants are the most alarmed. Probably because they more fully understand how dangerous they may prove to be. Mr. Harris told me he always ran out of the home, night or day, as soon as he felt the

shock. I missed noticing the first two or three which we had, my sleep was so profound. On Friday night last we had a very severe one. The house heaved and fairly groaned. The Japanese houses are constructed so as to leave free play to the timbers which are mortared into each other fitting with admirable and immitigable nicety, but secured with neither iron nail or wooden pin. I have now felt some half a dozen more or less severe and it is a strange sensation to feel the earth heaving and rocking beneath your feet, and is accompanied almost by a feeling of sea sickness. The shocks thus far have never lasted more than half a minute though some have been succeeded by a returning wave of less severity.

The last great earthquake here was in 1858, when nearly 20,000 people were estimated to have perished, principally from fire occasioned by the prostration of their dwellings in the ruins of which they were entangled. That at Simoda in 1858 was awful! The Russian frigate *Diana* lay at anchor in the bay, which at times was fairly emptied of its waters so that the anchors of the ship were visible, and then so filled with the influx of the sea that the vessel was brought up fairly over the anchor, with the strain stretched almost to the point of snapping. The vessel was at last lost from the effects of the earthquake.

I hope we shall be spared being witnesses of any more severe or devastating than those which we have thus far felt, which have been quite boisterous enough to make you feel as you sometimes do in a railway car, when you think you are going off the track. The people here however are regarded as more volcanic than the country and it is really difficult at times to withstand the contagion, in fact, of the many who are given to panic because constitutionally timid and the few who are systematically engaged in spreading reports of danger. I think I wrote you of the notice I had at four o'clock a.m. one night of an apprehended attack on the Ministers. In consequence of this rumor, the government sent a large steamer to carry me back to Yedo. But it was soon found out to be wholly untrue and two or three days after we rode on the Tokaido as usually. Bertie is going to Kanagawa to have his teeth fixed. I accompanied him to Kawasaki to which port foreigners travel in the direction of Yedo and from which place to Kanagawa 23 guard houses line the road. He returned on Wednesday in company with the Dutch and Prussian Consuls who have been here on a visit.

Visits by the way are formidable here. Guests are accompanied by servants and sometimes with more than one horse to a visitor. But hospitality in the East is more than a word and I suppose I might now visit China and remain two years on visiting without trying the politeness of my entertainers. This would arise in part from the custom of the people and perhaps full as much from the fact of my being the only one in Yedo who keeps a hotel. Still as I am able to keep my expenses within the limit I estimated, I think I can afford the peculiar position I occupy to be clever to an occasional Englishman or German or Frenchman. It is a worse tax on time than on money.

I hope you are relieved of all anxiety for my safety here, or at least all great uneasiness. From what I read of London, it is as unsafe as this city. No position is free from danger

of some kind; disease or violence lurk everywhere. I hope they will neither of them leave their hiding place here.

At the moment it sounds quite like civilization. The first stroke of a fire bell has just been given. Fires are of daily occurrence here. I have as yet of course seen none. But the fire bells sound finely especially at night. They are not large but numerous and of fine tone. They are not rung, having no clappers, but are struck upon, the smaller ones with a hand hammer and the large bells by a suspended beam. I have been promised by the government a large old one as soon as one can be forged which can be disposed of and I hope you will be able to hear its fine tone in our old Dutch City.

As the steamer sails early Tuesday morning I must dispatch this by a coolie tonight as it may miss the mail, which is made up at Yokohama. It may interest you to learn the mail facilities of Yedo. My letters etc. are dispatched by a coolie, who travels the 22 miles on foot in from 5 to 8 hours according to weather and his laziness. As the charge is only one *itzabu* (in weight 33 cents) for going and returning I cannot be too exacting. You will see if I wait till morning he may reach our Consul after he has left his office tomorrow afternoon and then the vessel which sails probably at daybreak is off without it.

The latest news we have is to the 7th instant by California papers. What a world of news is floating on sea and traveling on land for us! May it be such as will gladden the heart when received. I hope on and will hope ever. But if God permit our country to be destroyed we have the comfort of knowing His wisdom is greater than the wisdom of man and we will one day see the beauty and perfection of His designs. He maketh the wrath of man to praise him. Such supreme folly as the South has exhibited in dashing from her lips the overflowing cup of earthly prosperity has never been paralleled, and there is a mystery in it which the All Wise can alone reveal.

I had intended writing to dear Sue by this mail. But my intention was founded in the idea that her budget would reach me. She must now wait till it does. But what matters it. She reads your letters, I take it, and she may therefore consider herself one of the firm. She has often enough passed for my wife, if she has not passed off herself as such, to imagine she is long enough to read this letter. You will probably think, my darling, that I am as little worth to you as a husband as I am to her. But courage! I said this evening, looking at the monthly and daily diary suspended before my desk, one twentieth of the year ahead gone already. How time flies as you look at its receding wings! It is only as it is coming towards you that it looks like an old man and bears a sickle.

I have beside me a letter commencing, "My Dear boy," intending to write, if needful, till midnight. But I think my little darling must this time take the will for the deed as I wish the first letter of the New Year to be a good long one.

I was calculating this evening that the packages forwarded by the *Storm Cloud* and *Josephine* via California had reached you and that the ones sent by the *Scotland* were at least 3 days from Aspinwall on their way up to New York in the Caribbean sea. I hope you will like the silks. I hope you will have the silk batting sent by the *Benefactor* made into quilts

with silk coverings. I do not intend to sleep under any heavier bed quilts when I again reach home.

And now, my precious wife, comes the close of our conversation. I am just about thinking of sleep at 10 o'clock and you are just commencing the day. I hope you have many days of comfort and happiness. I hope and pray that our parting will not be unduly prolonged and that many happy years of "union restored" are in reserve for us. God bless you and my darling boy. Cover him with kisses for me. How he must be growing! May his health and yours continue good and life be a perpetual blessing. With a heart full of love for you and him and Sue and for all my dear friends who remember me in thought or in prayers I shall keep up a good courage.

I hope you will get from Dr. Rogers copies of my letters to him. Those to whom I write, if they do not care for my letters, can give them to you and if they put any value on them can furnish copies. Let Charlie say to Dr. Armsby and Mr. Olcott I have read their letters. I hope to write this week to Dr. Howe. My time now is monopolized with impatient business affairs which I hope will result in honor to myself and advantage to my country and the world.

Adieu my precious wife, child, sister, brothers. God bless and keep you and save you and all of us with a great salvation. Kisses and love, darling, precious wife and child.

R



No. 4 Yedo, January 29 1863

My Dear Wife,

Although I will send you a package which will probably start by the same mail as this I will not subject you to the probability of being disappointed, should this become separated and arrive at a different time, by you finding that not even a line was enclosed for yourself.

Your letter and Charlie's and Sue's of September has reached me though I cannot concur in the conclusion reached or the facts which you had in your knowledge. You will readily see that I can reach the same conclusions, adding to them the knowledge in my own possession.

I shall not take upon myself any fresh obligations which will involve the necessity of further stay but you can easily see how desirable, if indeed it be not necessary, that I should at least remain until I have completed the delivery of ships and received for the parties the balance due.

It is also to be remarked that the time of my departure from Japan should be either winter or spring. The months of August and September are liable to terrific typhoons and

I do not like them enough to wish to encounter them.

Need I say to you what desolate feeling at times creeps over me in this vast city when day after day passes and the same few faces alone appear? The Japanese look and act alike and an intolerable degree of sameness often is the history of a week. A day at Albany would have as much variety as a week here. Often comes a yearning for home and its sweet influences and conversations which will not be put down. You know my disposition is naturally hopeful and cheerful, and yet such dispositions are just the ones which are most apt to run farthest into the opposite extreme. And I assure you it is often a hard struggle to keep the eye fixed upon the silver edge of the cloud and prevent its sight from being effected by the darkness which fills the great center. But you do not hear much of this talk from me. Why should you? When you receive letters from me you feel pleasant. Why should you receive a dash of cold water in the face while reading them?

If I had the disposition, I could make myself perfectly miserable in a week and give the blues to everyone who approached me or read my letters.

The conclusion of the matter is just this: I have assumed certain duties which carry with them obligations to friends and this country and my own. These obligations discharged will be productive of good to myself and I sincerely hope to others. I cannot take all the good unless I also submit to the labor and absence from home and family which it involves. If God shall spare our lives to reach home, a separation which many submit to for a cruise on a national ship, a sea voyage or for mere personal gratification will have yielded in my case richer fruits, great benefits I hope to my country and to the world and for ourselves, my darling, and for our family, many things in the future which will deprive the past of all which now looks so forbidding and repulsive. Every letter that I write is accompanied and goes forth with the thought "by the time this reaches home and is read, our separation will be largely reduced in time"; "perhaps $\frac{1}{4}$." When I come in the office each morning I say " $\frac{1}{20}$, $\frac{1}{18}$, $\frac{1}{15}$, $\frac{1}{13}$ of the year is already gone! So much nearer home!" There has not been a single day since the first week in January that this calculation either mentally or on paper has not been made. I shall not willingly, except in reply to what you say, indulge in this strain of remark. But I cannot bear that you should for a moment think that any idea of personal pleasure or gratification shall enter into my decision that my duty keeps me here for any given period, be it more or less.

Mrs. Fisher has a daughter. She had two children before, the youngest 10 years old. The new visitant has been named "Jennie Pruyn" so you see you are not forgotten here. As there would be a risk attending the sending of silver here and it can be purchased better and cheaper in Hong Kong I shall make a suitable present in your name and shall attend to all similar cases which may arise. This is a wonderful country and should Sue's name be next appropriated I shall rise and respond as shall be becoming. I have given you this bit of intelligence with some misgiving, for in addition to sea sickness this will perhaps cause something else to loom up in the distance shutting out from your view and wishes this delectable land flowing with milk and honey.

My dear wife I now think each day of the occupation and solitude which one year ago filled each waking hour. God grant that now as many believe the bereavement to have been merciful, kind, and wise as one day we shall doubtless see it to have been “He doth all things well.”

I have written to dear Charlie as you will see about a pony. Much of the enjoyment we have is in the anticipation of it. And if the dear little fellow would be pleased with a horse and it will be best he should have one, it is a comfort to know we can afford it.

Bertie is now riding on my horse. His larger one Mr. Kip has taken to Kanagawa today and Ber’s pony is recuperating, having been ridden by him yesterday. He scarce ever misses riding on a week day. He has, as I have already written, one of the most beautiful little black horses you ever saw, the gift of Mr. Verbeck. If by so doing I could land it safely in Albany I would cheerfully give \$200.

I expected the French Minister to breakfast with me today at 1 o’clock. But he has not yet arrived but as he possibly may come to Yedo this afternoon I have determined to remain in.

I shall continue in Yedo the only Minister here. It adds much to my labors, as for everything wanted all the governors come to me. But you will see it must necessarily increase my influence with the government which I am happy to say continues great.

I have nearly finished a new treaty, which will give great satisfaction both in England and France as well as at home. I shall try not to be a whit behind Mr. Harris and I can say to you, my darling, that I know I stand better even with the government than he did whatever maybe the verdict at home.

Kiss my darling boy for me and dear Sue, and believe you and they possess my unalterable love. Remember me to Charlie and Abby and all my brothers and sisters and dear friends.

From what you say I hope the Church will succeed in getting Mr. Clark. I feel sure the others named by you will not answer. I may have prejudice, I do not mean personal, but such as may arise from not making sufficient allowance for increasing years and wisdom. But still such being my opinion I wish success for the other.

You can’t tell how I would enjoy to hear the old organ and *Old Hundred*.²⁰¹ I love music so much that I miss it greatly and particularly one good singing Sabbath Evening which I hope we shall soon enjoy again together my darling, and I don’t believe you will tell me I sing too loud. Kisses and love and adieu, my precious wife, from your loving husband,
Robert



²⁰¹ Also called “Old Hundreth,” this is a hymn tune in long meter.

No. 7 Kanagawa, February 20 1863

My Beloved Wife,

I am again on a visit to Mr. Fisher. When I was here at New Year's it was agreed that as his birthday was on the 18th and mine on the 14th February we should have a sedate celebration of events so important at least to ourselves.

A very fortunate result followed. I was enabled six hours earlier to read your most welcome and dear letters of November 6th, 12th, 14th, which all arrived by same steamer.

You are right in giving me home news. The political and war news I can glean from the papers, of which I have an abundant supply, as in addition to those sent me, including *Galignani*,²⁰² which is always filled with an excellent compilation from the English and other foreign papers, I have an occasional package from Mr. Brooks and many other papers sent me by merchants at Yokohama from their abundant stock. I like therefore to have your letters devoted entirely to yourselves, family, friends, home, Church. No detail is too trivial or fact too unimportant to interest me.

I notice what you say of Mr. H[arris] with much interest. When I shall be able to talk freely with you, you will readily see that I have had every reason to believe I am more safe and influential.

His disease at Yedo was not asthma. It was the disease our friend Cornelius²⁰³ on Columbia St. had when I sat up with him. And dreadfully severe too as I am told by his attendants (medical). You can readily see this did not make him more amiable or recommend him to the government. But this of course is *inter nos*. I have abstained this far from referring to this from delicacy and only do so now as it may cause you to have less fear for me.

You must have been delighted with his account of Japan but will doubtless have observed he has a good deal of manner. I am glad J.V.L. had him in charge, for I am satisfied they get along well with each other. I should have been pleased to have been a quiet witness. While one was profuse as a host, the other was profuse of praise of everything and everybody except a few of his antipathies, which of course it was not in human nature to praise. He must have had deep penetration to see in so short a time that I was "the right man in the right place." I will try however to make him a true prophet and to convert his fancies into sober facts.

I have about settled down into the assurance that Dr. Clark is now our pastor. I have a sermon of his preached in 1859 before the New York and Brooklyn Foreign Missionary society which Mr. Ballagh has loaned me. It is excellent. Mr. B[rown] has heard him speak and was very much pleased with him. I shall be satisfied, even though M[aurice] E. V[iele] is not. I think it possible even he may be mistaken though he is so very deliberate in his judgment and so apt to be in accord with—himself. You say you wish to hear him again.

²⁰² *Galignani's Messenger*, a daily Parisian newspaper printed in English.

²⁰³ Cornelius Ten Broeck. RHP is indirectly telling his wife that Harris was an alcoholic.

That does not alarm me as I would not expect you to be very enthusiastic. I shall be as much so. He may take flight as Dr. R[ogers] did but I hope he will not be so ethereal.

I see the department has given notice they will only forward open letters. That does not apply to so distant a place as Japan. Charlie can write to F[rederick] W. Seward. If not in letters sent through the Department, please enclose some of the notices of elections in our various banks, societies, etc. and little local items of news cut out from our papers which are not interesting enough to send me entire.

I had quite a windfall on January 7. I had as much profit in one month as Mr. H[arris] had in a year. This arose in part from an additional or extra allowance made me and in part from the unusual depreciation of the dollar which existed at the time. I have requested Russell & Co. to send you a bill which will cover but a little more than the profit than realized by way of New Years gift. I say so from the season, not that it was a gift. It was an advantage realized from the peculiar state of the money market. The same mail will bring a like amount to Charlie. These remittances will have me free from all the debt I take it either individually or in the firm. I suppose the bills will yield a large profit. I hope Charlie will be able to take for you and Sue an assignment of the mortgage on the Works if he shall think it best not to have it discharged altogether. (I anticipate a large surplus for me as a very considerable amount must have been realized on exchange, current bills being available to pay debts. The mortgage on house must be paid, also the small one held by Sisson²⁰⁴ with adjoining lot. It will be well for Jennie to take and hold for the present the Savings Bank mortgage. Don't fail to pay it.) By all means have me free from my debt. If a crash comes when the war terminates I am now sure it will find Charlie with sails furled and all safe. Should there be a surplus for me after paying my debt and share of firm, Charlie may use it if he like or he may invest and if so I prefer New York Bonds or stock in Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati Railroad stock. Let him advise with Mr. O[lcott]. I think he had better keep it for use. I agree with him as to his management of the Works and I rejoice he will be so strong. I suppose he will make the engine for the rifling machine, if not the machine itself, perhaps some of the work, boiler or engine, for the gunboat. He can easily arrange to reserve the boilers for all the steamers. I think he will have a chance to do more in this quarter without any risk. If I thought it necessary I would say more about prudence. I will content myself with saying I fear the end of the war will ruin more persons than were ruined at its commencement and when you look around Albany that is saying a great deal. Send me a statement in each letter of the premium realized, so as that others will not understand it if letter miscarries. But all this must be written ourselves. I may possibly have more still but cannot say at present as it depends on others. This I will describe in future. Of this be sure: it involves no risk or liability. In this Eastern world the

²⁰⁴ Noel E. Sisson (1821-1904) was a manufacturer and banker in Albany. He was vice-president of the First National Bank of Albany, director of the Albany Trust Company and the Commerce Insurance Company, and a member of the Fort Orange Club.

command of a few thousand dollars creates great fortune. I do not mean I expect one. But I can reasonably expect far more than any of us had an idea of. I do not enter into particulars at this distance. I have reason to know that Mr. H[arris] largely underestimated the amount he took home with him, perhaps stating less than half or a third of the amount, I mark you.

I am quite sure other letters which I hope to write before my return to Yedo will reach you as soon as this which goes by a vessel which will stop some time at Nagasaki.

I should have said that I will not be able of course to send anything for the next three quarters, except small drafts on the United States, as in order to give a chance for large premiums on gold. I have anticipated (having the opportunity afforded to do so) what I would have remitted at those times, so that I indulge the hope that the premium on all I have sent forward may be almost sufficient to pay Savings Bank debt of firm.

One of the vessels of the Oriental and Peninsula line was lost in November last, carrying down, I fear, some of my letters, though it is said only the Australian mail was lost.

I regret to see that up to November 14 your latest dates from me were of the middle of July. I wish all these acknowledged as soon as received always. You can see how slowly letters go. You say in yours of November you cannot expect an answer till March when yours are received only after a few days before that month. The times of departure from this place are very irregular. But you may rely on my sending letters by each chance, at least weekly if opportunity offer. When I do write you see I use good sized sheets of paper.

I expect to send forward other letters by this mail but will send in separate envelope, suffering this to go forward without any official mark.

I have just entered into an agreement (as Bertie wishes to prepare for college) with a Mr. Thompson²⁰⁵ who has been staying with Dr. Hepburn and Dr. Ballagh. He is a graduate of Dartmouth and was in the senior class of the Andover Theological Seminary. He expects to be a missionary and is a good scholar and an excellent young man. I give him his board here which is over \$100 each year and \$200 for his services. And I hope Bertie will make a famous scholar.

I hope to write to Mr. Weed in a few days about my return. My intention now is to try to get leave of absence so that I may leave without successor arriving as soon as ships get here. There will be many advantages in this, which it is needless to specify. This is not to be spoken of. Nor this: you will be pleased to hear I have concluded a treaty, first rate, providing for bonded warehouses, reductions of duty on about every article of importance on which duties are 20 and 33 per cent. You know I must be busy. I always made it a rule to try to make every office I held better for those who followed. The British and French Ministers are now a little wrathful because told that they and British and French subjects

²⁰⁵ Perhaps the Reverend Thomas W. Thompson, who was listed as an American missionary in Kanagawa in the 1864 *Chronicle and Directory for China, Japan and the Philippines*.

were not safe at Yedo, as some bad people made a distinction between Americans and their nations. This was in answer to the French Minister asking why he was unsafe and his people, and I and mine were tranquil at Yedo. They are still, at Yokohama, on good terms with me however. Affectionately and ever yours, R

For fear this may arrive at different time from other letters I add love and kisses to Charlie and Sue, I will commence at once with the letters.



Yedo, February 27 1863

My Beloved Wife,

I am once more quietly living in this quiet city, having returned here on Friday after an absence of nine days.

I have had quite a season of ease. The Japanese New Year lasts fifteen days. I expect to give an account of it in a letter to dear little Charlie, as he is the one who is supposed to be philosophically studying the customs and institutions of Japan. During the last two weeks I have had only two official interviews.

On New Year's (February 18) I sent to the Tycoon and the two ministers of Foreign Affairs each a basket of California champagne and a fruit cake. This latter made quite a sensation. A Governor of Foreign Affairs told me today the Tycoon has sent pieces to each of the Governors and I have promised to give a recipe. It was poor cake, however, compared with ours at Albany. I wish I had a few Albany ones. But as they were kindly made for me by Miss Mann I must not say anything against them. Perhaps the one I had may not have been as good.

We are daily expecting a mail which is past due but as yet I have nothing from you later than the middle of November.

It appears but as yesterday at times since I left home and yet what a life time I have been away. Do you need to be told there is a heart loneliness which sometimes oppresses me. To feel yourself so entirely alone among millions is a strange sensation. But time flies and I begin to calculate the time of return. It does not look so far off, so large a slice of my absence is transferred to the past and yet it must count by months. When this reaches you however I hope it will not much exceed a year before I can leave here. As soon as I can get the ships out of the way I am prepared to say farewell here. I shall be rejoiced too when the time shall come because I believe I shall have gained as much reputation as I could by a longer stay. I suppose you will all agree I am right in staying as proposed. You will know about the time I may hope to have these vessels or at least one of them.

Bertie and myself continue to enjoy good health for which we have great reasons to

be thankful, as well as for many other mercies and I pray the Heavenly Father may spare us for many happy hours. How I shall feel like enjoying home. You will have to drive me out of the house! Or else take me with you.

March 3 1863

On Sunday I went down to Kanagawa and return a Deacon. We had Communion on Sabbath and having already organized the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church at Yokohama. On Sunday we had our first service with 36 attendants. In the afternoon Communion 19 communicants. Mr. Mason from the Congregational Church was ordained Elder and myself Deacon. Our members are from our Church, from the Congregational, 3; Episcopalians, 1; Baptist, 1; Catholic Japanese, 1; Methodist, 1 (a licensed preacher); Presbyterian, 2. We have started a subscription for a building. Mr. Harris had given \$1,000. There is in the U.S. for it \$1,000 given by the Sandwich Islands. We have received \$1,200 more and will at once build a Church. I attained yesterday a grant of a large and beautiful lot from the Japanese government. Mr. Schoyer, a Jew, has given us \$250. We will raise in all \$5,000, I think without trouble. So missionaries will have homes. Mr. Fisher has besides in his hands \$2084 for a home for Mr. Brown, the money having been subscribed and given to Mrs. Brown. On this same lot her house will be built. I expect to get enough subscribed in Shanghae for a home for Mr. Ballagh should synod recognize the organization. I may have to withdraw for a few months from our Church. I hope great good will result from this movement. Foreigners are greater heathens than the Japanese. On Sabbath days as well as on others they have building and other work done and almost invariably have their excursions on that day. This is not the exception, it is the rule. More harm is done than among the heathen than it is possible to calculate. They must have a poor opinion of religion judging by such fruits of Christianity and civilization.

I send this to Shanghae tomorrow but I am afraid it will lie there till March 26th. That is the difficulty with some of my letters. They just fail of meeting the mail steamers. The next mail leaves March 9th. But one can scarcely hope this letter will reach it as 6 days is a good passage.

It is quite possible our celebrated dog Jumps will leave Friday on the *Benefactor* for Albany in the charge of Mrs. Allmand, Mr. Fisher's adopted daughter. If he get safely to you he will be the best natured dog you ever saw and you will like him well. I really regret to lose him and I don't know but Bertie's heart will fail him before the vessel sails. He is now at Kanagawa all ready for his voyage.

I will enclose you a photograph of Bertie's famous horse Johnny, one of the fastest ponies in Japan.

I am very anxious to hear the result of the call on Dr. Clark. I have read his sermons published in *The New York Pulpit* and like both of his sermons well. I sincerely hope that such representations will be made to him and such connections of duty will press upon him as to induce him to gain a favorable answer.

I wish you would say to Uncle Jacob H. that you will, if the debt can be paid, separate for me \$500 towards it and pay it when he shall think the proper time arrives. That debt must not weigh down our good old Church. Let me know about accessions to the Church, Church officers, etc. How I would delight to be able to sit in our old pew again. I would like to hear a good home sermon. We have good sermons here, but we miss the good hearty singing.

I wish you to remember me to all the members who may think of me. I cannot name them all here. But I often think and speak of and pray for them by name.

I am obliged to shorten this letter. I only succeed in getting it to this ship by one of the passengers now here who will leave in an hour. It cannot reach in time for the mail at Yokohama so I sent it to Shanghae to be mailed.

Now I expect I am settled here for a month. I do not expect to be engrossed by company as I have been. I hope to close the Yedo Hotel here and I hope to send you for the mail of March 26th a good long letter which will put yours and all former ones of mine to the blush.

You speak of my supplying the last portion of my letter to Dr. Rogers. I have not the faintest idea what was in it.

Mrs. Hepburn has not arrived yet. The Doctor is getting anxious for her arrival. Would you and Sue, when I return, have the courage to meet me in Europe? Think of it and write me. We could then stay 6 months there.

My time is up. With kisses for dear little Charlie and Sue and yourself, my beloved. Believe me ever yours. Love to Charlie and Abby, etc.
Robt. H. Pruyn



Kanagawa, March 7 1863

I have come down here very unexpectedly, my beloved wife, at the request of the Japanese government and this evening send an agent (Mr. Fisher's son-in-law) to Shanghae to purchase the steamer *Ly-ee-moon* for the sum of \$200,000 if he cannot buy her for less.²⁰⁶ I had not supposed I would be here again till April and came off at an hour's notice. I state all this because I feel that every such event will reassure you as to my position here.

I received two days since your letter of October and one dated September 27, but it

²⁰⁶ The *Ly-ee-moon* was a British paddle steamer built in 1859. Japan chartered her 1863-1872, and changed her name to the *Taipei-maru*.

must have been an error as that letter speaks of Dr. Clark's acceptance and also your and Charlie's letters of December 3 I think, but I cannot speak with certainty as the letters are at Mr. Fisher's house, also the letters forwarded by Mrs. Hepburn from San Francisco. (She is expected daily.) And yesterday on my way down I met a flood of papers and a letter from Colonel Raasloff²⁰⁷ with your letter and J.V.L.P.'s and dear Charlie's photographs, a great comfort to me. How well he looks. Why cannot you send yours to me.

I am rejoiced Dr. Clark has accepted. I think well of him. His sermons read well. I don't think I shall ever, if I have the pleasure to sit under his preaching, feel restive and uneasy till I see what direction he will go. You know such has been the case sometimes, for some men will be a little erratic. You know what I mean although you know how very seldom I was willing to admit it even to you.

A steamer will probably be here in sufficient time to take other letters for the next mail And I now think that the mail which brings you this will bring you at least half a dozen letters.

You ask me "Did you recommend Dr. R[ogers] to Mr. Doremus?"²⁰⁸ I infer that question may imply a good deal and I will therefore say what I did say and do. Mr. Doremus told me their Church had thought of Dr. R[ogers] and I said they could not get him. Whether I told Dr. R[ogers] of this or not I cannot recollect. But I think it made so little impression on me that I did not. Judging the Doctor by myself I did not suppose it possible he could be induced to leave, nor did I think he honorably could. This I may have put a little stronger to my own mind than is justified by the facts. But let it pass. I do not intend to reflect on his course. He is gone and it may and probably will be for the best. I did speak kindly of the Doctor to Mr. Doremus. I spoke of the success of our Church and Sabbath School. But to say I recommended Dr. R[ogers] to Mr. D[oremus] would be as farfetched and violent a charge as if I should say that the watch I carried was pure gold, a fine time piece, and hoped Mr. D[oremus] would succeed in buying as good a one, would justify him in saying I had advised him to take my own from my pocket. With this I let it pass. I think we now have an able, frank and manly Pastor with strong common sense and a facility of expressing his ideas with vigor, and if his manner is as good as his matter he will do well, God helping him.

Charlie's letter is an oasis in "his desert." Now I think he needs curbing and you and Sue must keep him in. Let him carry little sail. A crash will come. Fortunately he will have no debt. I hope that the Savings Bank debt can be paid by the Works in bills and mine to Sisson and the Life Insurance and Trust Company. If in consequence of sales or from your income you should have funds to invest, my advice is put it in Central Bonds or in mortgage with a very large margin over present prices or in Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati stock or leave it to your credit in Great Britain if any is in that shape, getting

²⁰⁷ Waldemar Rudolph von Raasloff (1815-1883) was a Danish diplomat.

²⁰⁸ Thomas C. Doremus was an elder in the South Reformed Church in New York City.

interest for it.

I shall write you more in full on my views as to stay here, next week. Should you muster the courage in a fit of desperation come to me but come over land. In summer people can scarcely live in the steamers on the Red Sea. I therefore should have to leave here so as to pass through there between December and April because of the typhoons here in August and September and the heat there in June and July. It is a fatiguing route. That by San Francisco may be tardy at times but it is pleasant comparatively. From that place here you do not go below latitude 22, and the Pacific is generally fairly smooth.

Say to Charlie I hope soon to send him an order for two engines, say of 50 to 100 horse power.

You may rest assured I shall undertake nothing new which will prolong my stay here and what I have advised you I now think necessary and that I am now steadily looking forward to return.

I have received Abby's letter with pleasure and read it with much interest. I shall endeavor to reply by this mail. But you must bear in mind some of my letters are intended for all though they may be addressed to you or little Charlie. I shall also bear in mind what you say of Mr. Gibson and Dr. Wyckoff.

I am pleased to hear what you say of Mr. Craver and young Calwell and know how rejoiced you already are with Bertie's wise decision. Have we not reason to rejoice? Will not that compensate a little for an absence which has already been prolonged more than you wish and which may be doubled? He is now studying with great regularity and pretty hard. Mr. Thompson is a good teacher and I think he will make really as much progress in his studies here in a year as he could at home in two.

I have received a splendid bracelet for you, a present from General Burgoine, Commander in Chief of the Imperial Chinese Army.²⁰⁹ It is said to have cost \$200. I know you do not care for such things. But it will come good for someone we love. I expect to send it to you by Mr. Egerton,²¹⁰ formerly of Troy, via San Francisco this month with some other trifles.

I had hoped to have written by this steamer a longer letter and brought down paper for it. But I have had instructions and a letter of credit to Russell & Co. to prepare and have not been able to write more. I console myself however by the great probability that I shall be able to send other letters to reach the English mail. There is little doubt of this unless accident prevent.

We have just the news of the reverse at Fredericksburg. I hope this is the end of such news, but am prepared for anything almost. Would we not all be calmer and better here? Why do you get so sea sick. But I really cannot bear to think of your coming to me. You

²⁰⁹ Perhaps Hugh Talbot Burgoyne (1833-1870), the only son of Sir John Fox Burgoyne. H.T.B. was not a Commander in Chief, but he was the commander of the Anglo-Chinese flotilla in 1863.

²¹⁰ Lebbeus Egerton (1812-1889) was a native of Vermont. When he returned to the United States he settled in Troy, New York.

will suffer so much. I would rather go to you. But do you think I should leave before the steamers, or one of them at least, arrive? Should I not stay at least till a year from this time? Are not our troubles at home and my success sufficient to require such course? You can easily see by the time this arrives what I have done. I can do as much more in another year and perhaps far more. Now when I think of some hours of the past you cannot imagine what a relief this gives me. I do not wish to be too avaricious of fame or money and will be guided by you. Though assuming that Charlie and Mr. Weed have made contracts I must if my life is spared see them through.

Am I not right on this?

But I must now close this. A ship is expected to leave Monday morning. A steamer next week. Both I hope will bear your letters.

Meanwhile I wish you to give my love to the whole family, embracing Charlie and Abby and their little ones and Townsend who has got to be one of the big ones and the General and Aunt Sue and Uncle C[hristopher] and Aunt Sarah, Anna and their boys. Baby and Mary Mullen are often in my thoughts and the long list I cannot name. Remember me affectionately to Cornelia. She has written twice. Alida not once. Give my love to her and family.

Should this reach you before the last remittances from Shanghai I should advise you negotiate them through Forbes & Co. Boston or one of them. Let us keep our affairs from some of the Albany busy bodies.

And now, my darling, we must part again. When I received your letters I expected at once to sit down and reply. Then it would have appeared more like talking to you. But for two days I had the officials with me and it was impossible. I can make no calculations on my time. I make it an inviolable rule to act promptly. That is the best reproach against their tardiness. My replies to their letters rarely wait for a day. Theirs come after weeks and months sometimes unless I hurry them up. Mr. Fisher is waiting for me to go home so adieu. Love and kisses for you, my beloved, for dear Sue, and precious Charlie,

From your husband



No. 10

United States Legation in Japan
Yedo, March 10 1863

I returned from Kanagawa this morning, my beloved wife, and expect to remain here at least till the first Sabbath of April, unless the purchase of the steamer *Lj-ee-moon* shall be made in which event I may have to go down for a few days.

The weather is now charming. The plum and apricot trees and peach trees are in full

blossoms. The side hills are draped in mantles of living green and terraced as they all are, and presenting different faces to the sun. Their equals can be found in no other land. Fusiyama towers high over all with its mantle of ermine without the slightest spot to sully its pure white, seemingly so near that a figure could be seen sitting on it, yet seventy miles off. So great is the purity of the atmosphere at times that this mountain has been seen a hundred and fifty miles at sea. How Dr. Pitkin could have omitted to speak of Fuji the peerless I cannot comprehend.²¹¹ It is the very poetry of Earth. Along the road can be seen hundreds of wild geese and ducks and the beautiful cranes, so perfectly undisturbed by the living stream of travel on the main road of Japan (all of which from Kanagawa to Yedo looks like our Broadway) as to feed quietly by the wood within one hundred feet often of its side.

A few days ago I received a letter from the Minister congratulating me on “my prosperous residence” in Japan and sending me various presents which do not conflict with the prohibition of our government, being dwarf trees, tea, *saki*, dried persimmons put up like our figs, etc., being a return present for some fruit cake and champagne I sent on New Year’s.

I will send via San Francisco the original letter.

Dr. Armsby has received I suppose my very valuable contribution to medical sciences. I have another one in my brain ready to commit to paper. The world should have the benefit of all I can pick up in my practices here and in consultation with my Arcalassian brethren. I have also for the Medical College two crabs such as you eat in Albany, only the male is 11 feet some inches across from tip to tip of claw. That would have been a fine fellow to come across while bathing! The female, in mercy I suppose to the male, has shorter claws.

This is no country for railroads or machines. An observatory might take. They make good glasses here and I believe they make observations of the stars. But it will be time enough when I get back to think of these things. At present I could not be hired to read a long political speech. I am a diplomatist and I am afraid a poor one. But if my treaty goes through prosperously then we will see what will be said. Though I do not expect to receive much credit. I shall hope however to deserve it.

But I will not be able to sleep tonight unless I suspend. Mr. Portman is now copying a dispatch. The mail closes at 4 o’clock p.m. tomorrow. This will have to be started off as early as 9 o’clock. But I hope tomorrow morning to be able to add a few lines. Goodnight. It is now about 12 o’clock with you.

March 11th 8 a.m.

²¹¹ The Reverend Dr. Thomas Clap Pitkin (1816-1887) was rector at St. Peter’s Church in Albany before visiting Japan in 1861, where he visited Edo for a week at the invitation of Townsend Harris. Afterwards he delivered talks on Japan in the United States.

I feared I should wake this morning with a headache but I have been more refreshed by sleep than I had expected and I hasten to conclude these hurried lines so that they may reach the mail. The letter to Charlie enclosed please open if he is not at hand. I only close it so that should this letter be wet, the direction of that one, being visible, may be forwarded.

I have read with interest the proceedings of the Church on the Heights Brooklyn, paying Church debt and hope if ours is not paid it will stir up our people. What is the use of boasting so loudly of Dutch descent if so little love is shown to our Dutch Churches. With few excepting, the most liberality is shown in proportion to means by those not of Dutch descent. On this subject I will write Mr. Ten Eyck and I hope you will feel it right to pay for me an additional \$500 or \$1,000 if that will encourage them to clear off the debt. I feel we can afford it. I have given \$500 to the new Church here. Mr. Harris had given \$1,000. I shall send Mr. Doty²¹² \$100 for China, the \$100 saved from the races. Let it be used in the Christian race. I hope it will aid in providing a course where many may run so as finally to reach the goal.

I shall try to place myself in a position to be able to leave here honorably next November or December. If compelled to pass by January, it will be necessary to leave it for another year. This looks terrible in the prospect, but how swiftly one quarter of this year has passed. I hope my treaty will be done and ships here so that a long stay may not be necessary. Oh how I wish it may be avoided. I would rejoice to see you yet I do not desire you to come. The voyage could be dreadful to you and Sue. The best is the California route however, especially for ladies. Quinine should be taken before landing and after leaving the isthmus. Oh how I wish we had been cautioned on that point, also before landing at San Francisco. I say all this fearing you may someday take a start. But I hope that my stay will not be so much prolonged as in any event to exceed a year beyond the time you could possibly hope to reach me.

Mrs. Hepburn has not yet arrived but is daily expected. The Doctor was anxious about her till her letter reached here, fearing she might have been captured by the *Alabama*.²¹³ She has been recreating at San Francisco. The most unpleasant place on that route is Aspinwall. We were nearly left when the train started, as insufficient notice is given and you get tossed around and hardly know which way the route is.

I occasionally read with much interest even the notices of the arrival of friends at the hotels in New York. I read all our advertisements. This makes me prize an occasional daily. Please cut out from the journal the columns of local news. The weekly contains mostly the news you find in other papers. The miscellany however is good. I do not receive the

²¹² Elihu Doty (1809-1864) was an American missionary to China.

²¹³ The Confederate Steam Ship *Alabama* was purchased by the Confederates in 1861 from a British shipyard. Under the command of captain Raphael Semmes, she sailed the world for three years with the aim of capturing U.S. commercial ships. RHP mentions the *Alabama* on a few more occasions.

Christian Intelligencer very early. Mr. Brown is now in advance of me three numbers. When your letters and all the papers arrive I am sure to have a restless night. I think so much and find so much to stir me up I cannot sleep.

I thank Sue for copying Charlie's letter, though original reached me in the same mail. I am glad to see she is so anxious for my return, for it would be unpleasant to feel one were not missed at all. But I feel you both will be fully satisfied with what shall appear necessary to me because you will feel and acknowledge its propriety. I think you have already come to the conclusion, you being the sole judges, that thus far I have done right, although it has involved so long a separation.

Say to Cornelia she may expect a letter by next mail from here. I thank her most warmly for her very sweet and full letter. Say the same to Abby. Why don't Haskell find time to give me some details as to the Works?

But I will start off this letter at once and will send another to reach this mail if possible which closes at 4 o'clock at Yokohama.

With my warmest love to dear little Charlie, Sue, Abby, Cornelia and all, and an ocean for yourself my sweet loving wife. From your Husband ever and wholly yours,
Robert Pruyn



No. 11 Yedo, March 12 1863

I am sure, my dear, loving and beloved wife, that I shall not omit an opportunity which offers or can be made to write to you, even though I may have only the time to send you a page. You must remember however that only two opportunities offer each month to send letters between Marseilles and Shanghae. The new French line has commenced running, but thus far I believe the line of departure from Marseilles differs only one day from that of the English line. If this blunder is repaired and especially if steamers are put in between the Port of Hong Kong, Kanagawa and San Francisco, we may expect to be relieved of these distressing delays in receiving letters. The news here is that the *Scotland* and *Tynemouth* are to run between those places.

I hope most sincerely, my darling wife, that you will, however much you may regret it, concur in the propriety of my remaining here longer. It is sad it is so, but we cannot expect all things just as we wish them. In the moral as well as the physical world the rose and the thorn are in close vicinity, and for advantages gained an equivalent must be reduced.

But, my beloved, I would prefer coming to you rather than you should incur the risks of a sea voyage. When I speak of remaining, I do it with a strong yearning for home. I know now far better than ever before the true meaning of that word. I never felt the

meaning through every part of head and heart so thoroughly before. I now have an appetite for it, an actual thirsting for it. At times I feel as if I wish to get up and start homeward at once. Sue will say why not do so then? Would it have been well to have done so at San Francisco? And yet then all at Albany, if not so sure it was best, as now, at least tried to think so.

I shall rejoice if by the time I can get a reply to this I shall see I can honorably leave, or at least so shortly thereafter as to make it unwise for you and Sue and Charlie to come to me even if so inclined. I do not think the government would now be willing to release me. I am sure they would not if aware of the precise state of things now. It would take a long time for a new Minister to reach the place in their confidence I have so very fortunately obtained. And the relations of the other powers with this government render my stay of great importance for some months. My dispatches will enable the President and Governor Seward to see this and I am precluded from entering into explanations. The position of affairs here is so very critical now, more so than at any other period since the treaties were made. I do not now refer particularly to dangers to foreigners, so much as to relations with foreign governments. I have a letter from the French Minister for example in reply to my urging him to press a particular subject, saying that there is no use of it, that whatever is done must be accomplished through me. He states openly to some of our citizens here that soon everything will have to be done through the Americans. While I do not think so, you will see he is certain that his position is not one of influence with the Japanese government. And there is very free talk of complications with both England and France. While I hope these will be avoided as more can be gained by conciliation than force, I hope and believe that government and people will in any event make a distinction between Americans and the people of the other powers.

The French Minister was here in February and the officers of the French frigate were advised by the government not to ride around Yedo and he was advised not to ride down the Tokaido as danger might be incurred. He asked how it was that I was living "tranquilly" at Yedo and my guests visiting every part of the city. It was answered that some people made a distinction between the Americans and the British and French and the reasons given, when asked, was the Britain and France had so many men-of-war, not ships I suppose, but guards. He was much worried and very angry. Bear in mind now how the officers of the *Wyoming* were treated: invited with me to visit the artillery grounds, witness the review and remnants of a regiment of infantry, the firing of a battery of artillery etc., etc.

The French Minister went down on the Tokaido a few days after I went down on a Japanese man-of-war steamer. But I have passed over the Tokaido five times since that day, twice going through large Daimios' trains. On one occasion before some of the train were heard saying "it is the American Minister." I do not presume on all this, neither relaxing caution or vigilance, but still it is pleasant and makes me feel more secure to witness these evidences of good will and to feel that it is not confined to the government

but extends to the people and to a great extent even to the Daimios, some of these however may for this very reason be hostile.

How much better off you are for subjects to write about. You have only to set down and speak of your daily thoughts, acts, and cares, and you have what will interest me most, while I am confined to subjects with which you cannot identify yourself except as they are related to me.

I am heartily glad you are so excellent a provider for the house. You know I was always poor at bargaining and you will be so habituated to it and also so sure it will be economical that you will not be able to give it up.

I really am pleased you remembered Dr. Wyckoff's turkey. Long may he live to enjoy the yearly visitant. I am sure no one deserves and enjoys one better. Let it always be tender and fat.

Let me know all about the Church. I feel sure it will prosper. I think Dr. C[ark] is a fine man. I know he can say a great deal in a few words, a talent which few have. And I am sure when we again sit beside each other in our old pew you will not have the chance as we go out to complain of repetitions. Of those I see none in his sermons. I am sure you will be pleased with him. I am already. And if you can read that sermon on Christian Conversation²¹⁴ and not say it is the best you have heard on that text I am greatly mistaken.

Oh how I miss Church music and for that matter Church preaching. You need a large congregation to have effectual preaching. Three thousand could not have been converted at Pentecost had they not been present, it is true. But we cannot tell now how great an influence the large attendance, the flashing eyes, the audible sighs, the evident feelings of the vast multitude had in giving power to the sounds and exhortations of the apostles while the preacher spoke. There were silent utterances unheard but not unfelt from every part of the congregation. Besides what power is extended by numbers on the preacher himself I think eloquence becomes dumb in a Church nearly empty or before hearers altogether sleepy, if indeed the last is possible.

Mr. Brown preaches an excellent sermon, but his congregation is necessarily small. Then we cannot have any right down good singing. I do not have the same chance as at home. There my voice could in an emergency be drowned or you could give me an occasional hint to take in a reef or rather put in a stop.

You say my dear that in a year the novelty of Japan will wear off. It does not last a month. There is no variety here. There is one unvarying green here to the Earth. All the buildings of a class are alike. All the people have black eyes. All wear their hair alike. All that dress at all, dress alike. My day of one month is but a repetition of its predecessor of the month before and is quite likely to have the same successor. When the papers come I read for hours, sometimes the same things over and over again on a subsequent day

²¹⁴ Rufus W. Clark published a sermon titled "Religious Conversation" in *The New York pulpit in the revival of 1858: A memorial volume of sermons*. (New York: Sheldon, Blakeman & Co. 1858)

unconscious of it, perhaps till nearly through. Then come the Governors and five hours will be accompanied in what should not have taken as many moments to dispense of. But everything is written down and translations from Dutch and English to Japanese and back again occupy much time.

Mr. Kip left last week expecting to remain in Europe till December. Mr. Thompson will supply his place as, and more pleasantly, to Bertie and much more profitable as he studies well thus far. Then again, notwithstanding the greater disparity of years, they have more amusements in common. Mr. T[hompson] rides more of course. It is a greater novelty and they are now busily engaged in shooting with the bow and arrow.

George Fisher (11 years) and Ayton Mann are now up for a few days and Ber is enjoying himself vastly. I rather think he minds absence less than I do. But that is natural at his age. If he is homesick, he has a very happy faculty in thoroughly disguising it.

I think I should be content to have you and Sue come out in Dr. Armsby's company, were I sure he would not be so demonstrative as when he returned from Italy. But Sue must remember he has been a demonstrator of anatomy. Should he come he would be delighted and he might make it of great service to himself as well as you. Don't therefore discourage him. Let him come alone or with you as is best, but let him come. It will be nothing for him to run over.

I should be pleased to hear you read any of my letters to Uncle Jacob H., however hastily they may be written and however private because I have always felt as if he were almost a relative. To be sure he had to say no when I said yes and vice versa but we generally agreed tolerably well after all.

I was very happy to receive dear little Charlie's photograph. As you do not send me one of yours I will send you one. I find there are two here and I value them so highly I wish to be sure of one and will therefore diminish the chances by sending one home the first opportunity by San Francisco. Charlie looks capitally. I can see he has grown. I can see he was well, I rather think. I was rather quiet in my childhood, certainly not the sample of perpetual motion he is.

You want Bertie to say which part of the house he prefers, he says State Street. I shall be content with what will please you best. But I have attachments for the old corner, enough at least to want it. Then if we do not live in it, it will be because our pleasure to live elsewhere.

I am glad you had such a good crop of pears. They are abundant here, but the solidity of a common ball. They last not only from one crop to the next, but should think they will last for years. What do you think of oranges at 15 for two cents. Mr. Brown has brought some 27 for a *tempo*, about two cents. Fruit is very cheap, as you will see.

My expenses will foot up less than 2,500 dollars and of this I dare not say how much is for wine. Sometimes I have two official visits in a day. Then wine is given as a matter of course. But as my receipts from *itsabus* alone will be quite handsome and pay that amount many times over I will not worry about household expenses.

The assessment list of the Bank of Albany I read with much interest. I did not find it in any paper sent, so your slip was quite welcome. If Kendrick²¹⁵ read it, it must have occasioned strange sensations. Where is he? And how is Sill²¹⁶ making out, and Mr. [Visscher] Ten Eyck?

I mention the last because the association of ideas, he being a cashier also, at least in the past. What is he doing now? I suppose I will have heard what his trouble was before this reaches you. I hope there will be no difficulty in the mortgages being paid in bills. And I hope the specie will be available to you for that purpose before premium falls. If 32 is realized the profit will go far toward the discharge of the largest one. I hope it may.

I am not surprised to hear that Dr. R[ogers] is popular and is succeeding well in New York. That is not the difficulty. Though perhaps the changes which will constantly occur in his congregation maybe so great as to offer an inducement for him to stay with it, as he will have change without going for it. I am quite reconciled to his decision. Perhaps more so because I have not realized it. I am much mistaken however if you do not say at the end of a year it is well.

11 o'clock p.m.

My letter has been interrupted for family worship, Onigero again being present and remaining. It appears to me he would not do so if he thought it would be offensive to the government. I think if it were not for the political fears arising from their experience with the Portuguese there would be no difficulty in introducing the Bible and in preaching freely in Japan. Now they will have to learn very gradually that there is no danger to be feared from our missionaries.

I shall leave this letter unsealed. I may have an opportunity to add a few lines in the morning. Though I must send it off before breakfast. If the vessel goes off on Saturday, the mail will close at 4 p.m. Friday and the messenger should start as early as 9, as if a lazy one goes it may arrive too late.

I could write now. But my hand is cramped, as I have written, besides all this package, three business letters this day, besides hearing an interview with one of the Chiefs of Artillery and seeing to a short dispatch. So it will be best for me if my life is spared to take a fresh start in the morning. So goodnight my darling, and while I strive to have a refreshing sleep I will hope now while the hour of 10 o'clock a.m. is with you, you will have a pleasant and useful day. I know it will be the latter if you have or can make the opportunity. So adieu to you and dear Charlie for a few hours.

8 o'clock a.m. March 13 1863

I shall now prepare to launch this letter on the wide waters of 15,000 miles, as the

²¹⁵ Edward E. Kendrick was the cashier at the Bank of Albany.

²¹⁶ John Sill was the cashier at Merchants' Bank in Albany.

Hindoo mothers launch their tapers on the dark waters of the Ganges. I hope my hurried lines will escape being engulfed in the deep waters and will shortly make their appearance in 52 North Pearl and shed a few beams of light around in the hearts of the little circle gathered there.

Strange thoughts, and not so strange either, very natural ones arrive as these lines from time to time go forth. How ignorant are we of the position of our loved ones to whom they are sent. How ignorant will they be of our position when received. Distance of time as well as space divides. How much more satisfactory, if the telegraphic wires should unite these distant ends of the Earth to home and friends, that there might be loving messages sent which would be yet warm from the heart. I see this line has already penetrated Siberia a few thousand miles only from here. If I stay long enough! it may even reach Japan. Japan will not have a foolish Atlantic Cable celebration! The people here are calm as any have ever seen. You may scold and threaten them and will not see a feature move or an eye evince any anger. Face and form are as unmoved as if honeyed compliments were following.

I am writing this sheet so closely, I fear I will not have time to fill it.

Tell Charlie Jumps had been sent to Kanagawa with the intention of sending him on to New York by the *Benefactor* in charge of Mrs. Allmand. At the last moment her husband determined to stay. We may now send him next month via San Francisco. We had a capital photograph, stereoscopic of him, only it is taken so near and so enlarged he looks like a Newfoundland dog. I send you the only copy we yet have. He is decidedly the best natured affectionate dog I ever saw. I really mourned for him while he was away and when we went down to Mr. Fisher's he manifested joy as I have never before seen for dogs. I am glad he did not go by the *Benefactor*. It would have been too cold in June below Good Hope, to the south of which ships go at times very far. The Japanese dogs cannot endure much cold. This picture will do until the original gets there. Although this last is now doubtful, as a messenger has just come from Mr. Egerton, who was to take him, saying he has concluded to go to Hong Kong as there may not be a vessel for San Francisco in six weeks, that it is still his intention to go by the isthmus but it is somewhat uncertain so Jumps may not be expatriated. If he was at liberty to decide, he would stay. For although I know he would like dear little Charlie well and run after him all day, he is very contented here. I shall not send him before satisfied he will be in good hands. It was a long time before Ber would consent. He said Jumps would not live, so we could lose him and you also. But he has now a lank, long, lean yellow grey hound. And has consented to spare Jumps. I have seen a Japanese dog which a Daimio paid as high as 80 *itzabus* for, over \$30 at their then value. The more pug the nose the better. You will see Jumps' nose is fairly flat. You should see his side face to enjoy his profile. Charlie will see what a quiet dog he is. He looks like a philosopher, and is in all respects a well behaved fellow.

I hope that the other dogs are safe at Albany by this time. The male is not so handsome as I would wish. It was given by Mr. Portman in place of Charlie, one of whose eyes by

the way is now a little blurred, not enough to spoil his looks. For the sake of his name and because he is so good I sent him to a Doctor, who could not keep him long though as he had tasted flesh and would not be satisfied with Japanese diet.

I hope my dear when this reaches you, you will be in good health. Keep up courage. You have so many friends around you and so many privileges. My life is far from an exciting one. For two days now I have not been absent from the house, then I take exercise in my long hall, doors all open. When I go out I see nothing new now. Riding all the time up and down State Street would give infinitely more variety. If you and Sue think I am willing to stay here because of novelty etc. only try it once. There is much of novelty and variety in every western village as here.

But my darling, this letter must now be forwarded. It goes forth with warmest affection for you, my darling, and our precious boy and with kisses for you and him and for Sue. May God bless and keep you and soon permit us to meet in health and to enjoy each other's society and serve him better and love him more than we have thus far done is the daily prayer of your own loving Husband,
Robt. H. Pruyn



No. 12 Yedo, March 22 1863

It would be difficult, my beloved wife, to find a more beautiful day than we are now enjoying. Yesterday we had a shower of hail stones, the first I have seen in this country. Last evening we had a fair earthquake and earth and sky all save man are this day enjoying a day of perfect rest. The sky is without a cloud, the air only enough in motion to cool the rays of the sun and the whole surface of the ground glistening in green and crowned with trees literally burdened with blooms of every hue. I could not credit that it was possible for fruit trees to have such a profusion of blossoms. The best idea I can give you of this beauty is to ask you to remember the appearance of our time in the early spring when the snow has fallen after a little rain and for a season every branch is fringed with a snowy drapery or again every branch is as profusely filled as our shrub known as the bridal wreath. But then you must go further. The branches of some indeed are hidden by this snow-white covering, but others have different shades of pinks, others dark crimson, while there are some trees (*renyo*, I have not been able as yet to learn the English name)²¹⁷ covered with beautiful yellow blossoms. Wherever you turn your eyes you see multitudes. And

²¹⁷ This is probably a forsythia bush, which is *renyō* 連翹 in Japanese. Forsythia were common in China and Japan, but had not become widespread in North America yet.

then crowning all are the dark shining leaves of the camellia with white or pink or dark crimson flowers by the hundreds. A few mornings since I called Bertie to see the white flowers on one of the trees, which upon close examination resolved themselves into nothing but leaves glittering in the sunlight.

I went this morning to the grave of Mr. Heusken, late interpreter of this legation, near my residence, which I see properly cared for, its hedge trimmed etc., etc. (Little George Fisher, who is going down tomorrow wished to see it) and I picked there a few wild violets which I enclose. (Alas I look for them to press and they have been lost though I thought I had them carefully preserved in paper.)

I am in daily expectation of receiving letters. Each day Bertie says we will have the mail today. And soon his prophecy must prove correct. Your last letter was of December 3rd. I know you must at this very time be in possession of my letter of January, by the *Emily Banning* of January 1st and probably the *Timandra* January 7th both via California.

Bertie is making good progress in Greek. Mr. Thompson is a good scholar and studies are pursued with more method and regularity than I had ever dared to hope. Unless the weather prevents, we take our daily ride, though I have lately been a little remiss. But I have again got into more regular habits and I really am less fatigued with a ride of 20 miles, than with a walk of one mile. What creatures of habit we are! I am grateful for continued good health, with which both of us are blessed and Ber has an additional possession of a most vigorous appetite, which he justifies always on the grounds that he is growing. Fortunately there is enough and to spare. I wish some of our families at home had what we send from the table. I let things go on as Takiso pleases and he gives us about the same number of dishes although we may day after day send many off untasted. I imagine the true reason is that some of the Japanese inmates have learned to love the fleshpots of Egypt. And interpreters, teachers, visitors and servants find no fault with the table. Still expenses are full as moderate as I have a right to expect, at least such as are for necessaries. You have seen I am not obliged to expend all my salary!

I begin now finally to establish a new era, instead of counting the days I have been absent. I timidly venture upon a count of those which will elapse before we meet again. I hope that before many weeks hope may have a more vigorous wing and be more adventurous in her flight.

Ber and myself have been walking the hall and talking of you and home and when we can go. He wishes to be at home so as to enter college in September 1864, leaving here as early as February at least. I hope that may be so but I do not wish to talk much about it. The government must have thought strangely of my position, with your telegraphs. While from here Mr. Fisher has been writing to friends in the Senate and at Washington asking my place when I resign. When I conclude my treaty, which I hope now to do in a few days, I will be in a situation to ask favors with some expectation of success. By that time also I expect to hear something from Charlie about the ships. The time I am on the sea here must be after October and the time we pass the Red Sea must be before May. I

should request to return by way of California, although the temptation to reach home two months earlier would be a strong temptation to prefer that route should opportunity offer, which however is scarcely probable. Of one thing I am sure, our position is more lonely than yours. The days and weeks are of enormous length as I look forward. Perhaps if I had notes to pay, the months would approach more rapidly. I am told such has been proved to have been the effect. As it is, fortunately, such things are unknown to me at least and I never expect to sign one. As it is, I have quarter day in expectancy and the first of each month the *itxabus* are received from the government in exchange for dollars. For bear in mind a dollar is worth for fish flesh in Yedo etc., no more than a U.S. paper bill could be. I find it very pleasant to welcome these periods, but they approach slowly. But to look backwards is different. I doubt after all if time be such an old fellow as he is represented. It is true as he comes forward you see every sign of age. He has its staff, its tottering steps, its snowy beard, its stooping shoulders and its weak eyes. But the moment he is behind your back he throws off his disguise and dances along with the agility of youth, throws away his false wig and beard, turns his staff into an Alpine staff with which he is ready to hunt the Chamois even to the top of the perilous crags they delight to haunt and if you could catch a glimpse of his face you would find one of his digits elevated to the corner of his eye or point of his nose and a merry twinkle in his eye at the thought of how he had been humbugging you.

I send with this a letter to my darling boy and am pleased to say I have others actually written, but I must reserve them to send with other letters. I have two nearly completed and a Japanese story of nearly three pages. Perhaps with this I will be able to send an account written by Onigero (Tommy) about the Fox Temple. I have pressed him into the service and he will write other letters from time to time. You shall have something for the Sabbath School. But I wish to say in advance I shall be rejoiced if they are never used, if in other words the meetings are made so interesting by other services as to render these letters to my dear boy so dull as to be unfit to read. So bear in mind, as I write mostly for home and family, and only incidentally think of the school. I shall not be mortified if they are found unacceptable there. The stories I shall send Sue may make the basis of her remarks to her infant class. Perhaps I will now send the one I have prepared, "The Tongue Cut Sparrow," with the original story in Japanese illustration. There are multitudes of these books. Japan is the children's paradise, with books, sports and treatment generally they are petted as in no other country in the world.

I know of no vessel about the leave for Shanghae to which port generally and occasionally to Hong Kong all the letters via Europe must go, but I will send this to Yokohama so as not to miss the first which may offer. There are no regular vessels connecting with the mail. We must take them as we find them. Some weeks several leave, other weeks none. The last vessel left a week ago yesterday. I enclose you in these two drafts which you will please send for collection to the endorsement to whom made payable. I suppose they will be paid in specie, indeed I see such is the notice. Send them quietly,

directly to them by mail, with directions as to how they shall remit. Charlie may do it in his name or as he thinks best so as to avoid showing they came from me to any but the parties at Boston.

I hope this week to prepare and forward other letters which may reach you by the same mail as this. Please as usual give my love to Cornelia and Alida and Mary and their families and to Abby and Charlie and all there. Aunt Sue and Sarah and Anna and all my friends.

Please send Eliza Jane \$200 for me (two hundred). Hand to her that amount. Some other time I may say more on this subject. Whether and what more it will be will depend upon papers to which I have no access now. You may say George's wife wrote to me asking for some—why I scarcely know. As to Sue and little darling Charlie cover them with kisses. It would not be safe for you all just now to be in fair reach of me. For I am quite voracious and would be like a regular "grizzly." But 15,000 miles is a pretty good arm's length. But my darling, far or near, at home or abroad, you are my darling little wife. May God bless you and my dear boy, may we be spared to meet. Then you will have to learn to travel with me. With love and kisses, many from your loving husband,
Robt. H. Pruyn



No. 13 U.S. Legation in Japan
Yedo, March 25 1863

My Beloved Wife,

Three days ago I had the pleasure of receiving your pleasant letter of December 19/20 and this morning your and Sue's letters of the 30th, the latter through the State Department, the same mail bringing me a circular from the Department of the date of January 3rd.

The cheerful character of those letters I particularly note, as the season in which they were written was calculated to awaken associations and recollections which would naturally sadden your hours. I am therefore rejoiced to hear you say it was not a gloomy Christmas. How delightful at that time to have Bertie's letters.

I was prepared to hear what you say that so far Dr. Clark fills abundantly the position vacated by Dr. R[ogers]. I shall expect to hear he more than fills it. His manner may not be so popular, but I think he will wear well.

Whether you shall feel willing or not to have Bertie enter college, his application to his books here will be of service and his desire to do so may be dissipated before he reaches home. I therefore encourage rather than oppose his idea.

I think all the world, and the rest of mankind has reason to be pleased with Anna D[e] W[itt]'s marriage, unless indeed humanity may require a special exception to be made on behalf of a few forlorn individuals domiciled at Spencer. But then, and I hope Abby will

agree with me on this, the very name of Spencer is sufficient to awaken thoughts of such invariable good nature and all even hearing that name have been so inclined to give up their own opinions and submit with such good grace to those of others, as to render it certain that Anna has landed not in a happy valley (for I believe Spencer is way up on the summit of the ridge between Springfield and Pittsfield), but on the American Ararat, where her ark may rest in peace and all the animals live as happily as their progenitors were taught to do when Mr. Cruikshank's progenitor having no music in his soul and no rest of mankind to tickle, was content to bear the simple name of Noah. Would it not be surprising if she should turn up as a model wife of a pastor?

You will by this time have learned to put little value upon news from Japan whether by telegraph or limping along by mail. The newspaper at Yokohama manages to set up a weekly sensation which I presume it is justified in doing.²¹⁸ The subscription price is \$25 Mexican dollars per annum, which for fifty two small papers is a price which to say the least requires some return and I submit that a revolution is cheap at that price. That I am sure should be the verdict in the United States. You will therefore please, as a general, if not invariable rule, act on the understanding that is proper you should put no faith whatever in half of what is published and totally disbelieve the rest. You will in this way, pretty generally, accurately arrive at the result. The only exception at present is that the salute was given to me, also the national salute and the xxx at Yedo etc., etc. But none of all this appeared in the paper here. Why? The editors are two Englishmen with more prejudice than brains. They would have a capital paper if, as some heretofore declared, the mind was actually located in the stomach. Next week we will have the *Japan Express*²¹⁹ published by a Portuguese, edited by Mr. Schoyer, an American. Mr. Schoyer has been suspected of being guilty of having brains. We will see whether the article is needed so far East.

Charlie must take good care of that handsome present of tops so that when I come home I may see it, and he will be able to explain all about it. I hope his dogs arrived safely.

I should have told you that the Japanese tea is better without milk and not too strong. I have sent some more to you by the *Benefactor* which I directed to be put up in pound and half pound papers so that you can distribute. I presume it will reach you soon after this letter arrives. It is our best tea exported. Price 30 cents here. There are fancy teas at high prices.

I am pained to hear about that Ex-Editor Ex-Colonel being in prison. It proves a lamentable state of things at home. Our greatest enemies have been among ourselves.

However much I would be pleased to have you here darling what you say as to

²¹⁸ The English language newspaper in Yokohama was the *Japan Herald*, edited by Albert W. Hansard and later John Reddie Black.

²¹⁹ *The Japan Express* was printed using single-cut woodblocks, not moveable type, and was a single sheet (three columns per side) per issue. It began publication in 1861 or 1862, but apparently did not last very long.

Catherine's letters is perfectly true. There would be no room here for any influence to be exerted here by you on this people. All that anyone can do now is to learn the language and be ready for the opening when made or perhaps cautiously try to hasten it. The language of course must be learned first. If the time had arrived, my official position excludes the idea of any influence being exerted save that which is unseen and without noise or exertion, that of an exemplary life. The idea of you being able to act as a missionary possibly might is simply absurd. The only effect it would be likely to have would be to terminate your visit. When a change does take place it will be radical and wide spread. The people are not bigoted. Perhaps if they were it might look more hopeful. They are intensely indifferent to any religion whatever except as connected with puerile sports and festivals.

March 27

Oh Jennie darling I have just finished the last chapter of *Mistress and Maid*²²⁰ in *Littell's Living Age*, No. 969. Read it. How my heart has gone out toward home with an almost intolerable yearning. For my dear at times it is intensely lonely here. Can you imagine I do not long for home.

I cannot believe however you and Sue and Charlie would think it right for me now to leave here, in the uncertainty of affairs at home and the necessity of closing up this business which I now at times wish I had not undertaken.

Mr. Brown is now here. I read your letter in relation to Catherine's, and my answers. He says he could give you reasons but I did not ask what they were as I wish to know none except such as are personal to yourself and relate to your own comfort and happiness, which I reproach myself for having made subordinate to so many other things. But my love, if God spare us to meet, we will think little of these things in the joy of the present.

I have just read a pamphlet from Mr. Bonney giving an account of his treatment by robbers who deprived him of clothes except shirt and pants and everything he had. He must have been a remarkable object as he is not exactly an Apollo. I have noted what you say about the equivalent of the subscription I did not make to the race course, and have accordingly sent \$100 to Dr. Doty for the China Mission, to be used for the Church building he was anxious to buy, or for general purposes as might be needful. I think it will do more good than if expended for the demoralization of horses and men.

There has been quite a sensation here for a few days. (I mean at Kanagawa.) My papers and packages have reached here with a printed address to me as "Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary" which I presume of course is a blunder of the dispatch agent at London. I am for the present wearing borrowed plumes though I have explained to our Consul who has been congratulating me that his congratulations are premature. There is

²²⁰ A novel by Dinah Craik (1826-1887) that was published serially in *Little's* nos. 954-969. The last installment to which RHP refers here included the last *three* chapters of the novel, 26 through 28.

considerable influenza prevailing at Kanagawa. Bertie and I, I am thankful to say, have escaped.

I enclose in this a letter and envelope which was addressed to the Chinese comprador of Walsh, Hall & Co. who is now here counting and examining money which W. H. & Co. are receiving for me. I think it will be a curiosity which dear little Charlie will be pleased to put in the museum I may gather for him. Upon reflection I think I will send that letter and the Japanese originals of the stories via California as the postage via Marseilles will be more than they are worth. A vessel is expected to go to California from Shanghae stopping here shortly.

March 29

Yesterday the box containing books from W.C. Little,²²¹ paper etc., arrived. In it much to my surprise I found the 1st volume of my *Works of Hannah Moore*.²²² How did it get there? I was disappointed as I expected better. Is this the box that was advertised at New York at the Express office?

I enclose you a letter from Miss Mann and an account prepared by her of the ceremonies attendant with the burning of the body of Sijiro, one of Mr. Fisher's servants. It may prove interesting both to you and the Sabbath School children. I have no time to copy it and upon the whole think you will be pleased with the original.

Mr. Brown came up here in consequence of having a severe cold. Therefore Mr. Spurgeon preached today, reading one of his sermons. The pastor of our Church you see has no salary but the Indian adage "poor preach poor pay" has not been heard here.

We went to the Heusken grave today. I wish you could have seen two weeping cherry trees in the enclosures, one nearly 4 feet in diameter, the other rather less but half as high again as your old pear tree, branches like the weeping willow as thickly covered with pink blossoms as nature or art combined could crowd them on. Amid all the drooping branches covering an area of forty feet diameter, these trees flower too freely to bear fruit. I hope to send home a few of these graceful trees.

After all I found the violets, but they did not press well.

We read news yesterday that another battle was in progress at the Rappahannock and that Burnside was likely to prove victorious, also that [Union General William Tecumseh] Sherman had taken 5,000 prisoners about forty miles back of Vicksburg and Marmaduke captured in Arkansas. I want all and more than this will prove true. I miss the daily paper much. This waiting wearily for news of home and country are both dreadful.

I have this day a letter from the ministers informing me the Tycoon leaves for Keoto

²²¹ W. C. Little was a bookseller and stationer in Albany.

²²² Hannah Moore (1745-1833) was a religious writer and philanthropist.

on Friday.²²³ There is a large British fleet here and on its way and we expect stirring times. I hope and believe however all will end well. It will be a bad time to press the government.

Now that we have so many vessels arriving I hope to be able to receive and send letters more frequently for a short time at least. The government has asked me to live for a while at Yokohama and have even offered to pay the increased expense which would be necessary for me to incur. They wish most probably to be able to say no foreigners are in Yedo at the great meeting between the Mikado, Tycoon, and Daimios at Keoto. But I have refused to go and shall remain in Yedo as usual.

The government ordered the *Wyoming* here again at my request and I may visit Nagasaki etc., etc. I wrote for orders November 27. It was telegraphed to Washington from San Francisco and orders from the Navy department reached San Francisco December 27 and were forwarded by the *Scotland* and reached me a few days since. They were also sent to Captain McDougal at Hong Kong and at Shanghae so I daily expect him.

And now, my precious wife, with kisses and love as abundant as those cherry blossoms for you and dear Charlie, my sweet boy, and for Sue. I must close again begging to be remembered to all enquiring friends and relatives.

I hope you will be able to read this. I am so constantly interrupted, I write by snatches. I can do no better. My correspondence is very large in every imaginable kind of business. And some kind of an answer is expected. The Tycoon's departure obliges me to prepare another dispatch for the government, for when I send off four already prepared.

So it goes. It is astonishing how much more has to be done than I had any idea of. Some I could perhaps shake off, but then I would not occupy the position of influence which I now do. But when I get home you can hold me still. Adieu, my darling wife and child,

Robt. H. Pruyn



Yedo, March 30 1863

The mail will leave tomorrow, so this package my love must go down today. I add a few lines simply to give you one day later intelligence. I would say in confidence I have succeeded in purchasing for the government a steamer at a cost of 200,000 for the government which was intended for the use of the Tycoon in going to Keoto. He has suddenly changed his plans, now goes tomorrow, much earlier than he had intended and

²²³ The shōgun (Tokugawa Iemochi) was summoned to Keoto by the emperor for the first time in over 200 years. The shogunal procession, which took place in late April, included an escort of 3,000 retainers.

by land. I think this change has been made in consequence of the arrival of so many British ships of war. It will have the effect to procrastinate the demands and settlement with British.

My position you will readily see with this people continues highly favorable. I have no room to ask even anything more. The only fear I have now is that our government may be unwilling to have me leave as early as I wish.

Please say to Charles that the pistols he sends me I wish of the kind that need no caps, also to send via California care of C. W. Brooks & Co. and not to have the box marked as containing arms. There is some difficulty about their exportation from Hong Kong and they may be sent to me that way from California.

I hope in a few days another opportunity will offer to send letters. Meanwhile, my precious wife, with love for you and my dear boy and Sue. Once more adieu,

R.H. Pruyn



The book I send will not be sent to F. & Co. if the first arrived.

No. 15

Yedo, April 12 1863

My Beloved Wife,

I have this moment received a letter from Mr. Fisher informing me that a vessel is to leave early in the morning and that he will endeavor to get a letter on board. I had devoted a large part of the day to a letter giving an account of the conversion of a Chinese scholar of Mr. Brown when this message reached me. I was compelled to lay it aside, though nearly completed and substitute another written some time ago, and to write a letter to the Secretary of State. The British Minister had informed the mail would not leave till the 14th and I had proposed writing you a long letter to be sent down late tomorrow afternoon. I am now compelled to send a very short one. But I hope another vessel will leave on time to catch the mail at Shanghae.

I do not remember whether in my last I told you of the arrival of Mrs. Hepburn and the long expected and very welcome box, more welcome as a proof of your loving remembrance than for the very pretty presents from yourself and Sue. Indeed, my darling, remember we have more than enough here. It is a land flowing with everything but butter. That only runs at the rate of 4 bits to 6 bits per pound.

I think I wrote you the box of [W.C.] Little had reached me containing books and paper. Was that the box which was advertised? By some strange accident the 1st volume of my set of H[annah] Moore's works was there and your copy of *Holland* and *Illustrated*.

We continue in good health and are rejoiced to see that as late as January 9th such was your condition. That is our latest home date, though the mail is daily expected. That letter

arrived via San Francisco.

There is a British fleet now at Yokohama to enforce demands on this government amounting in the aggregate to £110,000 sterling and on Satsuma of £25,000 and the execution of the murderers of Richardson. I am at liberty to say this as everybody knows it. I am in hopes and believe the affair will be settled. I think the sum will be paid.

I am alone in Yedo yet everything is peaceful and hope will remain so. I could not bear to have this mail go without a few lines to you even though so hurried and containing so little as these do.

I think my other package is in this mail. It has been at Yokohama some days waiting for a vessel.

But I send this also as some days have elapsed since the date of the others.

Bertie and Mr. Thompson are engaged in copying letters enclosed in that to the Secretary of State, but Bertie may be able to get a few lines ready while I am comparing the papers with Mr. Portman. It is now 4½ p.m. and our coolie will have sharp work to get down the 22 miles on foot before bed time.

So, my dear wife, I must close. Tell Charlie to hurry along those ships. Don't let him get in trouble with the currency. Keep the money at London till wanted. Agree to pay all in gold.

If best to do so, let some of our bank stocks be put in railroad bonds or stocks. Some of the banks may sustain great loss. I mean this only as a caution, not advice. You must judge, our interest at the Commercial is quite large. Advise with Cousin Bob and J.V.L.P. and Mr. O[cott].

With my warmest love to Sue and my dear little boy and for you, my precious wife, this must be off at once.

Ever Yours, my darling,
R.H.P.



No. 16 Kanagawa, Japan April 26 1863

Yesterday, my beloved wife, was the anniversary of my landing in Japan. In some respects it appears but as yesterday indeed since we landed. We have the same smiling sky and balmy haze and the crows whose melodious notes now fall on the ear seem the self-same black coats who sang our first morning song in Japan. And yet one entire year has been added to the past. A year thus far full of worries. We have enjoyed good health and had the pleasure of hearing the same good news from home. Our dear Bertie has felt the preciousness of the Savior. And now, if God spare our lives and health, we begin to look homeward. How much longer appears the year whose shadowy distance looms up in the

future! The past is all, not foreshortened, but back shortened of its fair proportions and is only as a day which is told.

We are again in trouble here. The British have come here with a fleet of a dozen vessels and made a large demand on Japan—the execution of the murderers of Richardson and the pay of £125,000 besides £10,000 for the murder of the sailors in June. This day was fixed as the last day in which an answer was to be given. But a few days ago the government addressed me a letter and sent two Governors of Foreign affairs to ask my mediation. They placed a war steamer at my disposal. I declined using it in going but used it in returning. It would have added too much to the excitement of an already too excited community, my steaming in under the flag of the two countries. I had been for two days suffering a little from a pain in my back, probably arising from cold. It was spasmodic but severe, sharp as you will recollect I once had in the side. I rode down with unexpected ease and my visitant has entirely disappeared. The British Minister has now extended the time to the 11th of May inclusive. The British merchants are thoroughly frightened. The rector of their Church, wife and family have deserted their home and are on a merchant steamer lying in the harbor. I have not the least doubt the British and Japanese would have a brush if it was not feared by this government it would involve other nationalities. I have now come down again to talk with the British Minister about making this port neutral should trouble arise under the protection of our flag, which the Japanese government is willing to do. The feeling towards Americans is most amicable. And no vessels will arrive with any of our citizens except by accident. You must not be uneasy. If anything is at any time to be apprehended you will hear it from me, not from other sources. I expect the *Wyoming* daily, having written for it three weeks ago. I know of course just what the British desire. What I gave you above is rumor here and rumor does not necessarily lie.

I note what you say about sending to Dr. R[ogers] for my letter. I sent him no idols. There must be some mistake. I can scarcely believe he abstains from answering your letter. That would not be gentlemanly. Please send enclosed letter to Mr. Doremus. I cannot imagine why he wrote me that “I had probably heard the Reverend Dr. R[ogers] of Albany had become pastor.” He could not suppose it was unknown to me. I suppose if he had any special object it was to call me out. You will see by my letter how admirably he has succeeded. But it is ill natured perhaps to attach any particular meaning to a letter which was short, other than that he had to say something when sending the books. I suppose by the time this reaches you, you will have received the excellent tea and chow chow, etc. we sent by Mr. Overbeck, which you will highly value. I forget whether I ever told you the Japanese tea must be used without milk. The tea Mr. O[verbeck] sent is Chinese, same choice he had collected for his family in Prussia.

The latest dates from home are to 9th January. The last letters received of December 26 and January 15. It is too hard to realize that a question cannot attain an answer short of 6 months. I am blessed to hear my dear little boy is so good a skater. I hope he had

many good runs on the skating park this winter. I wish you all went out more. Why not ride out more. Pray get a little wagon and ride frequently. I am very anxious on your account and also on Charlie's. I want him hardened not by violent exercise which would be injurious, but gradually and careful by prudent exercise and wholesome air.

There are now two vessels in port, advertised for San Francisco. A letter sent by them will reach you before this does. I will not make a large package now but hope to have a good package for you by one or both of those vessels, if any interval occurs between their days of sailing. Yet as something may occur to delay their departures I must send these few lines to meet the mail via Marseilles, so that too long a space may not exist between the receipt of letters.

Your Christmas festival must have been a decided success. I imagine the Church edifice will not be less strong for all time to come. As to Dr. McNaughton's pleasant conceit that the ghosts of the old Dutch worshippers would be disturbed by the scene, I can only express a hope they were better employed. I think we may safely conclude that bigotry cannot survive the grave. If anything in the world should be made pleasant it is religion, and those have much to answer for who habitually paint it with skull and crossbones. It should always wear a pleasant aspect and clothed as God clothes it with living flesh and blood and beautiful attire. As for the music, I could stand any tune now in a Church. We had right good singing in our Church today. But as our congregation only numbered thirty six we had nothing that sounds like home. I find the deprivation of Church services to so great an extent, next to absence from you and my friends, the greatest loss I must submit to. Yet I manage to get down at least monthly. This month I have succeeded in being present twice and hope to be down next Sabbath again. And yet it is quite a formidable undertaking, this leaving Yedo with thirty cavalry. A Captain Ballard and his wife, who have been visiting this place and domiciled at Mr. Brown's, will go up with me for a few days on Tuesday, and probably Miss Mann who has been somewhat unwell lately. So you will see I am not considered to reside in a very unsafe city.

On Friday in company with Mr. Portman I visited a vast number of small towns. We walked the entire distance and were about in all 3½ hours. You need not think I was very presumptuous. We had a dozen or more two-sworded men. Our *yakumins* much to my surprise made no effort to hasten our return. They all know my position with the government as officers attached to the Legation usually attend the governors from the office to my drawing room, a big ward for Yedo, and are present at our interviews, with the exception of an occasional confidential one. A few minutes before we came down yesterday the governor (second ambassador to the United States) said that the government thanked me and attributed entirely to my exertions the extension of the time granted by the British Minister. The British here are very sensitive on the subject of the favor of the Japanese to Americans, the British Minister having even spoken almost by way of

complaint of some of Mr. Kip's letters published in the San Francisco papers.²²⁴ The difficulty is that there is a difference perceptible to even the ordinary observer. Mrs. Ballard was saying today she had been asked last week in a store whether she was American, and we never ride down unless we hear someone speaking of us on the road as Americans, as we are easily distinguished as none but our legation and visitors there ride with only Japanese guards. The British Minister would as soon think of going in a den of lions as to go through the city as I did on Friday. I suppose you have seen none of Mr. Kip's letters to his father. I suppose they have received Episcopal unction before publication. I will try and send you two or more of them which I think I have. They are quite fair, not very rose colored.

27th April

I think it well to add a few lines before breakfast as I expect to be busily engaged all day. The mail leaves on Wednesday but closes tomorrow. I may therefore be able to add also a few lines tomorrow before I return to Yedo.

I anticipate passing a very quiet summer. Had it not been for those threatened troubles with the British, which I presume are very much exaggerated in China, we would have been deluged with visitors this summer. It was getting to be a fashion as well as a matter of prudence to come over here. There were, as was estimated, 1,500 deaths of foreigners at Shanghae last year. The cholera prevailed there fatally. The city is situated on a dead level. All around it is crowded by Chinese, who bury the bodies of the dead in wooden boxes above the ground. The battles with the rebels take place frequently not far from the city and it is a daily occurrence to see bodies floating in the river. Add to this that, of course, there is no drainage, and that the river water is all they have to drink and you will not be surprised to hear there is always in the summer a fearful dysentery prevails which carries off numbers annually. There is a very strong temptation to drink beer and spirituous liquors, and neither death or disease or Mr. Delanson can preach temperance there successfully, and all of those preachers all are usually regarded as strong. It is certainly not a want of good taste to prefer beer to the essence of dead Chinamen, though it appears to be conceded that the frightful drinking of brandy and beer which prevails there brings on disease. I am rather tired of this miscellaneous company, inviting so many I have never seen before or expect to see again, though some few of these visitors have been wonderfully agreeable.

When the *Wyoming* arrives, and I have just learned she is on her way up, I propose making arrangements to visit the other ports should business allow.

28 April

I shall not send with this the letter for Mr. Doremus and the *Story of Asking* for my dear

²²⁴ The series appeared in the San Francisco *Evening Bulletin* in seven installments.

boy but will send by the vessel now in port for California as they will probably arrive earlier by that route. As this will probably be arriving a month later than letters which will leave one week later, there is no inducement to add much more.

I feel, when about closing a letter, at a loss what to say by way of regards to friends. It would take a page if I put down names as they occur to me. How it would be to finish with such a page and then at the close of the letter add "here take in page 9 of letter 10"? I will think of it. Meanwhile, give love to Abby and Charlie and family, sister Cornelia and Charles Van Zandt and Alida and Mr. Bell and Mary, and give my precious boy a good sound hug for me and kiss him ever so much. How happy I am to hear he is giving you so much comfort. I hope and pray he may be spared to us long and give my love and kisses to Sue. I hope to write her in a few days. I do not often think this necessary, as your letters are not kept from each other. And my dear boy kiss your precious mother for me long and often and then you will not come up to my standard. I am afraid you will all need opodeldoc²²⁵ for your arms and sides for a few days if I were home.

My darling precious wife, I wish I could leave here tomorrow. If I was packed up tomorrow ready to go, I could not at this time. I hope some peace and quiet will prevail and in a month or so I will be able to say something more definitive about home and loved ones. Farewell my loving darling wife.

Robt. H. Pruyn



Yokohama, April 28 1863

As it is raining and I will not be able to leave for Yedo till tomorrow I will add a business letter.

Of course I have only this anxiety now that at the termination of this war there will be a great decline in values of everything which will ruin many people. If so, banks must be affected. It may therefore be well, as I have written before, to diminish our interest at the Commercial Bank, if good sales can be made, and invest say in stock of Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati Railroad or Great Western Railroad or New York Central stock or bonds. I only suggest. You will be the better judge, taking the advice of Mr. O[rcott] and J.V.L.P.

I had made arrangements to send two remittances from Shanghae but only one has gone owing to some delay in realizing. That has been sent to Charlie, £2,000. I now have arranged to send you same which you may expect by this same mail perhaps. I hope the Messrs. Barings have sent you and Charlie the large sum I requested them to do the first

²²⁵ A popular liniment.

of the year. I wish to know how much has been realized of profit by exchange on all my remittances.

I now suppose I do not owe one dollar individually or for firm or at least will not by the time this reaches you.

I assume that the current bills of our good banks will be taken in discharge, even of the mortgages, and I hope that arrangements can be made to take up mine with Mr. Sisson and the Life & Fire Company. J.V.L.P. may arrange for last, and that the Savings Bank will accept payment.

Should there be any surplus funds of mine invest in bonds, New York Central Railroad or mortgage or real estate, or in the railroad stocks before mentioned.

But I will say no more now. I will write more particularly perhaps via California as there is now a great chance that this will reach Shanghae too late for the mail and if so will not reach home till 6 months after you have received the letter sent eastward.

Truly and Affectionately,

R.H.P.



Business—

I take it my dear I will have considerable cash in your hands after discharging every obligation I may have individually or in the firm. If Charlie wishes to use any for the firm or for himself he is welcome to it.

Should any be free for investment I agree with you and that other old foggy Cousin Bob into whose honorable society I now crave admittance that bonds and mortgages are very good things provided the title is good. Those therefore are to be preferred if things continue unsettled. Should stocks take a tumble however there are several I would like, not all that I name but some of them.

Say Mechanics & Farmer's Bank; Mr. O[lcott] could get this for me.

Albany Insurance, which I did not expect was sold.

3rd Avenue Railroad which Mr. Weed can get for me, as also the Insurance stock through Mr. King.²²⁶

Charlie is welcome to sell the Works if he can make a good sale. Then you and I can really be husband and wife. You shall not go out unless with me or with my consent first had and obtained and I will be dutiful still.

²²⁶ Rufus Howard King (1794-1867) was a prominent banker and businessman in Albany. He was elected president of the Albany Insurance Company in 1862. There was bad blood between RHP and King, apparently because King had pushed RHP out of power among the Albany Insurance Company directors.

We will get a low wagon into which two old people can get comfortably with room for a lap dog and Bertie or Charlie can drive us.

But you see as Charlie can afford to take his time in selling we can of course sell to better advantage.

You speak of Charlie being pleased at having Townsend with him again. I hope this is so and that he has left Theodore's office.²²⁷ I see no reason why he should be broken down with hard work as he would have been there. A young man at his age had better not be so closely confined to his desk. I often regret I allowed dear Eddie to go into the Banking Department. We are poor short-sighted beings.

If our house is let, it should be hereafter only from year to year and not sold for any price whatever, lest you may lose however a very grand offer I will say short of \$35,000 of your present currency, perhaps better say \$25,000 gold.

I should like that passageway adjoining us on the north if Charlie can get it all the way to rear end of the lot say for \$300.

You must not think from these remarks I contemplate a long absence. I shall be delighted to leave next January and hope I shall have leave of absence. Let Mr. Weed say I shall only use it if it can be done safely for the public interest.

I hope you will call and see Harriet Weed. You will be delighted with her when you come to know her. She is one of your sort, good solid sense and good principles and as she has never married she is not liable to the objection of having once lost sight of that good solid sense as I fear some other person is liable to have placed to her charge.

R.H.P.



No. 17 Yedo, May 4 1863

Your letters, my beloved wife, of the last of January etc. marked so 7, 8, 9 and 10 reached me on Friday. Though a vessel will leave for California Thursday, I will not be able to send you as long a letter as I had wished prepared, because the same mail brought in six dispatches from Governor Seward which I answered, sending also duplicates of another one. This together with a correspondence I have with the British minister and the great press of business occasioned by the demands of the British government occupy me constantly.

I have written you via Marseilles what public rumors say of these demands. I will not communicate what I know but rumor sometimes comes very near the truth. The British

²²⁷ Theodore Townsend held the position of U.S. Collector in the U.S. Internal Revenue Office in Albany.

then demand £125,000, and a week from this date is fixed for the answer and if not favorable we will have war or something like it. This is therefore a critical time in the history of this country and as the government has for some time dreaded a civil war, there is danger that being so driven to the wall they may prefer a foreign one. Of this there is no doubt; we would have one tomorrow if none but the British were likely to be affected by it. The government however apprehending danger to other nationalities and involvement with them may settle. I was called on last week to mediate, and was successful in obtaining an extension of the time by 15 days. My own relations with the government continue pleasant. They have largely increased my guard this week, having doubled the number of the Tycoon's officers at the Legation. I do not think I am in any danger, but when I see how uneasy Mr. Fisher is I am heartily pleased you are not here. There is of course great excitement and enough foolish rumors to frighten a dozen communities as excitable as that of Yokohama.

I hope to send by this vessel two small boxes containing some beautiful articles. The colors on the ivory work will rub off if handled with warm or moist hands. As with all the articles I send, keep for distribution. There are some I should not much like to part with as they are choice, and you can scarcely tell which till your eyes are accustomed to the different works. All may look pretty but there is a vast difference.

There are two small rolls containing painted views of the Tycoon's procession going into Keoto, but I could not get in the two best ones, those containing the chief personages. Those I will try to send by mail. The small balls or beads made of inlaid porcelain and copper are very fine. They cost here more than a dollar each. The ivory ones representing oranges with insects on are also very elegant.

I see the *Benefactor* arrived safely. I hope my boxes arrived in good order, then you have some magnificent specimens of work.

Your tea I suppose was acceptable. You must be pretty well supplied by this time.

I was pleased to hear that articles sent by Mr. Hyatt and at the same time by express arrived safely, but I do not understand whether the silks for Anna P[ruyn] had arrived. If so the two heavy silks for you and Sue were with them and of the same kind. But though you do not say how you liked my selection I suppose they have arrived. You describe all as beautiful but whether that included the gold color I don't know. I felt sure Mr. Hyatt would be careful of my goods.

The question of my return does not depend at all on my pleasant location. I would as cheerfully abandon that as if it were the reverse. My decision now rests entirely on these ships. If Charlie and you think I had better return now, well I will send Mr. Weed some papers then leave it to your decision. There is nothing else to keep me. I will abandon a most elegant place, which if you were here I should be loath to leave. I can make twice what I wrote you at first I could save here. You know what you said your first remittance was from Boston to you direct. I can save ten times that. My profit one month on exchange will amount to twice that. But the government allowed an extra amount at the

time equal to an entire year's profit. The value of the dollar then was so low as to double the profit which we usually have. For example for \$1,000 we receive 3,000 *itzabus* from the government. Last January 2,200 of this would sell for \$1,000. Now each dollar is worth 2 $\frac{1}{3}$ *itzabus*. When I first came here, the dollar was worth nearly 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ *itzabus*. But all these advantages are purchased at too high a price if we are separated.

You will tell my dear little boy what comfort his letters give me. It is so pleasant to have him remember me so often and so pleasant to see his improvement in writing.

Bertie was very much amazed that neither you nor Sue had sent any letters in the packages last received for him. He thinks he has done miracles in the way of writing. He will not soon make a good correspondent. The truth is he is busy riding and we have so much company that it requires much self-denial and hours snatched from sleep at times and I have been obliged as it is to give him strong and repeated hints.

When I sit down to write to you I would feel little inclination to say much unless I could write cheerfully. You know that while easily depressed I always fought against despondency. Many in my situation would have broken down. Even here many believe me perfectly crazy to remain in Yedo, but it is my duty, and I shall discharge it. If next week the British attack it, I will probably be obliged to go. I am satisfied with what I have done here. For I have been very successful and I can say to my wife that I am more popular than Mr. H[arris] was and I think I have far more influence here. If I live I can easily show you why.

As to political feeling: absence and distance are two powerful disenchanters. With the exception of Mr. Fisher and Mr. Hall, who takes the *Tribune* and I presume indulges in similar leanings, I know nothing of the political bias of any of my countrymen here and, what is more, do not care if they are only good Union men. It would require a very vigorous effort to make me feel as formerly. So I think I can assure you I will not err much in that direction though perhaps I may be like an old war horse, who cannot forget old lessons.

With regard to the Works, if a good, first rate sale can be made, well. If not I think when I return, if spared to do so, I can arrange so as to satisfy all of us, either sale or advantageous arrangement. I hope to be able to bring commissions which will accomplish either. I am glad Charlie is so well satisfied and doing so well. Only carry little sail and no debt. Then if we lose a few thousands it don't matter so much.

I forgot to say to Charlie that I do not exactly like Mr. King doing that business and I wish him to say so to Weed. He did not treat me well at the Albany Insurance Company. General Cooper²²⁸ was absent, he was kept in the direction and I dropped as soon as my back was turned. Charlie may say so to King also. I would prefer Olcott but shall not insist on it. Only I do not like it at all and am far from satisfied. I wish my friends taken care of, not those who have not proved so. Not that I wish any harm to Mr. K[ing] but I wish my

²²⁸ General John Taylor Cooper (1798-1878) was a Director at the Albany Insurance Company.

friends first benefited then his turn will come. And if Charlie feels it necessary not to change I insist on one thing: that King shall know how I feel. It was an insult to me and particularly to your father's memory. He was very anxious as Mr. K[ing] knew I should be elected. It was some years before he was gratified and I was left out before he was buried. And I am surprised Charlie went to him.

Mrs. Hepburn did not arrive here till the middle of April. She is quite well and had a pleasant journey, but was delayed in San Francisco waiting for a vessel direct, while a lady and a gentleman came over in the same vessel who fortunately reached San Francisco only three days before the ship sailed.

I am glad to hear you are keeping the corner house. Do not sell and do not renew the lease. Should the adjoining house of Dr. A²²⁹ or the one on Chapel Street particularly be for sale and cheap let them be bought for me. I could use Dr. A's for an office if the Works is sold. It would have been a farce to send sardines here. Any such articles can be bought cheaper here than in Albany. I have good butter now 40 cents per pound. You need therefore send nothing. Cloth is cheaper here than at home. So is every article of luxury.

When you send slips from the papers please cut out no speeches—those I do not read. No account of battles—those I get quicker from other sources. But cut out local, city items, quarterly statements of banks, elections in banks and other companies, marriages, deaths. All those things which do not appear in the *Weekly Journal* you send.

You must have had a grand row in the Capitol. I am glad I was not there to steam in that horrid atmosphere.

As to the Army, though not liable to draft, you forget I am a veteran general and I will perhaps be wanted, though generals appear rather too plenty.

I think Seymour L. rather too aspiring and my brother E[dward]²³⁰ awfully so. It is a pity they did not live to come under the eye of Napoleon.

China is cheap here. It is all nonsense sending any out. But what we have is brittle, so many prefer our strong ware. Better to break what we have and replace often.

I have written twice to Abby. Did you receive any letters saved from the *Colombo*?²³¹ I must have had some on board when she was wrecked. The package sent via San Francisco in January has not arrived yet. It should be here soon.

I shall soon send you a good quantity of best Chinese tea. We can get as good tea as you are using for 20 cents. I shall make arrangements for a continued supply of tea etc. should I return, as I can get a far better article than is brought for sale.

²²⁹ Perhaps Dr. Eugene Andrews, who lived at 91 State Street.

²³⁰ Edward Roggen Pruyn (b. 1829) was a younger brother of RHP. The friction between Edward and RHP grew increasingly over the years, as RHP supported Edward and his family, and Edward lived a dissolute life.

²³¹ The *Colombo*, an American vessel out of Boston, was wrecked off Jamaica in early 1863.

It will give me great pleasure to execute the commission for Mrs. Robinson²³² and I am now having silk for 20 dresses made and I have more than that ready to send you. If I send white thin silk can you not have them dyed? The black here is said to be a poor color, that is to say the jet. The thin silks (washed) cost here now \$4 per 25 yards, one yard wide. But then each \$1 is worth \$1.25 here. For Mexican dollars command a premium and the exchange is to be added. I sent you one or two of these silks, though then the pieces contained 22 yards and cost \$6.

You must be sociable with your opponent neighbors. Our people should now try to keep their pastor. I am sure he will be a good one. I should think if not so popular a preacher as Dr. R[ogers], his sermons give proof of more power and ability. I hope and pray his labor will be blessed. I am glad to hear the General takes to him. Tell Uncle Jacob the debt must now be paid, this year.

The Tycoon has gone to Keoto to see the Mikado. No such visit has been paid for 200 years. You will understand the Mikado is the spiritual emperor and outranked the Tycoon when ancestors usurped the power. If now the Tycoon is sustained by the Mikado and great Daimios in his foreign policy, we will have a vast change in public feeling here and no more murders.

Is there any change in the appearance of our Church? I hope the attendance does not fall off. Have we lost any families? How many have been added? All those little graphic scenes you send me pictured ever so briefly of James Dexter²³³ and John F. Rathbone²³⁴ etc. on skates add greatly to the interest of your letters. They are homelike. What has become of G[jilbert] C. Davidson?²³⁵ Great changes must have occurred with our businessmen. Why did John Van Gaasbeek give up his marble store? I notice by the address his removal, but the cause of course is not disclosed. You see my letters are rambling. I note as thoughts occur. This time the ship leaves days in advance of the time fixed. I have had only a few hours' notice and we are all very busy. I have letters to Mr. Brooks, Mr. Rankin²³⁶ the Collector of San Francisco, and everyone else to get ready.

Besides I unfortunately have company. Mr. and Mrs. Ballard and child and Miss Mann and I must pay a little attention to them. I had a German here Saturday and one today, others will be here Wednesday.

You can easily see, my darling, that I did not need Charles' letters to make me willing to return. I of course was delighted to know he felt so well and satisfied with the aspect

²³² Although there were many Robinsons living in Albany at the time, this is likely the wife of Lucius Robinson (1810-1891) who was then comptroller for New York State. Robinson would later serve as the 26th Governor of New York 1877-1879.

²³³ James Dexter (1795-1867) was an attorney in Albany.

²³⁴ John F. Rathbone (1819-1901) was a stove manufacturer in Albany.

²³⁵ Gilbert Cumming Davidson (1818-1868) was a prominent businessman in Albany.

²³⁶ Ira P. Ranking of Goddard & Co. He was also the U.S. Collector Port San Francisco, office in the Custom House.

of affairs. Nor do I believe the country ruined. Although I cannot see how it is to end. I have been so utterly mistaken thus far that I feel unable to guess what will be the issue of this wicked rebellion. I did not believe any could be so utterly insane and wicked as to fire on anyone arrayed under our flag. And I certainly did hope for an easy overthrow of secession. But all is right. We were not worthy of so grand a country and God has purposes, the wisdom of which will be known to those who succeed us, perhaps to ourselves.

I am glad Charlie is to send a statement of his business matters etc., etc. I wrote you I had no idea of what you had, as I did not know what the shares of Gas Company stock were. Perhaps that letter was lost on the *Colombo*. It does not matter much of course. But it is strange to be ignorant of such details. I thought it would naturally have occurred to Charlie that it was well to have sent me a sketch of the will and inventory. It would have given little trouble and it is surprising it was overlooked. But I suppose all this is now on its way to me.

I have just heard from Mr. Fisher that one of the ships will be detained till Thursday morning. This will enable me to add a few lines tomorrow.

May 5 1863

You will see, my darling Jennie, I have asked leave of absence from the government. The letter has gone direct to Governor Seward and I enclose to Mr. Weed a letter asking him to second the application and one to Charlie, giving special reasons for it. Do not fear, if I ever get to old Albany and civilization I shall wish you to leave with me unless some imperative reasons require it. It will be of great importance that I have this permission, and I trust I shall be able to obtain it. Perhaps however a few days may settle the question by depriving all of us here of the choice to remain at all.

It begins to look like it. I received a letter today from Mr. Fisher, that the people were moving from Yokohama and Kanagawa and the Governor admitted it was by his orders. Last night it was expected all the servants would leave. Today I learned that General Banker,²³⁷ who is a great silk merchant here, had been packing up and sending away a large portion of his goods, and his clerk said others were doing the same. I had enclosed to Charlie a letter for my recall, but I took it out, but I will enclose it soon to be used if proper and leave of absence cannot be attained. It will not do to leave here earlier than January. Terrific typhoons prevail in some of the fall months. Leaving in January would bring me to Red Sea at right time or even if I left in February. Mr. W[eed] will be able to see what great results may flow from the permission to return on leave. Let Charlie tell him by the by I can probably bring my new treaty with me and let him urge W[eed] to make it a strong personal matter that I shall have leave of absence and it will be done.

I expect to send this package at 12 o'clock tonight and then if the vessel is detained beyond the time now fixed I shall be able to get an additional letter in the mail, which now

²³⁷ This may be J. H. Bancker, who was later a merchant in Shanghai in 1865.

is to close tomorrow afternoon. But I wish it placed in the bag which the Consul seals up as it may then be safer.

I regret you have been deprived of the letter Dr. R[ogers] has mislaid, particularly as I have not the most distant idea what it contained. How do you like my letter to Mr. Doremus. It was very kind of him to write and send me the books. But his letter was short and curious saying that he supposed I had heard that Dr. R[ogers] of Albany had become their pastor and was doing a good work. I feel very sure Dr. R[ogers] left because he found in some high quarter a want of sympathy and cordiality and perhaps if I were home he would unburden himself and we would find he was not so much to blame after all. But I supposed Mr. D[oremus]'s letter was designed to call me out and I thought it best to make a graceful bow and retire. I think both he and the Dr. will think it cool and refreshing, particularly as it will reach them in July.

I repeat here I have an account with Barings Bros & Co., Russell & Co. Shanghai, Chartered Mercantile Bank, India London and China at London, Walsh, Hall & Co. Yokohama, R.B. Smith Yokohama, and Colonel Fisher and C.W. Brooks & Co. have a small balance of mine of \$200. All of these except Smith and Mercantile Bank will have private unsettled accounts with me as well as Trust account for ships etc. I mention it to guard against loss as far as possible. John G. Walsh at Nagasaki has nearly \$50,000 for ships to remit. But he is connected with the house of Walsh, Hall & Co. at Yokohama. But what he has will not appear in their statement. Walsh, Hall & Co. now have a large sum. But I hope to have it lessened this week considerably. Make a memorandum of this as you are now a business woman.

I wish I could occasionally have a letter which was only two months old. It would be almost a miracle to have this happen as a letter would have to reach San Francisco the day a vessel was leaving direct for Kanagawa. Besides you must bear in mind I can only send you letters as a vessel chances to leave which is never regularly. Sometimes vessels may leave together or even the same day, particularly from Shanghai, and then not another for two or three weeks even. But, from Shanghai a semi-monthly mail leaves.

I send you a ragged specimen of our blossoms. They may reach you in sufficiently good order to give you an idea of their wonderful luxuriance. I wish you could now see the hill back of my large pond. It is a bank of azaleas and all colors. There is an elegant buff or lemon colored one here. I do not know whether I told you I also had the pomegranate. It bears a rich and beautiful flower.

In the vessel which bears this, I think I have informed you, two boxes go for you. One contains a beautiful bracelet which General Burgeoine, the Commander In Chief of the Imperial Forces, sent me. It is most elegant and the cost of such in Shanghai is over \$80. Then there is another presented me carved from peach stones, lovely. Then there are two specimens of jade stone in the other box, one light green, a little bottle, the other a pale tint vase with carved cover and stand presented by Mr. Overbeck. The jade stone is highly valued by the Chinese, and commands heavy prices. Then I send one of your ambrotypes

which I assure you I would not do had I not its mate. But I send the one because I wish to divide the risk of loss. I wish you would now have a good large photograph taken from it and colored.

I can give you two cases which show what a government we have here. A few days ago the father of Skaso,²³⁸ my best servant and who speaks the best English, came here to say he must go home with him to Simoda where he runs a small farm. He has five other children and he wished Skaso to take charge of the farm. I should first say that when Mr. Harris was at Simoda he wished servants and could find no one willing to enter into his employ. So the Governor of Simoda chose Takiso, who is now my head servant or butler as he is called and Skaso, and ordered them to go to Mr. H[arris], and they did so and have been at the Legation ever since. Skaso did not wish to return. But he said his father wished it and he must go. He asked Ber how long we were to remain here etc. Ber saying a year, he said that is a long time. I could do nothing with the father. I proposed giving Skaso a holiday of one month in a year. No. I wished to keep him 6 months or one month to give some instructions to a new servant for my room which Skaso had charge of. No. He must go the next day. I did not wish to leave him so I asked Portman to send word to the old Governor of Simoda who is now Governor of Yedo that I did not feel able to spare Skaso and wished him to induce his father to consent to his remaining. The chief officer of the Legation chanced also to have come from Simoda and that very evening I found Skaso's father had gone home and he is to stay with me. How was it done? The officer told him to go home and he went. Since then Skaso's mother has been taken sick and I have given him leave of absence.

The other incident is this. A few days ago the government took possession of the large temple here and it is now full of guards, muskets stacked etc. There are now 100 men quartered there and the priests have to give up their nunnery. This is a great government. It is supreme in all things.

I was rejoiced to hear of the addition of 12 to the Church in January and hope it may have been much more in April. The Deacons are very well. The new element in the Church is amply recognized.

But I must conclude my letter with this sheet which will bring me to midnight and as I have a governor or two to see in the morning and the letters should soon be on their way, I hope you will not consider I have neglected you especially as with this will go to Governor Seward eight dispatches containing many enclosures of much importance. You will be surprised if you could see how much in a small way there is to do. But I am determined to be prompt and am remarkably so and I get along quite easily.

I may go down to Yokohama for a few hours tomorrow. The people there are uneasy

²³⁸ Nishiyama Sukezō 西山助藏 (1842-1921). When first employed, Sukezō was assigned as secretary to Henry Heusken. After Heusken was killed, Sukezō then worked for Townsend Harris, and consequently RHP.

and I may think it best to see them if what the governors say will seem to quiet them or even if should it be decisive the other way. There is a good deal of bad feeling among the American and British residents. An English officer, Fisher writes me, was offensive yesterday, said the Americans were spies for the Japanese. An American merchant thereupon knocked him down breaking his own knuckle. The Englishman apologized and wished it hushed over as he was ashamed of it and there it ends. John Bull is a great bully, but he gets taken down sometimes. When the races were held at Yokohama an American who was mate of an English ship was insulted by the sergeant of the British guard and he proceeded to give him a sound beating and knocked down all who aided. Then he went on board ship and said to the British crew, "Now curse on. You have been abusing me as a Yankee and now I will flog you all." And he gave everyone on board who dared stand up to him a good sound beating.

And now, my precious wife, I must close. Please remember me always to those who enquire about me. I will not now go over the list but there is Mr. [Edmund] Herrick who in his sadness I would wish to remember and then Cousin Kate Ten Eyck is so kind in remembering me she must not be overlooked. General Gansevoort and Aunt Sue and Kitty and Uncle C[hristopher] and Aunt Sarah and Anna must not be forgotten and please say a word to Mrs. Corning for herself and Mr. C[orning]. I see he has been sick and am glad he has recovered. Dr. McNaughton I should wish my regards given to. I think I told you I had been called on by his nephew at San Francisco. And then Alida, Cornelia and Mary and husbands and, my darling, there is my precious boy, how he must be growing. God grant we may be all be spared to meet.

It is a sad thought indeed it will be so long before you read these lines! But a blessed one that our separation will then have been reduced two months.

And now my darling, with kisses for my darling boy and Sue and yourself I must again say what I wish I could lovingly do looking in your eyes how much and truly I love you and my dear children left me.

Ever Yours,
Robt. H. Pruyn



18 Kanagawa, May 11 1863

I came down Saturday, my beloved wife, to be present at the baptism yesterday of Jennie Pruyn Fisher, which ordinance was administered in the office by Reverend Mr. Brown. The child is as pretty a little one as you can find anywhere.

My other object in coming down was to calm the excitement here. Last week the time (which has now been extended to 24th) was about expiring when the British and French

fleets on a failure of compliance with their demands were to take coercive measures. Perhaps by the connivance of the government there was at once a regular stampede among the Japanese. The servants nearly all left. The merchants packed goods and moved off. Laborers and boats were not to be had except in small numbers and at exorbitant rates. The contractors who have been largely engaged in building became anxious to get their pay. On Wednesday it looked, it is said, as if Yokohama was to be under mob law. A large crowd went to Mr. Schoyer, an American, demanding money under threats. It was paid to their contractor. Another crowd went to Monsieur Bourret,²³⁹ a Frenchman. He was absent, but his head clerk probably got foolishly excited and shot the contractor. The vice Consul (it is said after he was down) also shot him and he was also bayoneted by one of the French guards. Mr. Robertson,²⁴⁰ an American, was hurried from his house by six men (they say they were taking him to the Governor). He thinks they would have murdered him. He was rescued by some American and British guard.

The government told me they had only given order to have the aged and infirm and children removed but that the people had become alarmed and fled. They are now to some extent returning. But it is probable the same panic will take place at the end of the time, now fixed May 24th. My impression is we may have war between England, France and Japan. The British demands are an indemnity for Richardson's murder etc. £125,000, and £10,000 for June murder. Then it is claimed that the Tycoon is powerless to observe treaties and is overseen by Daimios and so they offer to aid Tycoon against them. This is now the question and my opinion is he will decline because civil war would follow and if he do refuse then England and France will use coercive measures. If it came to this I shall not stay at Yedo. I return tomorrow however. But I would be so shut up there in case of blockade and would be exposed in case Yedo is bombarded. Fortunately the *Wyoming* arrived this morning. I sent letters to Captain McDougal at once on receipt of first information from Colonel Neale of British demand. We have 8 American merchant ships in the port so we are tolerably well provided for now.

In the event of war I probably will go with Bertie on the *Wyoming* and perhaps cruise about waiting results. Of course all this is conjecture at present. But my impression is if trouble began, years may elapse before it is settled.

It would be impossible to hold any large portions of the country. The sea board is of course defenseless to a great extent except there are few harbors and the coast is dangerous. The whole interior is intersected by canals and large ditches and filled with rice fields, the most difficult country in the world for cavalry and artillery, with large hills raised by volcanic action commanding the paths where horses and men must move in single file. It would cost millions of money and thousands of lives to do much if the Japanese once get

²³⁹ Louis Bourret was a French merchant who represented the Lyon firm Remi Schmidt and Cie.

²⁴⁰ Samuel Robertson. See <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1864p3/d493> for the diplomatic record of this event.

thoroughly aroused. All this arises from a desecration of the Sabbath, three gentlemen and a lady riding for pleasure on that day!!

May 11

The steamer *Wyoming* arrived here this morning, Captain McDougal having fortunately received a letter which I had addressed to come from the Consul at Hong Kong. He had orders to go south, but at once turned northward. All the Americans of course are delighted as there are also 8 American merchant ships here and we have reasonable accommodation. I shall not remain in Yedo while it may be unsafe but shall leave as soon as I shall be satisfied war will take place. You may rest easy my dear I shall not needlessly expose myself. I think at present I am perfectly safe here. Captain McDougal will go up with me Wednesday to remain a few days. I expect to come down with him. The ship will remain till war or peace shall be determined on.

You will readily perceive I must be greatly occupied, with Captain McDougal here, a meeting tomorrow of all the ships' captains and merchants, letters for Mr. Brooks, for the Department and Messrs. Barings and Collector of San Francisco.

If the vessel which takes this do not leave tomorrow I will have time to write a few lines more. We have now detained it a day but if it rains another day may be occupied. I sent packages of letters and two small boxes by Mr. Eldridge to San Francisco. This goes by the *Curlw* with 3 large boxes most elegant ware.

Be careful of the shell work. Hot air may injure it. It is now near midnight and I will close. With love and kisses for you, my darling wife, my precious boy, and dear sister Sue and all.

Ever Yours, R.



No. 18 Kanagawa, May 12 1863

I enclosed a few lines to you yesterday, my beloved wife, in a cover to Charlie and as the *Curlw* sails at 10 o'clock this morning instead of daylight I have the opportunity of testifying to health and safety to this good moment. Bertie is still asleep of course at this hour of 7 o'clock but he sat up late last night copying the longest document he has ever had in his hands for that purpose. So that he will have a good excuse for not writing by this mail as he has at least three hours work yet to do.

As I stood at the entrance of this house, the old heathen temple Honackagee,²⁴¹ where idolatry has held sway so long, and behold the beautiful evergreens, maples and flowers

²⁴¹ Hongakuji 本覚寺, the site of the American Consulate.

all around me, I said what a beautiful country and I thought how sad it would be to have the desolation of war sweep over it. And yet in a few short days a benign revolution which I had hoped would be peaceful and finally successful will be checked and the hour hand placed far back on the dial plate of progress.

I should have said that your namesake was baptized in Mr. Fisher's parlor which is the body of the temple building. At the rear of the room is a partition which forms a dark room where shrouded in fitting darkness are grouped all the idols to which these people have bowed in this very building for at least two hundred years.

It is difficult to write to you now. My head is so full of the different political events which now crowd rapidly on each other, that every subject I think of turns in that direction. I received a letter yesterday that the Tycoon left Keoto the 8th of this month and will arrive in Yedo the 24th, so that the policy of the government will be finally decided as is probable the present month.

I expect to make arrangements for moving the families of Mr. Fisher, Brown and Ballagh over to Yokohama at once. The missionaries think themselves safe here and they are probably but in case of a necessity arising for going on shipboard Captain McDougal does not wish his boats too much divided. The only difference thus far with me at Yedo has been that my guards have been increased, the large temple now being filled with muskets and troops. Thus far that building has been free from government encroachment and the temple services have been regularly held. Now the priests have a sinecure, but I cannot believe they like it, as their income, not being derived from a fixed salary but from contributions, in part at least must be diminished.

Everything is peaceable however. Two Sabbaths ago we walked to Mr. Heusken's grave accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Ballard and child of 7 years and Miss Mann. We had 50 of our strange looking guards. But all the people we met were friendly and to all appearances we could have walked the entire distance safely and dispensed with their company.

I find you laugh at our appearance in that photograph. Now bear in mind it was taken to show you the castle gate and my singular looking guard. Then as to the position of my feet I should have explained my saddle was Mexican with huge wood and leather stirrups, that accounts for the projection from the horse's sides. Then Bertie's large collar was a havelock. Now you will be able the better to understand the picture, which I think a very good one.

I have some more very beautiful ones. I send a large collection of Japanese drawings in India ink which will enable you to understand this country and its strange scenes and people better. Some of them you may not be able to understand, but I hope one day to explain. You will see their costumes, buildings, trades, festivals, punishments, in fact whole domestic and religious and political life. There must be six hundred or more of them. Should they reach you safely be careful of them not to have any grit on your hands. Let me know if they arrive safely. Then I will not duplicate them. I was also anxious to hear

whether the boxes by *Benefactor* and dogs arrived safely. And what the duties amounted to. Also what was the condition your silks were in. I am having those now on hand put in an inner tin box.

Ship ready. Adieu, my darling wife and child,
R.H.P.



Kanagawa, May 17 1863

You will be surprised, my beloved wife, when you receive this letter to learn the route it has followed to reach you. I have just learned that the ship *Haversham* will tomorrow morning leave this port for Victoria, Vancouver Island. Should her arrival there be on the eve of the departure of the weekly steamer for San Francisco, which usually performs the trip in four days, you will receive this letter much earlier than if sent via Marseilles. Besides as a curiosity of travel it is worthwhile to select this devious route, which I hope will be safe as well as expeditious.

I this morning received two letters from home, yours of February 24 and Mr. Weed's of February 15, both referring to former letters written, not yet received. It was a very happy thought of yours to send off those few lines "in advance of your weekly budget" as I would have been sadly disappointed had no word of kindness reached me from you, my precious wife. You must not think the days do not pass wearily. I should be delighted to leave even at an hour's notice and am prepared to do so at any time it will be proper to do so. I sent off via San Francisco by two different vessels a few days since my views on this subject to which it is unnecessary again to refer, as you will fully understand that my further duties may be discharged by another but that I must not leave my post voluntarily, at least until I find I can do so without injury to those who are executing the government commission. Should troubles arise with England and France, other questions may control my course.

I am rejoiced to hear such good news about Dr. Clark. The Wednesday evening lectures must be unusually attractive or the congregation more thoroughly awake to duty, either of which would be of itself a gratifying fact, the concurrence of both particularly so. I hope the attendance will increase and that the improvement will be durable. It will be a welcome hour when such privileges can be again enjoyed by myself. If the members of our Churches were ever deprived of them as I have been they would prize them more highly.

You must have greatly enjoyed the visit of cousins Robert and Cornelia especially if they made you a good long visit as you appeared to anticipate. And the intelligence that Charlie feels so well is very welcome. Now that I am absent I hope nothing will recur to

disturb his equanimity and that I will, if we are spared to meet again, find him thoroughly rejuvenated.

I am glad to hear of the safe arrival of the dogs. The best natured dog I ever saw, the celebrated Jumps, left here a few days ago in charge of Mr. Egerton in the *Curlew* via California. Charlie will be delighted with him if he reaches you safely. He never snarls. You can pull or push or punch him and he is ever good natured. And besides that he has one of the most remarkably solemn faces you ever saw and a beautiful “pug” of the most retiring disposition. The letter, wherein you probably noted more particularly their arrival and that of the goods, has not yet reached me.

I came down to this place Friday evening to escort Captain McDougal of the *Wyoming* who was at Yedo with me two days. I expect he will remain here till we learn of the result of the present claims and offers of England and France. If favorable, we may expect quiet for some time. If however disturbances arise, it will be long before anything like the comparatively peaceable times we have had will be experienced. Great revolutions must take place here in opinions, customs laws and government perhaps. A few weeks will probably determine whether these are to be peaceful or brought about by bullets and bayonets. Do not give yourself any uneasiness as to our safety. The government, it is true, have increased my guards at Yedo and have even sent 80 *yakunins* to remain here as an extra guard till I return. But these measures are taken as precautionary and not that they have reason to apprehend danger.

The British merchants are very much alarmed. It would require a very large sum to induce any one of them to go to Yedo. They cannot see how I can possibly remain there. Some of the Americans think I should leave; probably most of them. Mr. Schoyer informed me after the last ship had left for San Francisco that he had proposed calling my attention to an article on that subject which might give you uneasiness if not explained which he had sent to a California paper. I do not know what its character is nor is it material. I think I am safe and as long as I feel it to be right I shall remain at my post. You will not have to learn from others when I apprehend danger.

Yesterday I received a letter from Yedo saying the return of the Tycoon had been postponed. I suppose it will now be many weeks before he returns and I regard this as decisive that he will not accept the offer of England and France. I am not sure what will then be done but some measures will be adopted by the Admirals which I fear will greatly diminish, if not destroy, business and ultimately if not at once lead to hostilities. It is well known however we are friendly and I hope nothing will occur to embroil us.

May 18th.

I received a letter also yesterday from Mr. Pumpelly who is now at Shanghai.²⁴² He is no longer in the employ of the Japanese government. He writes to me he intended to go up the Yangtze River as far as Hankow and try to penetrate still further into the interior. This intelligence may be welcome to his friends at Albany, if they have not otherwise heard from him. As the vessel was to leave at 10 o'clock I have risen at 6 o'clock to write you a few additional lines. I expect however this week to send a letter via Marseilles which may possibly reach you as early as this. So I shall not send a larger package by this as yet untried route especially as the *Haversham* is not a very rapid sailer.

You must say to Sue I missed very much her letter this week. But as this mail was much behind time, another will be due before next Sabbath, by which I hope to receive fuller though not later news from home. I can scarcely hope to have such late news as you occasionally are favored with. When on the 24th February you said your latest letters were of the 22nd November, I had the pleasure of knowing that before a week had passed you probably received my letters sent January 1. That was a pretty far leap! We rarely hear anything much later than 90 days.

I enclose you another photograph of Ber. You will see he has a passion "to be taken" with and without horses and dogs. But then he requires something to occupy him. And he is constantly trying to think of something either personal to himself or by way of improvement of horses, servants or table. Sometimes I let him have his way simply to give him something to engage him.

Please say to Dr. Armsby that Dr. Simmons has left here. His practice, our Consul says, was worth \$1,000 per month. He has gone to Shanghai.

I shall now close this letter and add another should the ship be detained as is quite possible as the wind is unfavorable and the weather adverse to completing her load, if not on board as I understand it was not entirely on Saturday. And although merchants work here on the Sabbath, the Custom House does not, so boats cannot be procured.

I hope my darling Charlie has at length got his dogs and that he will be pleased with them. There are some here considered a finer breed, rather smaller but they are difficult to get and quite expensive.

And now, my dear wife, I must go through the stereotype request to be remembered to all friends but I will omit naming all. Please consider all put down in a row and read them off for yourself. They are in my mind as you can call them up in your own.

As for darling little Charlie and dear Sue, why is it necessary to say anything. They are written on my heart and with your dear name would find themselves impressed on every sheet if the photograph were legible. For them and yourself with an abundance of kisses and love melting over from my full heart I again commend you to the loving kindness and

²⁴² Raphael Pumpelly (1837-1923) was an American geologist, originally from upstate New York. He surveyed Hokkaidō and parts of northern China between 1861 and 1863, in the employ of the Japanese government.

promised keeping of our kind heavenly Father praying that his choicest blessings in this world and through all eternity may be your enduring portion. Such is the prayer of your loving husband.
Robt. H. Pruyne



May 18 1863

My Dear Jennie,

I am glad to hear of these Commercial Bank notes and hope by this time more may have been added. I was likewise pleased the Church matter has been attended to and shall be rejoiced to learn the Church has no debt.

I cannot understand your allusion to the \$1834 received. When your earlier letters arrive they may explain. Charlie also speaks of that amount. Now October 1 there was an amount sent on bills in Washington which should have produced at least the sum in question and also in London of \$1875 which latter should have produced a handsome profit when received, as it should have been in January. These bills were enclosed to same parties and you should write for explanation.

I am very anxious the two sums should be paid Savings Bank and Life & Trust Co., especially if they will receive current bills. The latter institution must do so of course as it has suspended, and I supposed the first will from necessity. I speak of these payments supposing that by the time this reaches you or even before, you will have received from me, in addition to what you have acknowledged, sufficient to take up both and the residue at Commercial also. As early as April this should have been possible.

Whatever money you may have of mine to dispose of I think had better be placed in New York Central Bonds, or in mortgages may be better yet if good opportunity offer. Cousin Bob may be able to get some good country mortgages. But those at home I should prefer of course.

But I will write no more about business matters! which you will think I had better come home and attend to myself. How gladly could I start! I could get ready at a day's notice if need be. It will be the happiest moment I have enjoyed, for many a month.

[This is half a sheet, not a whole sheet. The rest of the letter is missing]



Yedo, May 26 1863

You will not expect a long letter from me, my beloved wife, when you learn that as usual I have to write with only a few hours to spare before the mail leaves and under the disadvantage of having very little facilities as at 2 o'clock in the morning of the 24th the Legation building was totally destroyed by fire. It is said to have been accidental and to have originated in a small building adjoining the kitchen. You will remember that I have already informed you that all our partitions were of paper, thick where privacy was to be secured, thin when light was desired. You will not be surprised to hear therefore that in the short space of 15 minutes the whole 200 feet of building was in flames. I saved the books and archives, all damaged by the rain however, but furniture and clothing, except about a change and what was in the wash, all destroyed. The silver with the exception of 4 salt cellars and two tea spoons saved. The last thing I gave up was the copy of your ambrotype I kept. But Bertie was crying, "Father the building is all on fire. Come or you will be injured," and I gave it up. But fortunately had placed it in the top of my trunk which was safe, though nearly empty having in it only a change of linen for Kanagawa. The Bible you gave me is saved, a little wet, and the guard chain.

I had more than 30 silk dress patterns which were to have been packed in tin boxes which were made and which were hung up on the lines to dry till Monday in a room where fires were placed. But the fire did not originate in that room, more than 180 feet off. These are all more or less destroyed, too much so to be worth the duties and freight for so great a distance. Better to replace them.

We are, I am happy to say, all well, though our quarters are rather cramped. We at present occupy a small temple in the enclosure with three rooms, two of which are occupied at night by our guards. Our supplies for sleeping, dining, reception room and office for three of us, quite convenient and compact. Mr. Portman's building was not destroyed. But his affects were injured by the rain which fell rapidly while for precaution they were carried off. I cannot tell how much has been saved as there [are] a few articles on the bottom of one of the large express trunks which was saved which I have not examined. I think Bertie and myself can boast 3 changes of linen and two of clothes each. But you must send nothing. I can buy at Hong Kong at half what it would cost you, then the delay would be too great. I must supply some articles at once, though sparingly. The trouble of preserving clothes in this moist climate is too great.

You will think Ber, for a boy of his age, is having great and varied experiences. He stands it well. I think I shall be obliged now to go for a while to Yokohama, for lack of the necessaries wherewith to keep house. You would be surprised to see what ridiculous things were saved, compared with what was destroyed. Each *yakunin* seized something strange to him and therefore supposed to be valuable—my old stove pipe hat, Bertie's spectacles, a map of the Northern States hanging in the office, an oil painting of Franklin Pierce which Mr. Harris had, some of the books were thrown in the pond for preservation, as was also a box containing \$2,600, a looking glass was saved, a pair of decanters, lamps,

two wash bowls. The Japanese use none, as far as I have seen. The sermon of Dr. Rogers you copied and sent me was found floating in the pond. There also a volume of Kaempfer²⁴³ worth \$200 was thrown, which I had borrowed of the British Legation. All your letters were in the safe and are thoroughly water soaked. They may be legible and capable of separation when dried.²⁴⁴ The safe stood the fire but must have admitted the water like a sieve. The books and papers which were in the wooden case are in much better condition than those which were in the safe.

All the Americans at Yokohama are very desirous I should leave Yedo. They have not considered it safe for me to remain here. But you see how safe I have been in the midst of all the fire and excitement. I was never more cool in my life. Somehow, though easily excited by small things, I get over it when real difficulty or danger arrives. Affairs still look serious. The British demand for the money is put off, not refused but promised at some further day. This will be regarded as evasive and insincere. The French and British offer of assistance is declined. It begins to be more and more forced on my mind that resistance to foreign trade and intercourse will soon be the order of the day. While I say this do not fear for me. No persons could have been kinder than my guards or more vigilant. While I was dressing even my room was filled with them with each a lantern. Had I understood them, more would have been saved. While they were talking Japanese to me, which I supposed was asking directions as to what to save, and they were dodging after me from room to room, the difficulty was they were anxious for me and wished to get me out of the building. I had no idea of the velocity with which fire travels here. Almost light light [*sic*]. Finally Bertie's cries of, "Father come out—the building will fall" brought me to the open air where the rain was falling in torrents. I now propose asking for the assignment of a new residence till this is rebuilt and then to go to Yokohama to be with my colleagues till something like order exist.

Please say to Charlie if they have made their contracts for ships, all right go ahead. If not then build first what they can pay for with the sum which I have advised will be to their credit in London. Perhaps war may not take place, but it is impossible to tell. If an arrangement can be made as I suppose it can to carry the balance if war does occur, very well. But my idea is that they had better attempt at present to finish only two of the ships waiting to hear further from me.

And now, my dear wife, with love and kisses for you and darling Charlie and for dear Sue and all my kind sisters, for I must conclude this hurried letter. Pray believe I shall be very prudent and I pray God may spare our lives so that we may all meet again and soon. Your ever loving and faithful husband,
Robt. H. Pruyn

²⁴³ Engelbert Kaempfer (1651-1716) was a German physician whose lived in Japan for two years. His book, *History of Japan*, was the chief source of knowledge about the country in the West.

²⁴⁴ Those letters apparently were a loss. None of them are included in the RHP collection.

Some letters I had finished, or nearly, for my precious boy were destroyed. They were in my portfolio. I had 6,000 dollars in silver in the house: all saved.

I open the letter to say that the Gorogio, which means the government, has just sent me as a proof of sorrow 20 chickens and 600 eggs. It is usual to make presents on such occasions in Japan.

Let Charlie show Mr. Weed and Judge Harris²⁴⁵ his letter.



No. 22 Yokohama, June 13 1863

You will have heard, my beloved wife, before this reaches you of our having been burned out on the 24th *ultimo*, though I had not time to give you all the particulars; now will I and give them in this letter as a ship leaves next week for California, by which you will probably receive letters a month in advance perhaps of this. I wish now to lessen the interval which otherwise would exist in the receipt of letters.

Everything remains unsettled yet, though it is hoped that this day will bring decisive answer from the government. And the British Minister informed me yesterday he had the evening previous received a highly satisfactory letter. The evidence I daily receive forces on me against my will the conviction that it is only a question of time when another effort will be made to try whether the system of exclusion can be again enforced. Many of the Daimios doubtless think that as success crowned their efforts 200 years ago, the same issue will follow now, not comprehending the vast changes which have meanwhile taken place, and that at the time the Portuguese were driven out, it was not worth the trouble or expense it would cost to preserve the rights acquired here. Now it is different. These islands are on the great highway. We must have relations with this empire even if no business tempted foreigners here. Two American ships have been wrecked on the coast in the past 8 months, the last having on board 400 Chinese. The necessary care of the shipwrecked people here will compel the government apart from any other considerations to maintain treaty rights. But you do not wish political disquisitions.

Last night the officers of the ship of war *Encounter* (British) gave a grand entertainment, theatricals and supper etc., to which we were invited and went. I hesitated a little at first. But looking at the spirit of the affair, regarding it as similar to a tableaux exhibition or reading of a play, and as Bertie wished to go and never had seen anything of the kind I decided to go. When I arrived and found Reverend Mr. Brown and his children there I

²⁴⁵ Ira Harris (1802-1875) was a U.S. Senator who lived in Albany. Previous to that, he as a justice of the New York Supreme Court and a judge of the New York Court of Appeals.

felt better satisfied that I had not gone far out of the way. It was a very creditable affair. I will send you program via California.²⁴⁶

I had the happiness of receiving on the 28th May your letters of 23rd March. The mail which brought them was the fastest which the people here has ever had the good fortune to have. It was a decided improvement to have letters in a little over 60 days and a great joy to learn you were all well, yet a great disappointment to observe no progress on that dreadful war. But as I have never seen but one end of it I do not despair even now.

Please say to Dr. Wyckoff I was much pleased to receive his letter and shall endeavor soon to reply. He is a very keen observer and how I can do otherwise than accept his cool and disinterested statement of your feelings and views, though they may have been somewhat unknown even to yourself. However I shall not be governed by them so as to extend unreasonably my sojourn. Now that I am a wanderer without bed and board, for the present a guest of Walsh, Hall & Co., I get occasionally quite blue. I have so little inclination for work now I have more restricted facilities. I hold out the idea to the government and intend returning to Yedo in July. No progress has been made I understand in preparing quarters for me. But I say I shall go to the building assigned the French Minister which he has kindly offered me. I have no idea I shall go because I expect all kinds of objections will be started and I see nothing to be gained by going. But Yedo cannot be given up, though my colleagues believe that is the prize for which the Japanese government are contending. Everything is still very unsettled here. The British Minister says he has had a very satisfactory letter as I have before said but this is a curious people. The night before the British Legation buildings at Gotenyama were burned,²⁴⁷ some officers brought the British Minister a sample of some tack to be put in the stable for the horses when they must have well known the British would never be allowed to go there and use them. Work goes on here now as usual, both public and private and improvements steadily progress, and yet no one is satisfied that he will be permitted quietly to enjoy what his money is now providing for personal and business accommodation. You would be surprised to see what splendid improvements have been made here. The Bund or dock for more than half a mile is built of stone and four jetties of stone reach out into deeper water. The vessels anchor about $\frac{1}{8}$ of a mile to $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile off. There docks etc. here have been built at the expense of the government. The warehouses of the merchants are called godowns. These, as well as most of the buildings for dwellings, are of stone, many of them quite picturesque. Everything looks substantial. Property is high. A good lot on

²⁴⁶ RHP Papers, B4 F6

²⁴⁷ The new British Legation buildings, located at Gotenyama, were burnt by rebels before completion. The attack took place on December 12 1862. Afterwards, Britain gave up any plans to locate the Legation in Yedo, and instead stayed in Yokoyama. There was great opposition to foreigners establishing themselves at Gotenyama. RHP may have written about this to his wife, but the letter is not extant. He wrote in great detail about the situation to William Seward in a dispatch dated February 16 1863. See <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1863p2/d372>.

the Bund without improvements on is worth \$5,000 and none for sale even at that, though there are only two vacant, and these because parties are building for speculation purposes or for their own residences when their present leases expire, probably the latter. Should these troubles be really settled favorably there will be a great advance, though property has actually doubled in value since I have been here and yet the government has granted in that time some 200 additional lots to foreigners in a new concession. Everyone is entitled to receive one simply paying a year's rent in advance and enclosing the lot. When I tell you I know of one instance where the lot was sold (after being fenced) for \$1,300 you can form some idea of their value. Officials do not have lots assigned them as clerks. Only those are supposed to have them who really require them for business purposes, though this rule is very often violated and some of the Consuls who have been here some years have succeeded indirectly in acquiring valuable lots. Mr. Harris tried to prevent it, but failed. The new concession is not well located and the temptation is lessened. I have fortunately had little if any complaint made to me. There are so many things I wish to put in the letter which is likely first to reach you that, as I do not wish to repeat, I scarcely know what to say here. And yet the chances are I shall omit many things in the letters I expect to leave here next Saturday.

I have had a present of a box of English breakfast tea from Mr. Forster²⁴⁸ now in England which is really elegant and I will send it to you, though it has reached me here. I have sent via Shanghai 5 boxes of Japanese tea which is better, Mr. R. B. Smith²⁴⁹ says, than those which were taken home by the *Benefactor* and sold for \$1.25 per pound. That tea cost me \$21 a picul (133 pounds). When fired there is a loss of 6 to 8 per cent. The charges will bring prices up to 22 cents per pound. To this must be added freight duty etc., including premium on gold. Now merchants estimate that 22 cents here cost them say 44 cents, and they say therefore that they must get for the teas of this quality 80 cents at least before they get even their money back. I should have told you, you must not use milk in Japanese tea. It is well for you to know also that if you will have a little box made with a paper bottom and place on this the drawing of tea (whether Japanese or Chinese) and cause it to be held over a fire and gently shaken till heated well and crush, you will find tea not only improved but get a much greater product. The Japanese bring it in fired as is called. But it is refired, then it loses the percentage of moisture I have stated and it will lose more if you have it refired as I have recommended. If you had a little notice of this put in the paper it would be of service to the poor. All tea merchants here say this is so. You will find an agreeable aroma rising and the tea will draw better and stronger. The Japanese teas are purer than the Chinese, they are not adulterated as yet at all. The only jockeying thus far practiced is mixing inferior teas with those of better quality. You will

²⁴⁸ John Forster of Forster & Co., Foochow (Fuzhou)

²⁴⁹ Richard B. Smith was a founding partner of Smith, Baker & Co., a tea exporting firm established in Yokohama in 1859.

see the advantage of this when I state that the price varies here from 5 cents to 35 cents. The teas I send were bought so less because purchased at the height of the British difficulty when prices had fallen one third. They had before sold at 35 cents per pound and the cost in the U.S. should therefore be stated at \$1.00 which is the mark, except I happened to pass by as Mr. Baker,²⁵⁰ who buys for A. A. Low & Co., was negotiating for this lot and I asked him to buy 5 boxes for me. Please send of this lot to Dr. Wyckoff and Clark each half of one of the boxes when they arrive. Send also a few pounds to the Pastor of the Holland Church, and to Uncle Jacob H., and do with the rest as you choose.

Sunday 7 o'clock a.m., June 14 1863

As the long expected settlement with the British was not made yesterday, though a governor has come down and an interview is to be held today, the steamer has been detained a day and I am thus able to give you one day's later account of our continued good health. I have tried to get Bertie up to write to you but he is insufferably lazy. He says he cannot write to you unless he is rested which means unless he continues in bed till breakfast time which fortunately is not later than 9 o'clock. I rise now at ½ past 5 o'clock and walk below the village and take a salt water bath each morning and hope to keep this up as long as possible. It will require a great effort, especially in view of late dinner etc. Breakfast here is at 9 o'clock. Tiffin 2 o'clock. Dinner 7 o'clock. At many houses breakfast at 12 o'clock and dinner at 8 o'clock, which becomes an all evening and almost all night operation. I had to fall into these hours even at Yedo, in order to enjoy rides.

I presume you will have had news of affairs here and they are bad enough. But you must remember you will be imposed on by exaggerated reports. Mr. Verbeck for example has left Nagasaki, I think from an excess of timidity. I have had no official or private letters which appear to me to justify such a step, though I am not sufficiently aware of the facts to justify a correct judgment. I refer to it not for the purpose of condemning Mr. V[erbeck] so much as to assure you. I shall keep you advised of everything and incur no needless risk. I am pretty sure now I have been never more exposed to danger at Yedo than I had any idea of. But thanks to a merciful God all that danger has been safely passed.

Our Consul and missionaries have left Kanagawa. I thought it best they should come to Yokohama, especially as the government was willing to pay the expense of their temporary removal. They were asked to leave only for 15 days not exceeding a month in any event. The former period has nearly expired and to all appearances no prospect as yet exists of their return. If they can be as cheaply accommodated here it may be as well for them to remain altogether. Perhaps they will be obliged to, particularly as Mr. Fisher will scarcely return and if he do, only for a short time, as a house is to be built for him this side of the bay.

²⁵⁰ Colgate Baker (1838-1903) was an American, originally from New York. He later went into silver speculation.

We have a most beautiful day, as elegant a spring day as you ever saw, a fresh breeze blowing gently, not a speck of dust on the green foliage, and although the wheat has been gathered for more than two weeks, it is spring yet and so it was in January when the apricot and peach blossoms came out and so it will be till our fall, for the crops are even coming up and everything wears the fresh appearance of the early spring.

Our service commences at 11 o'clock. It is now approaching half past 10 o'clock. I have been interrupted so as not to be able to write much this morning, though I had expected to have filled this sheet. I hope however this week to send you a good long letter filling several sheets. But it requires a great effort to write here.

I am pleased to hear my darling boy continues to improve and that he studies hard. I wish him to improve every moment because when I get back I will want him to take a great many rides with me and with you, perhaps on horseback, for if I see a good little pony in England I may put it in my pocket and bring it along with me. Kiss the dear boy for me and let him return it for me also. When will I be able to dispense with deputies in such a healthful recreation? Give my love to Sue and Abby whose commissions I shall try to exceed as also Dr. Vanderpoel's.

My darling wife I feel more sadly when I write to you than at any other time. It brings home and you and all my friends so resolutely before my eyes and then the thoughts of distance, separations and that continued and the end so uncertain. It should be so pleasant in every respect. It is in some aspects but yet, especially as I conclude, the dark side of the cloud intervenes. But I must not annoy you with doleful letters. They shall always be as cheerful as possible.

Remember me to all relatives and friends. I shall try and write to Abby and Sue by vessel at end of week. It appeared to be useless to send via Europe now when at least 30 days more will probably be taken on the transit.

With my unalterable love for you my very dear wife and my precious boy and Sue,
I must now stop.

Ever Yours,

Robt. H. Pruyn



I enclose you, my darling, an invoice of silks much larger than I had intended, but more having been saved at the fire than I supposed when I duplicated the order, I find enough pieces to astonish you at least, in my possession. I suppose you will find no difficulty in preserving such as you do not wish to use or dispense of. And then you and I will not be bothered at New Year's to know what to buy for presents.

You will have these insured as soon as you receive this for \$3,000. As the vessel is British and first class, insurance can be effected at the lowest rate.

As to value in the U.S. I can say in a general way you are safe on estimating the *itzabu* at \$1. Should duties be paid on these silks you will have to figure something like this. For one yard of the best silks, heavy and wide, \$2 per yard.

Prem and Draft 25 percent 4/ duty 35 percent 70c	1.20
Freight and insurance etc. etc. etc.	<u>30</u>
	\$3.50

The pink striped ones \$3 to \$5 more each piece.

The other wide ones green, purple, buff slate etc. with the stripes all as above. The plain black and other silks of same quality put at 12 bits in Albany adding for freight duty insurance as above. None of the silks or crepes are worth less than \$1 except some half dozen pieces and the wide crepes more than that. I mention this so that you may know if there be a piece you wish to part with to a person to whom you do not wish to give it. I am done with silk so say nothing. I know I have bought too many. The gauzes should be worth \$1.25 at Albany adding duty and insurance and no freight. The little scarfs with fringe at end \$1 each. The large scarfs with spots in purple and white etc., etc., worth \$10 each here.

As to those I wish you to give away I have very good reasons which I will not repeat. From these and the lot via San Francisco I wish two or three dresses given to Mr. Weed for his daughters, a dress to Mrs. [Ira] Harris, two to Mrs. [Abraham] Lincoln, one to Mrs. Seward and one to Mrs. F[rederick]. W. Seward. Should duty not be asked let Mr. W[eed] get them through. Give to his daughter two more dresses and one to Mrs. Morgan and another to Mrs. L[incoln] and two more to Mrs. S[eward] and if Mr. W[eed] wishes two or three for others all right.

With regard to duties please let Charlie make a memorandum and give to Mr. W[eed] so that he may procure an order for their delivery either without duty or on payment of duty as may be necessary so that the boxes need not be opened in New York. The boxes look too large for above quantity. But two of the boxes are double wooden ones with a tin one besides, making three boxes each before you reach contents. One has only one box of wood and tin box within. Box No. 3 was packed in a great hurry while the boat was waiting to take it to ship which sailed suddenly two days in advance of expected time and I was not able to get a complete list of contents as Ber had only made the list of those in two boxes and I was obliged to make it up from memory, which was difficult as these goods are all sold by the piece and as the Japanese foot is 15 inches it makes it difficult to get at lengths by the yard more particularly as their pieces generally xxx a little. I have tried to get at the sum more than at the quantity. Should you or examiner find any serious omissions you can make up the amount of duty in same and pay it.

I suppose Mr. Weed can say at Washington that the dresses are intended for presents not for sale and can get an order without producing invoice for addressee of 3 boxes of

silks as marked and he may think it proper to send a few dresses to some other officials than those I have named, say Mr. Harrington²⁵¹ Assistant Secretary of Treasury, etc.

I make these remarks with no disposition whatever to avoid payment of duty. The government wants money and I am willing to pay any legal demand. But as I suppose it is customary to admit duty for articles sent home by ministers as presents and of course I can afford to give more away if duty is not paid.

I think it very necessary Mr. Weed gets the order for the delivery before their arrival. So there will be no delay. I am sorry the third box was packed so hastily but I think if duty is to be paid the government will get the proper amount as price is right if not quantity. The aggregate paid I have put down. Should duty begin to be paid it may then be as well to get order so that boxes will not be broken up in New York.

I was up at 5 a.m. But I have been writing my final dispatch and I am unable to do much more. Mr. Portman is now copying it and we have barely time to get it on board before the ship sails.

I shall therefore not attempt to write much more to you, my darling. I have to think what more to say to Charlie. Am occasionally interrupted by Captain McDougal of the *Wyoming* (who is writing to Secretary of the Navy) with questions and my mind is engrossed by business matters.

I received on the 22nd your very welcome letter of April 13 via Marseilles. I assure you I shall do nothing to delay more here, everything to hasten my departure and shall be pleased if it can be arranged so that I can leave in January. I hope Mr. Weed can procure me leave of absence or rather give his influence in form of the application I have made. You will see how difficult it must be for me to make any calculations. I can only say rely on my doing all I can to get home as soon as I can with propriety and honor.

Georgie Fisher goes by this vessel to reside with his uncle at Buffalo (a Mr. Mason, grain and flour merchant). He carries with him two small packages for you and a box containing sundry little things which I hope you and I can one day properly dispose of. I embrace every opportunity to send forward what I have.

The ivories I have a good collection of. Shall try to get some good ones for Abby as she wishes also to execute balance of Commission.

Be careful when opening all the boxes I send. The silver ornaments for suspenders and carved pins are from Hong Kong. The wooden tops have a top inside which can be made to spin along the string by placing the point inside the slide. They are for little Charlie. He may give away all but 3 for saving.

And now, my darling, I must close with love and kisses for you and my carling child and for dearest Sue.

Ever yours,
Robt. H. Pruyn

²⁵¹ George R. Harrington (1815-1892).

The seal I send is my name in Japanese.

I have received from the government a letter this morning asking foreigners to leave. Don't be alarmed for me. A strong force here. English and French. *Wyoming* here. *Jamestown* at Hong Kong I have sent for.



Yokohama, June 21 1863

You will have heard, my beloved wife, before this reaches you, of the destruction by fire on the 24th *ultimo* of the Legation buildings at Yedo, and I hope you will have received my letters via Marseilles and not be startled first by a telegram. The fire broke out at 2 a.m. of Sunday in or near the kitchen. I was aroused by Onigero whose presence was very opportune as otherwise the presence a moment afterwards of more than twenty *yakunins* each with a lantern would have been somewhat startling. I rose and dressed with more deliberation than I should exercise again after my experimental knowledge of the rapidity with which Japanese homes are devoured by the flames. I placed my watch and a small pistol lying under my pillow in my pockets. Placed a large Colt Navy revolver in another pocket, went to the adjoining room and took out and buckled on my sword, then took from the table a flask of powder, some fixed ammunition and caps, and then pointed out my trunk to be removed as also a bureau. Meanwhile I had of course called Bertie who was in one of the adjoining rooms. In the parlor a large number of pieces of silk were hanging. These I directed to be rolled up, but the *yakunins*, more experienced than myself, at once cut the ropes and began to bundle up the silks. I then, being unable to make them understand me, started from the room knowing well they would all follow me. I went to the large express trunks and pointed to them. These were carried in the parlor and filled with silks. The trunk was saved, the other burned. I then started back, my *yakunins* rushing after me and jabbering Japanese which must have been very poor as I could not understand it. I should have said I had, while dressing, sent for Mr. Portman. He had arrived and we had saved the papers and given directions about books etc. Finally hearing Bertie's cries "Father! Father!" I had learned from him that what the *yakunins* were saying to me was not that they wished me to point out what I wished saved but to save me as there was danger of the roof coming down. Had I known this earlier probably more articles would have been saved, as I kept them dodging briskly after me. As soon as the fire reached the hall it went on with the rapidity of a racehorse. You must bear in mind all our ceilings were of paper. The division between the bedrooms and office and the hall and between my room and the dressing room were made of translucent paper forming small panes pasted against the most beautifully made and lightest woodwork you can

imagine, all joined thus [illustration].²⁵² The other partitions were of paper, thick and ornamented like our wall paper.²⁵³ You can readily imagine such fine walls would not long obstruct the progress of the flames. I had however misunderstood Onigero who had rushed in saying “Minister it is all over.” I thought he meant the fire was out, instead of that he intended “it was all over the premises.” In 15 minutes by the watch the entire building over 200 feet long was in flames.

The main temple and gateway was saved. But the priests’ houses and guard houses near my house were destroyed. All my best linen had been carefully put away. The washing here being an awfully severe operation, I thought I would use only a portion at a time. Only those in the wash were saved, and of course the poorest, and so of everything else. Some summer pants etc. I had just received from Hong Kong are destroyed. All my bedding and beds purchased of Mr. Harris. One table and bed linens were saved and all the silver much to my surprise was brought to me the next day by Takiso. The confounded silks had driven this out of my head. Only two tea spoons and the 4 salt cellars are gone. Of course my loss is very considerable but I presume this will be made good to me by the government.

I had promised both you and myself several long letters by this opportunity, but the unsettled state of affairs has not only obliged me to write many dispatches (11)²⁵⁴ to the government but to my colleagues also and to the consuls of the U.S. at the different ports, and to have many interviews with the Japanese government. For example up to 12½ last night I was engaged with the Governor of Kanagawa. This morning at 10 o’clock I am to be engaged with one of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs who is to arrive here *en route* for Keoto.

There has been a curious state of affairs. This part you may read to our friends but it must not get in the papers. The English demand of £100,000 was to have been paid commencing last Thursday and a paper had been signed to that effect. Then the British Minister was informed the Tycoon had sent a letter from Keoto directing that the money should not be paid. The British minister then turned over the affair to the British admiral who has given notice that after next Saturday he will commence a proceeding to compel payment. Last night I was informed confidentially the money will be paid tomorrow. The Minister today will probably confirm this.

The position of affairs is thus: the Tycoon is at Keoto or Osacca a few miles off, the Mikado not giving him permission to return, he does not disobey. An order would be issued for his deposition if he did and a new Tycoon proclaimed. The Mikado has issued orders for the expulsion of foreigners. We have his proclamation showing this, it is

²⁵² RHP is describing a *shoji* 障子 here.

²⁵³ RHP is describing a *fusuma* 襖 here.

²⁵⁴ Dispatches from this time are at

<https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1863p2/ch9?start=31>

admitted by the Governor. We have also copies of Tycoon's order to the same effect. But the Yedo government say they will not act under these orders, that they do not wish to do it and would not accomplish it if they desired to do so, that the Tycoon has been compelled to sign these papers. His refusal would cost him his life and power. I suppose this is true. The position of the government is a difficult one. Perhaps there may be a resolution, a new Tycoon, or if the old one escape a Civil War, perhaps one in any event. Both Colonel Neale and myself have been fortunate in getting possession of papers disclosing this state of things, he by means of his Secret Service money, I through friendly considerations. And the government now admits the orders, says that we were not informed of it because they were regarded as not reflecting the real views and wishes of the Tycoon and were to be treated as a scurrility, and therefore they would never have mentioned had we not made the enquiry and learned it first from other sources.

June 24th

Oh how much more I have to say—

[end of page—no further pages. Incomplete letter?]



Yokohama, June 26 1863

I had the pleasure two days ago of writing to you via San Francisco with the reasonable expectation that in sixty days you would be in receipt of the letter and in half that time of the telegram which I have desired the Collector to send forward. And although the message in addition to that of the fire which destroyed the Legation buildings is simply, "All well," I thought it would be welcome and as it may reach you before any of my letters it will serve to prevent any uneasiness should exaggerated or unsatisfactory reports prevail.

I have informed you of the receipt of yours of 13th April. I am very much pleased to hear your intention to send me copy of sermon of Dr. Clark. I am certain I shall be pleased with it. I regret to hear that there should be any unreasonable twelfth juror in the congregation. The member who always finds himself in the majority, when others chance to agree with him, but who appears to delight in belonging to a select minority of one can't help himself, I suppose. He delights to growl and I suppose only harms himself. His nature must undergo some change before he can be entirely reconciled to the harmony of heaven.

You may say to my dear little boy that I have heard there are beautiful little ponies in England and when I come home I will either bring one of these or he shall have one purchased at home. Meanwhile cats and dogs must suffice, as he will have, with "Jumps" now on his way, three dogs. I think his and your hands will be full. Jumps you will find of

the most agreeable temper, and I am therefore inclined to believe you will not object to keep him for Bertie should he arrive safely. We regretted to part with him, but his affection for us was so remarkable that we could not bear the idea of leaving him behind us and therefore gladly embraced Mr. Egerton's offer to take charge of him, hoping one day to witness the joy which I am sure he will testify on seeing us again.

I am pleased to hear of Dr. Rogers' success. I think everyone who loves our Church should rejoice at it. The fact that there was room for 75 families to enter the Church proves the lamentably low condition from which the Church was raised. If it now becomes a strong Church it will be of great aid to our denomination. It is quite satisfactory however that such gain has not been at our expense. I am very sure that our gain will soon be apparent also, if it be not already. When I say this I have no disposition to depreciate Dr. R[ogers]. My opinion of him as a pastor is unchanged. Probably no one really knows (outside of his own family perhaps) why he left. I think I do. I think he would not have left had I been home. I would have served as a medium to unite what there was danger when I left would be apt to separate. I think the doctor felt or fancied a want of true good feeling and sympathy in certain quarters and as the debt was not paid feared that these might grow wider and wider, differences which would render his position an uneasy one and he therefore thought it best to embrace so good an opportunity to secure himself. It is needless to say more.

With regard to Dr. Wyckoff, I would say that the Second is your old Church.²⁵⁵ I shall not therefore object but rather be pleased to have you remember it now. I should be pleased to have you give \$100 each year to enable it to employ a colleague for the Doctor. He deserves an honorable as well as useful close of his ministry and I see no reason why you and I should not aid. Perhaps such a proposition on your part may prove serviceable to the Church. The Doctor's letters makes me think he feels rather uneasy as to the condition of the Church. This measure would enable the Wednesday evening service to be resumed and permit of only one of the Sabbath Services to be performed by the Doctor. One of the most promising of our young men might be secured as his colleague, and perhaps as low as \$1,000 per annum. I mention this, my dear, because you may not otherwise think it right to go outside of our own Church. But there you can do all that is proper and necessary and not leave this undone. Give for me my full share at the North Church²⁵⁶ and a little running over if needful. I hope I shall soon hear our debt has been extinguished or brought to so low a point as to be manageable. When I left it was intended to reduce it to \$5,000. Please give at least \$500 towards this reduction should you think it proper after consultation with Uncle Jacob H. Ten Eyck. I think we can afford as much as this and will not object if you think we can afford more and what is more act on that

²⁵⁵ The Second Reformed Protestant Dutch Church, on Hudson Street below S. Pearl, had I. N. Wyckoff as its pastor.

²⁵⁶ The First Reformed Protestant Dutch Church is on North Pearl Street, thus is it the "North Church" in RHP's mind.

belief. Do not let so praiseworthy and necessary a measure fail by our not doing our whole duty. Write me about this debt. It gives me much concern.

The additions to the Church are gratifying particularly as derived from the young. How does my friend Durant like Dr. C[lark]. I hope his family is with us yet and our neighbor Mr. Sumner.²⁵⁷ I did hope also that Georgie Ten Broeck²⁵⁸ might have come back from the interest he took in the Christmas tree. Say to his father now is a good time for him. Please say to Van Santvoord I hope he is working easily in the traces. As I propose when I get back to be a regular old foggy, except that I will not growl, it is very necessary he should be docile and steady and work well until he can find another wheel house and retire as I propose to do on half pay, which will be to get only half the abuse.

From what you say of a gift to our Church in Mrs. Dudley's will I suppose she must have executed another one.²⁵⁹ But I cannot reconcile that fact with the contrivance of Kendrick as Executor, unless executed shortly after the other will, in the codicil of which I was named as Executor. If they fight long enough I may be home time enough to act as Executor and take a hand in what I suppose will be a free fight open to all comers.

I am getting into very good habits now. I rise every morning before six, walk half a mile and take a salt water plunge in the bay and last night, with many obligations to that worldwide notability the mosquito, was in bed at 9 o'clock. But as no one else can stick a bill at me or into me I will take it philosophically. I regret I cannot get Ber up in the morning. He takes an afternoon bath now. I have conquered his aversion to cold water and may have the same success in overcoming that to early rising. I was able on my return from my morning bath to commence this letter for which I wish full credit. You will see it is on a large sheet and contains good quantity whatever objections may be urged to the quality of the entertainment.

You will please send nothing in the way of food or clothing. Both are cheaper here than at home even without the risk and cost of sending it out. In this little village of Yokohama I suppose we have on sale 20 boxes of sardines for every box you have at Albany. Stockings and collars are high here, the former 4 bits a pair, the latter 2 bits each. But at Hong Kong I bought a blue cloth dress coat made after a pattern I sent for \$16. I think we can get along without any home contributions, therefore send nothing in the shape of food or of coats, pants, etc., etc. Your box via San Francisco has not yet come to hand but I presume may now be expected any moment.

Saturday 27, June

We have no regular days for any vessel to sail here. The steamer which carries this to Shanghae was to have left early this morning, mail closing at 4 p.m. yesterday, but about

²⁵⁷ Alanson Sumner (1801-1874), who lived at 96 North Pearl St. in Albany.

²⁵⁸ George P. Ten Broeck

²⁵⁹ Blandina Bleecker Dudley (1783-1863) of Albany.

noon a circular was issued announcing that the mail would close at same hour this p.m. and the vessel leave at daylight Sunday. As the steamer is fast and will reach Shanghae in time for the mail of July 5, I suppose this letter will reach you early in September in very nearly 60 days and almost as soon as those I have sent via San Francisco. Sometimes we send letters by sailing vessels to Shanghae and instances have occurred where a month's passage has caused the loss of even two mails there. Then your letters are unreasonably delayed and you are without them for weeks more than you would be if we could always send them by steamer. In one case, a vessel was 10 days getting out of this harbor. I mention this so particularly as it will enable you to understand more fully how delays may take place and also to endure the disappointment more philosophically.

Had I made as vigorous an effort for two days at Yedo as here for these two days, I would have been able to send you a dozen sheets. But here it appears as if everyone was in the conspiracy to deprive you of what would prove the measure of your desires as well as my own. Someone is constantly dropping in and half my time has been employed this morning necessarily with business, while nearly the residue has been wasted unnecessarily, by parties who might have been better away, even for themselves. At the moment of writing this sentence Mr. Brown calls on me. I have been aiding him today in finding for him and his family a residence which he has just purchased. I have promised to stand by him and his rent will be reduced from \$600 per year to less than \$300, a very material advantage. He is enabled to make this purchase by a gift of about \$2,000 made by the residents here, principally if not all British, to Mrs. Brown as a testament of the appreciation of his sermons on the Sabbath in the British Consulate before the arrival of the British Consul.

You can easily imagine how difficult it is with these constant interruptions to pick up the ideas which are scattered by their intrusion, especially as the mail is now within a half hour of closing and this letter has to be sent off nearly half a mile. Differences in watches must also be taken into account and I may find it already closed.

I think it more prudent, my darling, to close as I am so worried as almost to have lost all idea of what I have said, but most of all of what I wish to say.

I do not so much mind not having written to Sue as she must always consider herself as entitled to a portion of yours. I hope to be able by next mail to send you a more acceptable contribution to the light literature of the day. With kind remembrance to all and love and kisses for yourself Sue and dear precious Charlie I am, my precious wife, ever yours,

Robt. H. Pruyn

As the messenger will not leave with the letters for a few minutes I have time to add we are now the guests of Walsh, Hall & Co., at whose house I spent a few days when on first arrival in Japan. Mr. Fisher and family are with Mr. Schoyer. Mr. and Mrs. Brown and Mr. Ballagh with their families have left Kanagawa and probably will never return to reside

there. I see little chance of my getting to Yedo soon. It may very well be that it would be unsafe to go. I have shown enough courage in remaining. I do not know in what shape or to what extent opinions on this subject will reach Europe or America and probably you will not think as much of my prudence as my courage when I say my continuance surprised all and alarmed most of the residents here. When I wrote down that I had been delayed leaving, many were convinced I was under duress, perhaps without my knowledge, and obliged to remain on some pretext or other. And great relief was felt when I arrived here and not till then were the people satisfied I had it in my power to leave. While I was there I heard such remarks brought to me and Ber by interpreters and servants that the people liked me and really hoped I would leave Yedo alive. I am inclined now to believe I ran some hazard. I don't know whether I told you that I left Sabbath one week from the fire instead of the next day (Monday) as I intended because the government sent a governor of Foreign Affairs to me and gave notice they had as information of a force of 500 to 600 men collected to attack me that very night.²⁶⁰ The government sent additional guards but as I was outside the line of guard houses and intended to go early the next day, I thought it foolhardy to remain. In this I suppose you will concur. If you do not, send word and I will go back at once. Rely on my being prudent.

Ever Yours,

R.



Yokohama, July 1 1863

I received this morning, my beloved wife, your letter of the 27th of April and I now have reason to congratulate you and myself upon the improvement of the mails in regularity which we now have reason to expect. The vessel which arrived today is to run in connection with the French line and a line of vessels is soon to be on this route connecting with P[eninsular] & O[riental] line at Shanghae. The interruption has heretofore been confined to this end of the route. I was not aware till yesterday evening of this improved state of things and therefore am not able to earn by this effort the reputation of a voluminous correspondent though I hope to attain that of a regular and punctual one. My quarterly accounts drafts have to be made out and forwarded. These having been completed I have an half an hour for you.

I notice with regret what you say of the non-arrival of letters. But you must bear in mind that you cannot expect them each steamer as it would be impossible if I wrote daily

²⁶⁰ See <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1863p2/d388> for RHP's dispatch to Seward recounting this event.

to connect with each one. At times you must have a small deluge and at others a dearth.

I have received at least two letters from Abby and I have written as many in reply. I trust by this time all arrearages will have been brought up and that I will not appear a delinquent in any quarter.

I hope Dr. R[ogers]'s mission to call on you was accidental and yet kind friends may have conveyed impressions to him which were envious or at least high colored. He has not written to me since his removal. I shall bear anything in that quarter philosophically because satisfied he had no truer friend in Albany than I have proved. If M[aurice] E. V[iele] is his best friend now it is all right, it will take him a long while to make up for omissions at the commencement of his pastorate. I presume this gentleman will be the warm friend of Dr. C[lark] this very year. He would be at once if some others were less friendly.

With reference to the ships, my darling, I shall try to get them out of the way or so much more advanced as to make it of little consequence whether I remain or not. Still if you have any ambition you should urge me to remain. But as all that is extinct in your bosom or has never been fanned into a flame, I will allow the embers to slumber in mine. I intend to be as much inclined to fogyism as you will be content with.

I am glad to see that Albany & Susquehanna²⁶¹ is at last triumphant. It will make my position more satisfactory. We shall have a road of great value and all the money paid will not be utterly lost. The city will be satisfied though some stockholders may lose. The directors who have stood by it so long will not be mere visionaries. Congratulate Mr. Ramsay for me if you see him.²⁶²

Your letters via Washington have not arrived. They are probably with our Consul at Shanghai to whose care the dispatch agent at London will persist in directing my letters. A third remonstrance which I have addressed him may cure the evil. Your address is correct, simply to me in Japan. The letters are then brought direct either from Shanghai or Hong Kong according to opportunity offered. You make a great mistake in speaking of our Church debt as \$40,000. The whole expenditure was only a little more. Please get from Mr. Ten Eyck a full statement of amount [repaid] and still remaining, showing each subscription. I am pleased to hear what you propose doing. All right. Give \$500 or a \$1,000 just as Van Santvoord does. You only anticipate my wishes. I wrote a day or two since on this very subject, also asking you to do something for Dr. Wyckoff's Church.

I feel we can afford to do what is right. My profit on two months exchange of *itzabus* etc. was equal to the larger of the two amounts sent you from B[arings] B[rothers] & Co.

²⁶¹ The Albany & Susquehanna Railroad (A & S) was a broad gauge railroad from Albany to Binghamton.

²⁶² The Albany & Susquehanna Railroad bill had been vetoed by Governor Morgan multiple times, each time with a different reason. Thurlow Weed disagreed with Morgan on the bill, which called for appropriating \$500,000 to the A & S Railroad. After years of political infighting, the bill was finally passed. Joseph H. Ramsey was a politician and railroad executive.

I am ready, my darling, now to come home as soon as I can do so honorably. Until I see the result of my application for leave of absence, I can say no more. Please see Mr. Weed and have a talk with him yourself. He can greatly aid and it will result to the advantage of the Country and of our friends if leave is granted. I can judge when permission reaches me when it will be proper to avail myself of it. But do get it. I cannot enter into fuller explanations but it will be most sincerely to be regretted if it cannot be given more on account of others than myself.

There are enough petty jealousies here as everywhere to present many drawbacks to even this position. Malice thrives in every soil and separation from friends and country do not serve to give entire unanimity and friendship here. Our British friends show the same cloven foot here as in the Western hemisphere. I only share the common lot and have no special cause of complaint. Personally all is fair. Perhaps all Americans are a little too suspicious.

News has just arrived to damp our 4th July that Hooker was defeated early in May twice and Sedgwick once. It is time some success was gained before Washington. What deadly influence paralyzes every effort there?

This is the first letter which goes by the French line. My other letters will leave Shanghae Sunday next. Then the next mail after this will be the 22nd, though we are expecting a vessel to go to San Francisco. The ship *Viking* was wrecked some days ago and a vessel will come here to take nearly 400 Chinese now at Simoda to that city.

I hope, my darling, that you will struggle to bear up relying on my doing everything which, if God spare our lives, you will approve hereafter however hard it may be to do it now.

With my most tender love for yourself and my precious boy and dear Sue I am darling as ever....

Yours, Robt. H. Pruyn

I am pleased to hear what has been done by you for [my brother] Edward. I had not heard of sale of the house. The best thing which can be done is for all of us to unite, buy him a good farm in Wisconsin, put in name of his children and send him off to rely on himself and expect no more.



Yokohama, July 2 1863

Yesterday, my beloved wife, I closed my letters as the mail was about to close but Mr. Portman returned from posting it with the message that the vessel would be detained another day. I have therefore some little chance for a few additional lines, not very many

however, as I had nearly four hours interview with one of the Ministers who came down from Yedo and have another interview perhaps longer in store for me with the Governor of Kanagawa this morning. If I succeed in filling this sheet this closely written with anything intelligible and interesting I shall have cause for sincere congratulation in the absence of all to interest you. For well I know that even Japan politics, however polished, cannot please you and constant attrition must have smoothed and rounded off my prominent thoughts and feelings to such smoothness and uniformity as to make each succeeding letter appear but the transcript of its predecessor. But what else can I write of except indeed friends at home and then I usurp your province.

I see much in home news now to prove interesting. The effort to endow Rutgers College is one with which I sympathize even here, particularly as I have some ideas of an independent character in that direction.²⁶³ These I hope to develop soon at home and should you be applied to, it may be well perhaps to refer the subject to me. I think our views would hardly be found to harmonize in acts, provided you had acted before we had canvassed the subject. For I must have mine modified by the recollections connected with my college education in addition to the interest we would share in common growing out of its dependence on the Church and its influence on the denomination. I like the magnitude of the effort. The resolution to raise one fifth the amount would have been less likely to be successful, because not necessarily requiring the contributions of the entire Church and one portion would therefore have been too willing to leave the work to the other, and if successful the labor would have been nearly if not quite the same.

If I were at home I presume I would be heartily in this movement. It will be some time before I can subside into the condition of happiness which the Buddhists practice, that of complete supreme contemplation, self-satisfaction, selfishness. Education having done so little for me, the practice will be necessarily long and severe.

You ask me did I wish the Chapel Street house was yours? I have heard nothing about it or the lot, except your remark that the lot had been sold for \$10,000 which made me fear it included the house. How much of the lot was sold I am as yet profoundly ignorant of. I miss sadly any and all business details, but now I hope for them as I have so often asked for some. Barings Brothers & Co. write me you have drawn for part of the amount to your credit, the 2,400, but not the 2,000. I suppose that has been done by this time also. I have requested a full statement of all these remittances with the premium realized. You will bear in mind that for every dollar I have paid here, you will probably realize considerably more than two dollars. In the only case you have made any statement more than \$2.10 was realized.

I shall remember your suggestion as to coins for Jo[hn] McE[lroy], but I am not sure

²⁶³ RHP was an alumnus of Rutgers College (now Rutgers University), and was also a trustee. He felt a strong loyalty to the school, and insisted later that Bertie attend it also. Rutgers became a land-grant college of New Jersey in 1864.

he is a collector. He made the collection for me. I will probably be able to find a more acceptable release from that obligation. I am pleased that you like the silk I sent you so well. By the way the silk batting I have sent you must be kept for quilts. I know I have before asked this but it is worth repeating. As to you being so grateful for my remembrance of you on sending dresses, it would be curious if I ceased to care for you in that respect, after having devoted so much time to making such purchases when at home. You will never have occasion to buy even in twenty years another silk dress when you get my full supply.

I regret to hear your intelligence as to cousin Eliza. The result must be already known to you. I hope it will be a happy one. She has had one constant cause of sorrow which has outweighed perhaps all her causes of thankfulness.

I hope the dogs do not annoy you too much. I forgot to say they were almost cannibals. We brought [up] Tama on meat to prepare her for the journey from the days of her tender infancy. Quite pathetic that. But wait till you see Jumps! He will be sedate and yet boisterous should you be away from him even for an hour.

My interview with the Minister yesterday was partly employed in asking for a further advance for ships. The more I get the less will it be incumbent on me to await their coming. I suppose further payment will be made. He made a strange request. He wished the *Wyoming* loaned to take troops to Osacca for the defense of the Tycoon. Had the *Vanderbilt* or some equally large steam ship of war been here, I could have sold to the government for more than half a million. They would have been pleased to buy the *Wyoming*, had it been permissible to sell her. The governors are in great straits here with the Mikado. We have this morning 42 steamers and ships here, 14 of which are war vessels. A French admiral as well as a British admiral is here. You can readily see our harbor wears a busy appearance. The *Wyoming* is unfortunately ordered home. I hope I shall be able to keep her till something more certain is known. The *Jamestown* will be here soon, but steam ships alone are useful, the winds are at times so regularly adverse.

I was obliged to add to my small stock of shirts. I bought very good ones made in London, handsome fine linen bosoms for \$14 a half dozen, not made as well of course as Miss Jane's lot, but I presume equal to the average at home. I have purchased very handsome linen drilling for \$1.25 per yard even making allowance for the greater value of money here. I suppose these prices are fair for these articles in a time of cotton famine. Prices for many articles, especially those cheapest at home are high here. Everyone is willing to pay because he expects large profit. I mean merchants of course. I paid for a pair of leather slippers, though better than those at home, French made lined with buckskin in uppers, for \$3.50, common earlier \$7. Prices as I have before said are more reasonable at Hong Kong. Your box has not yet arrived. The climate is so moist here it is best to have a small stock on hand and buy as you want. The fire relieved me from the trouble of taking care of many nearly useless articles. I shall not subject myself to any needless trouble in that direction hereafter.

I see by the *Intelligencer*, loaned me by Mr. Brown, the first installment of the subscription for volunteers had been received. I hope it was welcome. I do not see any other minister had thought of such an effort, though I presume individual subscriptions of comparatively greater value have been made. The distance may be taken into account in estimating its value. You will please send Mr. Dawson the following additional subscriptions: G.W. Goodman \$10, E. Taylor \$2. These men are both colored.

This completes the subscription unless something is sent from Hakodate which is promised this month. But I do not expect much.

I see also in the *Intelligencer* an extract from Mrs. Dudley's will. This was not, thank fortune, witnessed by me. I hope our Church and the Observatory will both receive the bequests.²⁶⁴ Who is to occupy Mrs. D[udley]'s house and have the good fortune to be your neighbor? Buy the house and we will compromise for State Street. The library is so fine and the rooms so large. But we will fix all such things when we meet. You see how unsettled I am. Being without my house, it is natural I should have unnatural and unreasonable aspirations in that direction.

You must prepare for a great tea drinker. At 6 o'clock and sometimes 5½ o'clock a.m. I take a cup, then I walk over half a mile, then bathe and walk back then take another cup of tea and eat some plums, then write or read till 9 o'clock then a little fish, a couple of eggs, two cups of tea and some more plums. But tea is by no means the only beverage used. Claret and ale for breakfast and lunch hours and all meals is the rule not the exception. And in China I am told it is even worse than here.

You ask me about my old disease. It has gained on me some. But I have been blessed with a remarkable degree of good health, and I hope it will be continued. I shall exercise reasonable care and avoid useless exposure. And I expect you will ride and walk and get good fresh country air daily. Give the same to Charlie, my precious boy. I wish to see him plump and fat. You see how much work I have given him to perform to earn a pony. I have a suspicion you are too much tied to the house. Regular exercise is greatly needed by you now. How shall I be satisfied you do not neglect this, short of being at home to see to it myself?

I will delay writing Charlie and Mr. Weed about the ships till I have a definite answer to the money question or hear about their contracts. I am quite sure we will not have war now. The action of the Tycoon is merely Pickwickian. He is at present obliged to appear to reflect the views of the Mikado. When he once gets away from Keoto he will act independently of him. You need have no fears for Ber and myself. We will be safe whatever happens.

I am now anxiously expecting the letters and papers sent via Washington, which

²⁶⁴ According to the *Intelligencer* of April 16 1863, Blandina Dudley bequeathed \$30,000 to the Dudley Observatory for the establishment of a professorship. She also bequeathed \$4000 to the North Dutch Church in Albany.

though of earlier date than the one received will be none the less welcome. I suppose I will find some details there now wanting. Send me home news, local news, short articles of local news, no long speeches. I do not read them. Have neither time nor inclination. Please say to Dr. Vanderpoel I hope to answer his letter by next mail. I am pleased to hear from him. Why do not Ten Broek and Van Santvoord write? I will answer their letters right willingly.

I shall always welcome a letter from you as the choicest present you can send, but do not make your mailing too much of a trial. I should prefer that even the letters you send should be unalloyed with anything disagreeable. With the improvement now to be made in the regularity of the mails, every two weeks should bring letters to each of us with occasional mail via San Francisco by way of dessert.

If I have forgotten to say that Mrs. Hepburn has arrived I can now say she is here, well and happy. But her companion, Miss Connor, has taken fright and gone to Shanghae. I should prefer risking my life here. Shanghae is most unhealthy in the summer and disease is after all more fatal there than this people have proved. It is really more a matter of surprise that a few difficulties have occurred.

I will say now to fortify my resolution, and that you may think of it, my darling wife, that I think, whenever you are ready to think it right, it might be well for us to give to the General Synod \$2,500 for a scholarship, "the Edward Lansing Pruyn Scholarship," to educate young men for the Ministry. If you are ready now, I am. I will at once replace the funds you may use, to the extent of half. I know you will wish to give half so that it may be in our joint names. I wish to think of our dear son as connected with a living charity and connected with the coming of the Redeemer's reign. I will send via San Francisco to Mr. Brooks sufficient to use for this purpose if needed. I am not yet sure whether I shall ask him to invest it till you send for it or not. At all events it will be subject to your order. If prepared to act on this suggestion at once, well. If not, delay and we will further consider it. Charlie and Sue should think of the same thing connected with your father and you have my most cordial concurrence on your own participation in that. I think too little has been done in such directions.

And now, my darling, it is again 3 o'clock. I have Captain McDougal quietly disposed of with a newspaper while finishing this letter but I must not tax him too much. As soon as Ber finishes his letter it will be necessary to send this package to the French Consulate. May favorable breezes soon waft it to you, and you and my precious boy receive it in good health, spirits, and in hope of an early meeting. Love and kisses for you my darling, for Sue and for precious Charlie from your affectionate husband,
Robt. H. Pruyn



The British steamer *Ringdove* was circulated yesterday to sail this morning at 11 o'clock for Shanghae and dispensing with my early sea bath I rise at the usual hour and devote the morning to this remembrance of you. Had it not been that I cut my foot slightly yesterday while bathing I think I would have persuaded myself this morning that a good plunge would not deprive you of a single line, but would so freshen me as to enable me to write more, faster and better.

We have had our 4th [of July] celebration and you have had yours and I hope that your celebration was made joyous by Union victories of which we have not yet heard and that the dark veil which hangs like a pall over our country has been rent aside, or so far lifted as to give you light glimpses of a better day. We had to enliven on a telegraphic dispatch in the *Straits Times* of Singapore that Hooker had been twice beaten on the Rappahannock and was now entrenched. Nevertheless we had a joyous celebration. The house of every American was open to all comers. Calls were made on them by the British Merchants and hilarity was the order of the day. We had a slight collation in two cabins to which a good number of Americans and of British naval officers sat down and song and speeches were kept up for several hours. Nor were the men forgotten. They had a table spread on the berth deck where some of them were eventually spread. Grog is not now allowed in the navy. It was said they had some wine however and I imagine it was pretty strong, judging from some of the effects I saw. We had very nearly 50 ships in harbor decorated with flags and at 12 o'clock seven ships fired salutes, the British and French admirals' ships and all ships carrying over 10 guns. The sound of 147 heavy cannon shots within a few yards of each other, the smoke enveloping and rising from the different ships and the quivering of our own vessel as the heavy 11 inch guns were discharged gave us a faint idea of what a naval combat might be, having the comfortable idea that some of these heavy guns had messengers bound for us to make a closer acquaintance.

I regret to say the *Wyoming* will be off in a few days, which will oblige me to forego the trip to Nagasaki for the present. Captain McDougal wishes to get out of these seas before the typhoon season sets in, which will be in a few days. The worst time is in August and September and a slice in July and in October. But it is really considered as embracing both July and October, and you cannot be said to be out of their reach until below latitude 10°. The *Jamestown* is now on its way from Hong Kong north and may arrive any day, but she unfortunately has sails only. Steamers are required in these seas, where the wind blows so steadily from one quarter at certain seasons. But I am all the time hoping the rebellion will soon be put down and a large fleet be sent to the eastern seas. "Persuasion is better than force" is not the motto here. Force is persuasion.

The Japanese government has chartered two merchant steamers to take troops to Osacca, either for the protection of the Tycoon or to get him away. You will remember

that I have informed you that they wished the loan of the *Wyoming* for this purpose, and as the Minister was also on the French admiral's ship, I presume the same application was made to him for his ship.

Saturday we had a small mess of excellent sweet corn from seed. In a few years this country will have a good supply of vegetables. Everything but the onion appears to grow well. There was a good supply of tomatoes here last year, furnished by the Japanese who had been supplied with seed. We have excellent strawberries. So far gentlemen have raised these in their own gardens. The Japanese will soon cultivate them for sale. They will not eat them. They think snakes feed on the different kinds of berries, though they have no fear or dread of snakes and do not even trouble themselves to kill them. The repugnance which we all have to snakes is not shared by the Japanese. Is not our feeling more one of cultivation, than one naturally and instinctively created? Do not we miserably educate ourselves when we read the Bible up to this feeling. These Eastern people on the contrary handle snakes without betraying a particle of feeling. Indeed one day I saw an immense spider in my hall as large as a half dollar which I stepped on but only disabled him. He lay in a large ball but one of my servants took it up coolly and turned it out in the garden. Thinking it might get in the house again I went to the spot where I had seen it strike, but the spider had vanished. One of these spiders I saw in my room so large that I could not believe it was a real one. Some men had brought some straw work a few days before and I stooped to take it up under the impression that it was an agreeable and beautiful toy such as the Japanese delight in. But when the fellow as large as a big silver dollar walked off I soon disabled him from further locomotion. On the whole however we are pretty well exempt from the pests of the tropical countries. Though we do have centipedes, I have only seen one. I believe they have few noxious snakes. You will see how far ahead we are of India where you are liable to find a cobra carefully stored away in your boot or under your pillow.

On the 4th Lieutenant Colonel Young of the *Wyoming* presented me with a large piece of oak for a cane, which was cut from the keel of the *Meridon*, the British ship on which [Francis Scott] Key wrote the Star Spangled Banner.²⁶⁵ You will remember it was during the attack on Baltimore the *Meridon* was the flagship of the British squadron. I hope I will get it home safely. We will need a large house for all my curios, or we will be able to start a museum. I have some more coins for dear little Charlie, some of the Manila gold dollars among the number and a large assortment of Chinese coins, some two thousand years old. I should have told you the *Meridon* has been for many years at Hong Kong used as a hospital ship and is now being broken up at Whampoa I believe. When the *Wyoming* was there Lieutenant Colonel Young had two pieces cut out and turned into canes at Amoy. One of these he gave me. It is rather large and will have to be trimmed down.

²⁶⁵ RHP is mistaken. Francis Scott Key was aboard HMS *Tonnant* during the war of 1812 when he wrote the poem that would become the lyrics for the national anthem.

I should have written that some specimens of beetles etc., etc., which I sent home via California, some in spirits and some dry, you can send to Professor Cook of Rutgers College for the National History Society.²⁶⁶ I have here a crab, the same shape as those we eat and you are so fond of which is 11½ feet from end to end of claws. How would you like to attack or be attacked by such a monster. We have had one this year 12 feet across, but the cats made away with the tail, so the 11 feet will have to satisfy me now. I will try and get Captain McDougal to take it for the College as he is ordered to Philadelphia. I had intended it for our cabinet at Albany, but I can get another this summer.

It is now 7½ o'clock and Ber is in bed yet. He may be able to send a few lines but I cannot count on a minute as my own after breakfast I am so liable to interruption. I think I have matter also for a short dispatch, so I see no prospect of getting off more than this sheet today, though I think another ship will reach Shanghae before the mail closes there.

I am glad to see Mr. Vermilye has a call from the Church at Utica and hope he will accept.²⁶⁷ It appears to me he will be popular there and he will find a great improvement of his own health and that of Helen. I have seen 3 months of the *Intelligencer* of Mr. Brown, while mine of same dates are somewhere on the way. Now mail continues by way of Washington, except an occasional letter via Marseilles. All are acceptable whenever they arrive. As I look out on the garden and see the trees and shrubs and the masts of the ships towering over them I do not realize we are so far separated. But as I read and write these lines I say three months will have passed before they reach their destination. Such a result speaks very intelligibly and very unpleasantly also.

I suppose you must miss greatly some of our young men in Albany who have entered the army, though the number taken from our Church is not so large. I suppose there will be much suffering among the poor if the war continues on much longer, though I suppose wages must have advanced. The great premium to which gold reached at one time must have frightened all of you. To me, you will have seen, and to you also it has proved by no means so frightful an event, but I would willingly for the sake of the country had it otherwise. With no debt to pay I do not see any advantage in remitting home when I am able to begin saving again. I would like to have your views and wishes known on this subject. Let Charlie write me whether real estate has gone up much. My idea would be to have any funds I may be able to save to your and my credit on England. Then should any good opportunity arise to acquire an excellent piece of property, say on Broadway, you will be ready. But I hope now to be home before we can write and answer many letters to each other. I only allude to it now as meanwhile some good opportunity may occur, and

²⁶⁶ The Natural History Society of Rutgers College was founded in 1857, and closed in 1874. George Hammell Cook (1818-1889), professor of Chemistry and Natural Science, was the Director.

²⁶⁷ The *Intelligencer* of April 9 1863 reported that the Reverend Ashbel Green Vermilye, D. D. had accepted the pastorate of the Reformed Dutch Church of Utica. He had previously been the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Newburyport, Massachusetts. Helen Lansing Vermilye was his wife.

should you have anything available use it according to my estimate, as some of my stocks have been sold which I supposed had been retained. You must have, after letting Charlie have all that he wishes for the Works, considerable surplus from me. This I wish invested unless Charlie should wish the use of some for his debt. If so let him have it and use it without hesitation. If he cannot so use it without paying double taxes, he can turn over to me any of his houses on Hudson St. and take them back when I am repaid. This is on the assumption he has a debt, which I shall be gratified to hear he has not. I see he is a Director of the Merchants Bank. It appears he has got over his dread of banks. I feel only a little sore about insurance companies. I have not got over the Albany Insurance Company affair yet. I know it is not worth minding, but I feel vexed that Charlie did not think of it. If Mr. W[eed] makes King do what is right, all well. Otherwise I will remember. There it makes me feel comfortable to ventilate a little. I do not get a chance often.

I will not be able to fill even this sheet. I have had my breakfast and the hour has nearly arrived to send this to the mail. I will therefore go down to the Consulate and write till the last moment, though really not knowing what I can say more which will interest you. When I get your letters I am often supplied with better thoughts than I can dig out of the now barren soil. I am afraid you find it difficult sometimes to read what I write. I cannot write expertly on such small letters, without leaving some badly or imperfectly formed. I send a Sandwich Island postage stamp.

I am in hopes affairs will soon assume such a shape as to admit of my leaving. No one at this time could supply my place. I suppose Mr. B. R. Wood²⁶⁸ has returned because his mission was a boring one and he had no one to manage his affairs at home. Had I the pleasure of having you here, my darling, and Charlie and Sue I would be content to stay at least two years more.

But I must now close my letter sending the most kind remembrances to relations and friends whose names you will please consider as placed in this letter. It seems useless to fill so much of a sheet each letter with a list almost alphabetical. If one of our cousins has had the poor taste to take the name of Gregory for that of Lansing give my compliments. I am glad you had a dress for her.

Kiss dear precious Charlie for me and let him supply my place and shower kisses on you, and with heartfelt and heart burning love to you and him and dear Sue.

Ever and wholly yours,
Robt. H. Pruyn



²⁶⁸ Bradford R. Wood (1800-1889) was a politician and diplomat. Officially he was the U. S. Minister Resident to Denmark 1861-1865. Samuel J. Kirkwood was appointed by Abraham Lincoln to replace him in 1863 (when Wood was recalled), but declined the appointment.

3rd in July Yokohama, July 13 1863

You will see, my beloved wife, that life is highly spiced in this Eastern world, if variety be spice. The last episode has been the firing into the American steamer²⁶⁹ *Pembroke* by two Japanese vessels, the brig *Lanrick* of 10 guns and a bark a little larger owned by the Prince of Nagato.²⁷⁰ The steamer was a little vessel of 240 tons. The *Wyoming* left this morning for the purpose of capturing both those vessels if she can find them. Captain McDougal's views and my own harmonized entirely in relation to the course to be taken. I hope we shall succeed in the attempt and I think it will give the finishing blow to these and similar insults. I was to have gone on the expedition, but for a few days I have had a severe attack of the summer complaint²⁷¹ and have been obliged to take medicine to check it, and the doctor thought I had better keep quiet. So although some of my things were on board I have remained quietly here. Bertie is of course very much disappointed, though I had, before determining to go, explained that the ship might be fired on by batteries or other ships. Upon the whole I think you will be pleased with my sensible conclusion. My duty did not require me to go. On the contrary my presence might have embarrassed Captain McDougal and if a chance shot had injured Bertie I do not know how I could have well met you. I would have been a wanderer.²⁷²

As a vessel leaves for California in less than two weeks you will probably hear of the result of this by that way. I have not yet written the government, so should this be the first news you have of this affair don't let it get in the papers. You will see that the news reaches the papers I suppose from many other quarters as it has made quite a sensation.

²⁶⁹ This marked the beginning of the Battle of Shimonoseki. See Hall's *Japan Through American Eyes*, p. 339-40 (entry for Saturday, July 11 1863) for a contemporary account.

²⁷⁰ Mōri Takachika 毛利敬親, aka Yoshichika 慶親 (1819-1871) was the *Daimyō* of Chōshū 長州 (also called Nagato 長門) Domain. RHP refers to him as the "Prince of Nagato" or simply "Chosiu" throughout the letters.

²⁷¹ Diarrhea, as reported by Fisher to Joseph Heco, who recounted the event in his memoir *The Narrative of a Japanese*. Heco says that McDougal had waited for Pruyne for two hours before giving up on him and weighing anchor. Joseph Heco (1837-1897), born Hamada Hikozaō 浜田彦藏 was the first Japanese to become a naturalized U.S. citizen. He was among seventeen shipwrecked sailors picked up by an American ship in 1851 and taken to the United States. He returned briefly to Japan in 1853, but then lived in the U.S. until 1859, when he became an interpreter for the American Consul at Kanagawa. Like "Tommy," Heco was a minor celebrity in the media.

²⁷² No matter how much RHP tries to rationalize his decision not to go, it is hard to accept. He told Seward and Fisher that he was physically unwell, and under doctor's advice to stay home. But here he tells his wife that it was "not his duty" and that he might "embarrass McDougal," and finally that he or Bertie might have been injured for which she would not forgive him. Clearly the physical ailment was a convenient excuse for a more complicated situation.

Had I gone I could not have written you by this mail for want of both time and inclination. The mail closes at 10 a.m. and I should not have felt it right to make you uneasy and would therefore have delayed till we had safely returned. As it is I will write but a short letter and send my best supply by the later and better mail.

You must not be uneasy about my sickness. At home we would have paid little attention to it, but it seems in this Eastern world prompt remedies are necessary, particularly in China where a Chinese diarrhea is very present and very fatal. The cholera has appeared again at Shanghae, and they may have as many deaths as last year, 1,800, or about $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{6}$ of whole foreign population.

I am not yet in receipt of your letters of April via Washington, but daily expect their arrival. And in a week another mail will be due when I hope to receive other letters sent direct via Marseilles.

You will remember you will have, subject to your order, should an opportunity for an excellent investment occur, some \$3,000 which Mr. Brooks will invest for me at San Francisco at $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent a month as it will be in specie and I wished him to collect only the draft in that form. I have thought it best to ask him to invest at least till you are prepared to say it is best to have it home.

You see I must occasionally annoy you with money matters. But as you are now a business woman it will serve to educate you so much as constantly to give you pleasure.

We have July delightful weather now, and fruits are quite abundant. Plums, peaches and melons are in season and getting quite good, though I have been practicing self-denial for more than a week. I shall be more careful of my diet hereafter and see whether it is possible to get a greater of an inch of fat on my ribs.

Yesterday we had a supplement to *The Straits Times* and we are somewhat encouraged by the home news. We had been fearing Hooker was badly beaten, also Sedgwick, but the reverse appears to be true. This uncertainty is dreadful. I do not despair. I have always thought it a mere question of endurance, and we do not deserve a country unless we hold out forever if needful.

I hope you have had fine accessions to the Church this month. There are quite a number of my friends such as Vanderpoel, Van Santvoord etc., whose decision I hope will soon be made.

How is Dr. C[lark] regarded by Messrs. McElroy, Vosburgh etc., etc. I should judge they would prefer him to his predecessor, that is if they institute any comparison. Let me hear Church news often. Next to family news it is most acceptable.

I am afraid you find my letters very tame, but you will see what scant material I have. You must have become thoroughly tired of my descriptions of the country, besides I do not wish you to think it so charming as to make me desire to remain here always. The political news I could scarcely make you understand, for none of us are sure we understand it. All the Ministers are groping in the dark. We know there is a gigantic system of deceptions and are not quite sure who are to be the victorious. Whether the Mikado and

Tycoon are really at issue in council and may be so in arms admits of doubt. Though troops have been moved to Osacca ostensibly for the support of the Tycoon, the people ridicule the idea, and we all almost at the point of believing it, another feature in the face of deception presented to us. Their toys and ivory carvings often represent masks, and if the faces of the officials are not masked their minds and real sentiments are most effectually and constantly.

We have between 15 and 20 men-of-war here and nearly 400 troops also here, and I presume more will arrive. I trust the rise will be bloodless and peaceful. The mission of the *Wyoming* may bring things to a head.

The *Wyoming* has been ordered home and Captain McDougal wished to leave Saturday. I sympathized with him in his anxiety to leave but could not agree it was right he should go. I therefore proposed a letter to that effect and all the Americans here sent in another. The attack on the *Pembroke* may now delay him a long time. I wish him to stay at least two months. The *Jamestown* is somewhere in China but she is unfortunately a sailing sloop, better than nothing. I have written for and expect her daily. As it will be more difficult for her to move, we may keep her longer when we once get hold of her. She fortunately has about 60 men more than the *Wyoming* but we need both vessels. It is a great pity we had no steamer here to accompany the *Wyoming*. If you look at the map you will see a body of water with many openings to the sea lying between the islands of Niphan [Nippon], Sikoku [Shikoku] and Kiusu [Kyūshū]. This is the Inland Sea, full of beautiful islands green from the water's edge, the most beautiful sea it is said in the world. I am sorry to lose the opportunity to see it, but still hope to do so before or when leaving. Steamers going to Shanghai generally follow that route, as the shortest and also least dangerous.

As I feel a little weak I have been unable to write much though I have done nothing else since 7 o'clock and it is now 9½, mail closing at 10 o'clock. I hope however you will be able to read this letter. I am strongly tempted at times to be back, particularly as the morning is quite sultry.

I hope you are getting my letters now more regularly. I do not miss a mail and occasionally write between mails as vessels leave for Shanghai for fear the one which leaves for the mail may fail to connect.

I pray you and my darling boy may continue in good health and that we may all be mercifully spared to meet. Shall it be in Europe? Talk about this with Sue and familiarize yourself to the idea.

And now my darling, as the messenger has enquired whether my letter is finished, I must begin to close it.

It appears to me I had better prepare a stereotype form and ask you to insert it in each letter. Then I can remember in each letter all whose names come up to my mind and whom I would desire individually to remember.

But for yourself, my precious wife, and for my darling boy and dear Sue, a cargo of warm love and remembrances, and kisses and for Charlie and Abbie and children. Cornelia,

Alida, May and families and Betsy Brooks, Dr. Wyckoff, Gen[eral] G[ansevoort] and Uncle C[hristopher] and families my kind regards. I can say no more, so adieu my dear, loving, and beloved wife,
Robt. H. Pruyn



No. 4 July Yokohama, July 22 1863

My Beloved Wife,

You will have heard by telegraph before you receive this that though at peace with the government of Japan, we are at war with at least one of the great Daimios. You will see that Captain McDougal and myself have taken responsibility of punishing these Daimios and that the ship which received and answered the first national salute in this country will become celebrated as being the first ship dispatched for the purpose which has fired upon the two-sworded men of this country, destroying \$135,000 worth of property and I fear much over 100 lives.²⁷³ The particulars you will find in my letter to General Gansevoort.

You must not be alarmed by this. I think it will lead to an improved state of affairs. We will be rendered more secure either by the government being brought to a sense of the danger of procrastination and clemency towards the hostile Daimios or by the aggregation of such a force being brought here by the Treaty Powers and being retained here permanently, at least for a season, as will effectually overawe all hostility. Meanwhile I think that the same people and princes who are hostile to us will be equally the enemies of the Tycoon and so we will continue on good terms with the government at least, and probably the prompt chastisement of this Daimio will put an end to all open hostility. This having the question of peace or war in my own hands is a fearful responsibility. But it is impossible to wait 6 months till I can hear from the president. I think peace will be preserved, but it can be preserved only by showing we do not fear them. My colleagues and myself are in perfect agreement with each other and the chiefs of the Naval forces of all the nations as to what shall be done and we will act together, so it will be Japan or some of its Daimios against the Treaty Powers.

Please let *Evening Journal* see the map I send, and account as published and take extracts if they wish.

I should be heartily glad to say something more definite about my return. I can only hope for leave of absence at present to be used when right. If I had it now I could not leave, nor could I resign now with honor. It is not right now to strike the flag. Perhaps

²⁷³ The diplomatic dispatch recounting this is at <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1863p2/d405>

very ignorant or very malicious people may say, and perhaps really think, that if Mr. Harris had been here, this would not have happened. He saw it coming. Mr. Portman says the last words he said on ship board was, "I leave everything peaceful. I wash my hands if anything happens." The truth is the government is environed with trouble. The foreign question they cannot avoid. Every officer of the government thus far who has been high in position and managing foreign business thus far has been disgraced. The ministers in office when Mr. Harris left have been deprived of lands, one worth 30,000 *kokus* of rice a year, the other 20,000. Each *kokeu* is 15 shillings Sterling. I send you list of Daimios which please preserve carefully. This will give you an idea of the enormous incomes some of them have. But bear in mind that all of it is expended in supporting idle retainers. Like our shareholders they have nothing more to show at the end of the year than they had at the commencement. All is absorbed by idlers. The one has only slaves to show for all his expenditure, the other retainers.

I think I may be able to give you an account of the result of the French expedition before the vessel leaves for San Francisco. The admiral should return today.

July 25th

The mail is to close this evening and I am to finish my letters to you under difficulties. Yesterday I dined with the British Minister, am to dine today with French Minister and as if that were not enough, a meeting of all the Ministers is to be held at 11 o'clock this day to decide on the action, jointly perhaps with all our naval forces. I have had my sea bath at 5½ o'clock and you can imagine I feel somewhat sleepy as I did not get away from dinner till midnight. I did not finish my chief dispatch till 15 minutes before dinner yesterday, having waited for the return of the French admiral, and our meeting today may oblige me to prepare an additional one. Recent events following each other so closely have kept me quite busy. Each affair necessitates visits from or to and meetings with the Ministers, and then Japanese officials call on us. Strange to say trade is more brisk than ever and acts which everywhere else would result in war appear to give even satisfaction to all the officials here. The Prince of Nagato whose vessels we have destroyed is probably really the enemy of the Tycoon and so much so as to make his punishment regarded with favor.

No. 4 of July 1863, Sheet No. 2

The French admiral returned early yesterday, having, as he says, destroyed three batteries and a Daimio's palace, blown up a powder magazine and burned a small fishing village. Having been informed by the Dutch ship of the existence of the batteries of which the *Wyoming* was not aware, the French admiral anchored outside the straits and landing his men and some Zouaves he took with him stormed the batteries. In one of these a book was found marked at a page directing how batteries should be managed when engaged with steam ships embarrassed by a difficult current (which exists in these straits).

Stakes were set up near each gun and the guns depressed so as to bear on the main channel. As the foremast came in line with the stake of each gun, the gun was fired and of course the ship was hit. The *Wyoming* was taken so close to the batteries that most of the shot and shell blew over and Captain McDougal by this happy expedient saved much life and his ship from being hulled as the *Medusa* was many times first near the water line.

It is rather singular that the *Wyoming* which was the first national vessel which ever received and answered a national salute in Japan should be the first vessel dispatched for the express purpose of firing on Japanese. For you will see the *Medusa* was passing through the straits and the Dutch thought their flag could not possibly be fired upon.

Our British friends are very much inclined to sneer at and criticize the movement of the French admiral. He had announced before he left most murderous intentions and taking with him one large frigate, one gunboat and 100 Zouaves he had in all more than 40 guns and 800 men. He did really less than the *Wyoming* with 6 guns and 150 men. Of course the British are obliged to praise her performance or they could not otherwise well abuse the French and it is conceded by all that Captain McDougal managed admirably.

The British fleet will put to sea in a few days. It may perhaps be decided by the Admirals etc. after today's meeting to go to Nagato with vessels of the four nations instead of the English going alone to Satsuma's dominions as is now proposed. You will understand the British are yet claiming of Satsuma £25,000 Sterling and the surrender of the murderers of Mr. Richardson. It is supposed by some this will be yielded to, but I now think he will resist. He is a very powerful prince with an income of nearly a million Sterling as you will see by the list.

A British gunboat dispatched to communicate with the French admiral. Should that be fired on then Nagato will have to take it again and Satsuma will be obliged to wait. The British officers have been taking bets whether she will be fired into. The question who will win depends for answer entirely upon whether the vessel approaches sufficiently near the batteries. Four are still left, the English say 6, as the French, they claim, only destroyed one and that by the way is the report of some of the subordinate officers. The vessel will unquestionably be fired on if in this range. The Prince has shown himself plucky. He is entirely in earnest and must either greatly overrate his power or expect support from all the Daimios.

Masuda, one of the young interpreters who resided with me at Yedo, called on Portman this morning and says the French never went to Simonoseki at all, but attacked the wrong man living a short distance east and that is the reason only so little resistance was made. I suppose as the place was in the territories of the Prince the Admiral thought it was all the same. As the place is 600 miles from us, we may continue about that distance from the truth.

The truth is occasionally spoken here. Accidents will happen.

Mr. Hall told me this morning the Japanese are beginning to have a great respect for the Americans, saying they are great strong men and their big shells are terrible things. I

am sure we will be treated with a little more consideration now that they have seen what hard knocks we can give. They say the British get very angry right off and then get over it taking it out in talk but that the Americans are very slow, don't get angry easily, but when they do get angry they are terrible fellows and not easily talked into quiet again.

You may rest assured I shall exercise patience and forbearance, shall do nothing rashly. I have great sympathy for the government in its truths. We are here against their will, it gives them great trouble with the Daimios, but they must submit. I shall, however, act with the other Ministers unless they are disposed to go too far. We are in the same boat and must sink or float together. No difference can or will be made.



3 of No. 4 July 1863

Business column

July 23 1863

Two days ago your letters of March via California came to hand. Boxes not yet arrived probably yet at Shanghae. Via Marseilles I have yours of May 7th. Some of your letters must be wandering yet. You speak of having sent me a copy of your father's will which has not arrived. With reference to your remark about gas stock I would say I did not ask what it was worth. I simply said that your saying you had 150 shares did not inform me how much you had in value as I did not know how much each share was, whether \$10 or \$100. From what you say of dividends I infer you have somewhere about \$3,000 of the stock. Of course there is no necessity of my knowing anything of all this, because I suppose we can want anything. Either of us will have sufficient for both but it is somewhat singular that so long a time should have elapsed and I have heard so little of anything on which I would have based a decision had I been under the necessity of making one. A few lines from Haskell would have given information about the Works. You tell me 2 of Upham's lots have been sold. That is all I know of the Works worth knowing, except a few lines as to inventory. I do not say this complainingly. You can well see that what I prefer is facts, not results only. Those I can work out or at least comprehend only when I know about such debts as Upham's, Clark's, Howard's, etc., etc.

I wish only to say let the Works be sold if a good sale can be made. I think this will be facilitated by retaining the real estate which I think had better not be sold, unless a first rate price can be had.

You will hear from Brooks about some money which you can use. Do as you think best about this. If it can be better disposed of at home do not hesitate to use it. I think his firm a good safe one and he will probably invest at 18 per cent payment in gold (monthly). I leave you however to be the judge. It is at your disposal. Besides what you say you had received you should by this time have two small drafts of April 1 in Washington, about \$1,000, and two bills from R[ussell] & Co. of nearly the same amount as last two from

B[rooks] & Co.

I would say generally as to any investment on my account that I suppose real estate and almost everything else is above its true value. Yet I should like if not too high some Albany Insurance stock and some 3rd Ave railroad stock, both of which could be got through Mr. Weed. As Mr. King is president of the Insurance Company, Mr. W[eed] could get stock through him. Say at par \$3,000. I suppose it is worth at least 60 premium. I should think railroad bonds of the New York Central would be good. When the war ends real estate will go down, then it would be convenient to have money on hand to purchase with. But I neither expect nor desire you to trouble yourself with accumulating or making money. I make these suggestions to save you from any feeling of responsibility, so that you may not be troubled with the fear you have not done as I would. Therefore it is I give you this to aid you. I will add further whatever I have to my credit anywhere, as with Mr. Brooks, so elsewhere it will be to credit of either us so as to avoid as far as possible, in case of accident to me, the necessity of law proceedings.

I have received the printed copy of Mrs. Dudley's will. If you choose you can say to Uncle Jacob H. that the \$1,000 to me as executor, if it can be secured, though I am not there to act, I will give to the Church. I suppose Charlie had better see [Robert J.] Hilton. I might qualify here so as to be able to draw it, or perhaps I can anyhow have the \$1,000, though of course not entitled to fees unless I act.

There. I thought I would devote this sheet to Mammon and I am glad it is through.

I should like you to get from Dr. Vanderpoel for me the items solicited for our Church debt. I hope it is extinguished or nearly so. If that \$1,000 is given of Mrs. Dudley's by you for me let it be conditionally on entire debt being satisfied for and paid off.

I should like to hear from Charlie something about my Chicago and Northwestern and Bellefontaine railroad stock and just what remains unsold of my stocks and real estate and what has been sold and prices realized. I suppose this must be on its way to me but if not let it come. It worries me only to be ignorant of these things. A little scrap enclosed in one of your letters would suffice for each of these things.

I have written a dozen times about this and now this is


Finis



4 of No. 4, July 1863

I should have given you some description of Japanese manufactories I have sent home.
1. The ivory carvings are worn at the end of a braid of silk cord, at the other end of

which a pouch is fastened for tobacco and also a sheath for pipe.²⁷⁴ The cord is passed under a band worn around the body and the ivory hanging over it prevents pouch from slipping down. The two holes are made to pass the cord through. The little beads with holes through are used on the same cord. The beauty of the workmanship will not surprise you after this explanation. A Japanese beau is extravagant in this direction and that of swords.

2. The cabinet you speak of on the end thus  is a sword stand and is the most perfect and expensive piece you have received. That would sell today in this place for \$200, perhaps double that, as some gentlemen here are perfectly wild when an elegant article like that is seen. I know of one cabinet here which one of my guests (Mr. [Thomas Augustus] Gibb) offered \$1,500 for. The price was \$2,700. It was sold a few days ago for \$1,200. You will understand there is great competition here. Parties wait the chance of good high prices. At Yedo the articles were brought to me. I had no competition and quiet at night. As they would have to take them away, they would accept 1/3 or perhaps 1/4 the price asked.

I have a screen (elegant) fortunately saved for which I paid 200 *itzabus* for which 700 was asked. I have been told I should have 1,000 for it. It is so superb that though large I must try and get it home. One side is inlaid with magnificent porcelain buds, flowers, vases, dragons etc. It stands say 5 feet high and is about 3½ feet wide. The other side is superb black and gold lacquer, framework solid wood, silver ornaments, carved with birds and trees (the under section). Then I have a cabinet handsomer than the \$2,700 one, which you must not see till we can admire it together.

3. You, by this time, can by comparison of articles see which is first class and which inferior work. The best commands very high prices. I may say in general terms the gold colored lacquer is most prized and most expensive. You have some small boxes etc., elegant specimens of this ware.

4. My best china was all destroyed at the fire and some other curios. How many and what I scarce know yet, as they were nearly all boxed. Three large boxes were burned, six saved. I think the best have escaped. My large bronze vases were saved, 4 of them very unique and elegant. I had purchased and was using them as furniture for ornamentation.

5. I had some magnificent dwarf trees in china pots, presents from Tycoon. Also tea in porcelain urns likewise presented by him and *saki* by ministers destroyed.

6. The tortoise shell work is very fine and valuable. It is the true tortoise. The Japanese heat it and put it in any shape. You have not yet received the handsomest specimens of it. I am not sure that some of this was not in some large boxes sent via San Francisco, for the fate of which I have some fears. I fear the boxes may be handled too roughly at Panama.

²⁷⁴ Here RHP is describing *netsuke*, which are usually made of ivory or wood.

7. I have sent you by Mr. Egerton some elegant work contained in two small boxes which I hope have reached you safely before this.

8. I note what you say about silks away from Yedo. I have more difficulty in getting the right kinds but will bear in mind the wants of friends you name. I have a larger quantity on hand than you and Sue could use in 40 years. A few pieces will be taken home for you and for others on the *Wyoming* if she leave soon.

Sewing silk shall be attended.

9. You say nothing of the elegant silk-like cotton batting which was in all the larger boxes etc. I sent home. This is very valuable, worth here \$1.25 a pound. What have you done with it. It should be kept for bed quilt filling and for a substitute for cotton wherever ladies use it.

I will embrace an early opportunity to thank Dr. Francis for the copy of his Memorial Service. Meanwhile pray do so for me.

I am happy to hear the dogs are so well behaved and such agreeable fellows. Their feelings must have been greatly hurt at your attempts to make them confine themselves to a rice diet. Her ladyship particularly was from early infancy habituated to meat so as to be strengthened for her journey and the dog Mr. Portman sent had learned to love the same kind of food. I think this race of dogs, so decidedly puggish, is the original of the King Charles Spaniel. Their side faces I suppose you think charming. Charlie at least will say so.

I have just had my hair cut. It was not very long but I have concluded to send you some though the auburn locks are very short, as you once admired very much the iron grey hair of my father and I have an idea that by the time my locks reach you either from the length of the voyage or some equally good cause they will slightly only be sprinkled the same way. I would like to have a scientific report, if found in that condition, how such an effect can be produced.

4 o'clock p.m. July 25

I wish you to say to Dr. Vanderpoel that I have received his letters for which he has my thanks. I hope to be able to answer them in a few days. Also please thank Dr. Armsby for his very interesting letter. It contained an immense amount of valuable news, just the right kind. In a few days another vessel is expected to leave for California and unless Japan is too much disquieted I shall write to both the Doctors.

You will also please say thank you to Charlie. I have not yet succeeded in getting further payments but suppose I soon shall. Yet the loss of the *Lancefield*²⁷⁵ may make the government fear they would lose the ships if they got them, though we are careful to make a distinction between government ships and Daimios' ships. In a week or so I may be able

²⁷⁵ A four-gun warship, one of the steamer vessels acquired by the Chōshū domain combating the *Wyoming* in the Battle of Shimonoseki. It was renamed the *Jinjutsu* 壬戌.

to telegraph via California if paid and he may hear of it before this reaches you.

I have written three times to Abby and suppose she has a matter of course by this time received my letters. I had intended to write today but it has been impossible. So also my dear dickie Charlie must wait. If my letters ready for him at Yedo had not been burned I might have had a stock for him. I may be able to send one on earthquakes in Japan by next mail. I know he is taking good care of the dogs and hope they are kind and affectionate to him. I hope also he is improving rapidly and studying so he will be able to share a good deal of time in riding out with me when I get home.

But when shall that be? I answer as soon as it can be. I do not wish to spend the balance of my life, however, should I be so favored as to be at home once more, in justifying myself for running away. I know you are satisfied I did right in not responding to your call at San Francisco and I am satisfied you will feel I am thus far right. I hope to act so as to meet your approval even though forced to decide against your and my own wishes now. Events move rapidly here as at home and we cannot tell what a day will bring forth. Japan is purely scriptural in this respect.

I wish the government would publish my dispatch about this affair of the *Pembroke*, *Wyoming*, etc. Probably it will do so at length.²⁷⁶

And now, my beloved wife, it is near 7 o'clock. I must prepare for dinner at the French Minister's. As he has requested me to act as his second I cannot stay away, nor should I at this time. I could not write much more if I stayed away. The mail closes this evening and the vessel sails at 4 o'clock. a.m. I hope it will have favorable breezes and you will receive these lines in good season.

Give my love to Sue, and thanks for her letter. I shall give her a good long one. But she will have a share in this. Remember me once more to all friends, particularly our own little family connections, and accepting my regrets that this letter is not more interesting. Receive for dear Charlie kisses and love, and the same brimming over for yourself, my precious wife.

With love, love, love,

Ever Yours,

Robt. H. Pruyn



No. 5 July Yokohama, July 28 1863

²⁷⁶ RHP's dispatch, No. 48, dated July 24 1863, was published in the *Papers Relating to Foreign Affairs, Accompanying the annual Message of the President to the First Session Thirty-Eighth Congress, Part II*, Document 405.

My Beloved,

On the 25th I had the opportunity of sending you a few lines by the way of California which I hope will have reached you many days before this arrives. If so you will have learned that, though not actually at war with this government we have actually been at war with one of the Daimios, who is a Sovereign Prince in his own territory. We have every reason to believe that what has been done, if not exactly meeting the approval of the Tycoon's government, does not cause many tears to flow. A letter from the Gorogio to the French Minister expresses regret that our ships have been fired, but makes no such expressions in reference to the punishment which the U.S. and France have seen proper to visit on the Daimio. You may be sure, my darling, it was felt by me that I had a heavy responsibility. At this distance I felt it would not do to wait. It was a time for sharp, decisive work. I think our government and people will approve. The *Wyoming*, the Japanese say, did great execution. Yesterday one of the Chief Naval Officers came down from Yedo and asked permission to go on board, which was granted. I think they will have a better opinion of our ships. The French, with a frigate and gunboat, accomplished little when compared with the *Wyoming*. She blew up a steamer which cost \$115,000 and sank a 10 gun brig which was bought for \$20,000, both from an English house. Masuda, an interpreter who was with me at Yedo for several months, says the governors are much obliged to us. The probability is that Nagato was at almost open war with the Tycoon. He is pretty well crippled now and the British, French, Dutch Ministers and myself have agreed and signed a paper for our naval officers to act upon declaring the Inland Sea should be opened, if needful by our joint naval forces. I think we are now in a fair way to work out a solution of the Japanese question.

I abstained from going on the *Wyoming* as Bertie wished to go along and as my duty was rather here than on board the ship. I could not have dared to meet you had an accident unfortunately befallen him. The wounded on the *Wyoming* are getting along favorably. By the way our Dutch friends laughed at the idea of their ship being fired on a few days before the *Medusa* left Nagasaki for this place. Some of the officers of Nagato visited the ship, examined the guns, and asked many questions about the management of shell. The Governor breakfasted on board, asked whether they were going through the Inland Sea, furnished pilots and gave no hint of danger. His silence is to be attributed either to hostility (secret) to the Dutch or else to a willingness to see the Daimio roughly handled, as he must have felt the ship would be fired on if indeed he did not actually know it. A British steamer is now in the Inland Sea and will doubtless be fired on if she come within range of these batteries.

You see we really have of necessity the powers of making war here *ex necessitate*. I shall be as pacific as possible, but the truth is hard to get at here. The order of Know Nothing, if it did not originate here, has an extensive membership here. Officers invariably answer, "we don't know," although "they know we know they know." Is not that a beautiful sentence. Its chief beauty however consists in its truthfulness.

Bertie and myself continue in good health. Mrs. Rodgers, who left New York in the steamer with us, has come over from Shanghae with her husband and child for their health and are now staying with Mrs. Hepburn. Bertie is acting as her escort and showing her [around].

Your letters could be more acceptable and read better if you sat up less at night to write them. Set apart an hour to write and then suffer no interruption. I prefer getting up early and write in the morning, particularly as mosquitoes are no aids to epistolary correspondence, particularly when the writing is so fine and close as this. Should their fine stings reduce the letters in size or destroy in a greater degree their shape, I fear that what I now hope is legible, would become as bad as an unknown tongue.

I do not see much chance of my getting back to Yedo very soon. Indeed I have no furniture and it will take some months to get it. But I shall in a few days begin to agitate the question to keep up a healthful excitement. The government sent me last week a copy of the evidence taken about the fire of the Legation. They can prove anything. In a case tried before the British Consul a few years ago, the witnesses almost admitted they were governed in their testimony by the rods and equally plain directions of the Japanese officers in attendance. We shall never probably know the truth. I am not quite sure I would be safe at Yedo now. It is said the Tycoon is to return in 10 days, an authority we have heretofore found valuable in many cases. Perhaps the relations with the foreign powers will assume a better shape. He will at any rate have a strong force there and will be able to send off all suspected or dangerous persons. You will understand all the ports as yet opened are in the Tycoon's own dominions. It is said by some this contributes the principal ground of the opposition of the large Daimios, as the Tycoon pockets all the profits of the foreign trade while the Daimio wishes to share in those profits. And perhaps there is some truth in this.

The weather is quite warm and by no means as comfortable as it was at Yedo last summer. The evenings are quite cool. We are obliged to use mosquito nets as we would be absolutely eaten up. One of the seamen was missing as the *Wyoming* left for the Inland Sea. It had been given out some days before that she would leave for home on a certain day. Captain McDougal told me he has prepared to do. I said nothing but quietly prepared a letter in which I declared I thought it unsafe to have him leave. I said I did not expect to alter his purpose, really did not wish to interfere with his desire to get home in which I fully sympathized but said I felt my duty called on me to gently protest against his leaving. He had already privately said to me he would delay his departure, though on the evening of the day when what was intended as a farewell dinner was given him, the news of the firing on the *Pembroke* was received and my opinions of course were amply confirmed. I think it will now be some time before he starts and fortunately the *Jamestown* is daily expected. She was to leave Shanghae the 16th, stopping at Nagasaki. I think the naval forces will soon pay a good visit to Mr. Nagato and pay their respects, little more warmly than will be pleasant. The British fleet will also go to Satsuma's dominions. It is said he is

ready to settle. This may be true. Then again it may be said only to throw the British admiral off his guard and perhaps to induce him to take a smaller number of vessels. We shall soon know. We have now 11 British, 4 French, 1 Dutch and American steam vessels of war here.

As you have in at least two letters said, I had not mentioned Mrs. Hepburn's arrival. I would now say, though you have doubtless long ago received the information from me, that she arrived safe and well, though after a long detention at San Francisco. Miss Connor, who accompanied, left here in a fright, shortly after her arrival, for Shanghae and she is about returning, I understand, to the United States. A young clergyman, a Mr. Thompson,²⁷⁷ has arrived as an associate to Dr. Hepburn. Not the Mr. Thompson who was at Yedo—he, by the way, has ceased acting as Ber's teacher. I had allowed him a horse, which Ber used one day after the arrival of all of us at this place, without his knowledge or permission. Supposing that Mr. Brown would return to Kanagawa he had, intending to go with him, given Ber notice that he gave up his engagement and the horse and he had the folly to write to Ber he must apologize for taking his (my) horse before he could renew his engagement. I paid him and let him go.

Ber has now sold that horse. I thought two were sufficient. But he has an elephant in the shape of a boat, which I have allowed him to buy, of which Ayton Mann has one quarter. So he now has 3 boatmen in his employ. But as we got rid of one *betto* and horse feed, the expense will be about the same. I suppose he will soon tire of the boat. But I wish to keep him occupied and satisfied. I shall try and make other arrangements for his studies.

[July] 29th

I have notice that a steamer will leave on the first to connect with the French mail, which opportunity I propose seizing to send you a few additional lines. The political disturbances, occurring as they do at the commencement of the silk and tea season, bring a larger number of steamers here than usual and the chances are that not a week will pass for some time without an opportunity for connecting with the line of mail steamers, which is by no means certain when we are dependent on sailing vessels. I yesterday received a letter from Russell & Company acknowledging the receipt of two letters, one on the 20 the other the 21 July. The first left here on the first day of this month, the other on the 13th. This will serve to show why some mails have brought you no letters.

Trade is not interrupted. The quantity of silk brought to market in the season ending July 1862 was 12,000 bales, last season 25,000 and this season is estimated at 35,000 bales, estimated say at \$400 per bale. You see how rich the country is and how susceptible of great increase in its production. The people are industrious. And all that is necessary to

²⁷⁷ David Thompson (1835-1915) was from Ohio and attended the Western Theological Seminary in Pittsburgh. He arrived in Japan in 1863 to do missionary work.

increase production vastly is a demand for the articles. Then the increase becomes almost fabulous.

I am glad to hear so many marriages are to come off. It gives evidence of healthy activity. It proves that neither property nor hopefulness nor confidence are exhausted. When I speak of the grand smash which I have predicted, I do not mean that is to follow that the country is to be maimed. I simply mean that the stoppage or diversion of the large business, both commercial and manufacturing, which has flowed so long in unaccustomed channels will destroy, as it has already created, many fortunes. The reverse of what has taken place is soon to be seen, as soon as the war ends. It is very pleasant if you have \$20,000 to pay to be able to do it with what cost you and is really only worth half that sum, the amount being doubled by a depreciated currency. But now reverse this, let gold be again at par and let a party have to pay a debt of \$20,000 created when things were at the flood tide of apparent prosperity. He has received for his money what is really worth only half. He returns the article, land or stock whatever it may be, and finds he has only paid half the debt. This was so in England. Bankruptcy and even to many a flourishing home was occasioned by peace when Napoleon went to St. Helena. As long as the war lasts, business will go on swimmingly. When peace comes and the great tide falls, many fish will be found floundering high and dry and the bigger the fish, the mightier their struggle, the greater the wreck. I therefore, if only for the fun of it, preach prudence to you and Charlie. It is only at a distance that you can calmly estimate such dangers. Everyone I should say must be a little crazy at home. The dry goods and other merchants can become rich by simply marking up his goods. Should peace come suddenly the marks will have to be changed. He will have his goods, but they will represent a different value. It was with reference to this state of things I thought it might be well if it could be done on favorable terms to sell some Commercial Bank stock and get Central Bonds or Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati Railroad stock. But I am too far away to say what is best. You must decide as you are now such a business woman. I have insensibly got talking about money matters again and will stop.

You would be astonished to see how many and what substantial stone buildings foreigners are erecting in this place. When affairs are settled so that the policy of the government shall inspire confidence, this will become a large place. It is very healthy. Only one foreign resident has died here, and that a child, since the port was opened. And yet there is pretty high living. The wine bill of a merchant will range from \$1,000-\$2,000 a year. There is open house kept everywhere, visitors from Europe as well as China and other parts of the East are always to be found here. There are hotels, but after all they are only billiard or bar rooms, as every merchant keeps a hotel. A house which cost \$2,000 to build it will rent for \$1,200 to \$1,500 per annum. Land is going up so fast in value. Lots which could have been purchased a year ago for \$2,000 will bring \$6,000 now and so in proportion.

I indulge hopes now that a speedy end will be put to our home rebellion. I think I see

evidence of more activity and boldness in our generals. The rebels to be put down must be kept constantly alarmed and compelled to meet rapid and repeated attacks in every direction. It is in this way they will be more completely and rapidly exhausted, at whatever cost of blood or treasure this must be done. We can never have disunion an accomplished fact.

As I will have an opportunity to send another letter in a few days I will shorten this and write a few lines to Abby and Sue who will complain otherwise. Though much that I write could answer as well as if addressed to them. I can say nothing definite now about my return. I wish first to see the result of my application for leave of absence. If granted, I can leave in January. If refused, my decision can at once be made. You may depend on my leaving as soon as it is proper to do so.

I shall be pleased to answer any letters from home. You would be amused to read Armsby's. It is concentrated gossip, sufficiently acid to be very palatable and not sicken the stomach. I believe I must send it as a model letter. It gives news of Bleecker,²⁷⁸ Kendrick, Plumb,²⁷⁹ Gilbert,²⁸⁰ Lovett²⁸¹ and the Albany Directory in general. There is a slight dash of malice of course. Other names are mentioned, which I will omit. More agreeable news would be more pleasant. But it would be difficult for the most charitable and humane to write things entirely pleasant without changing the subject slightly. For my precious boy I again send his father's love. It is a strange experience you and I have. I often think how long those days appeared at Washington, our first real separation. And yet they were as minutes compared with our present parting. Till I can say it in person, take the messages of love from a distance and let kisses and every kind wish and loving expectation and prayer go with them and may God spare us to meet, to love, and to discharge every duty in his fear and for his love. Remember me, my darling wife, to the large circle of relatives and friends, and may our separation not be prolonged so as to find that circle more and more contracted. I have just heard the mail closes two hours earlier than I had expected, at 11 a.m. instead of 1 p.m. I may therefore be unable to do all intended, liable as I am to interruption.

Yours in love and hope and ever, Robt. H. Pruyn



No. 6 of July Yokohama, July 29 1863

²⁷⁸ William E. Bleecker, president of National Bank in Albany.

²⁷⁹ J. B. Plumb, president of the Bank of the Interior in Albany.

²⁸⁰ Horatio G. Gilbert, cashier of the Bank of the Capitol in Albany.

²⁸¹ Joseph M. Lovett, cashier of the Albany Exchange Bank.

My Beloved Wife,

Two days ago I sent letters for you Sue and Abby via Marseilles. Tomorrow this will have to go by French steamer the same way and may possibly join company with those letters in crossing the Atlantic. It is a great pleasure and comfort to me that as the time of our separation is so unhappily lengthening, there is a gradual improvement, which may be regarded as likely to continue, in the opportunities for correspondence. Now if a mail line were only established to California it would be the extreme of luxury. I have nothing more to communicate in reference to our relations with this country as nothing has occurred, except the naval officers have met and we are now only waiting to hear from Yedo. We will give the government the opportunity to speak but will not permit a long delay. This is just what they do not like. It is their practice to delay everything. Procrastination is the great thief of Japan. If they can get a few days' delay, although they know they will then be as bad off, it is all the same. Something may turn up. They do not care about the suspense. Like a great whale they come up occasionally to blow and then dive off again into their ocean of concealment and mystery.

I am staying still with Walsh, Hall & Co. I have no furniture yet but shall send this week to Shanghae. I shall get as little as possible not knowing as yet whether I shall require it at Yedo or here. I should like by the way to know whether you would wish me to bring back our table and bed linen if in good order, which it now is, as thus far I have used only what I purchased of Mr. Harris. Should I stay much longer and use it, it will be much worn, as the Japanese are desperate washers.

August 1 1863

The *Jamestown* has arrived and I found a Captain Price²⁸² a neighbor as he lives in Troy. He married a Miss Paine,²⁸³ daughter of the late John Paine, cashier etc. As he speaks of Kidd,²⁸⁴ Crosby,²⁸⁵ some of the Van Rensselaer family, General Cooper etc., etc., as acquaintances, we find many things of mutual interest of which we can speak and no doubt his stay here will add to our fund of pleasure. He said he is promised another steamer so that if the *Wyoming* return we will be well taken care of.

We had another unfortunate affair on the 29th. A party of English merchants went on picnic to Kanagawa a dozen miles below here and probably because the meeting occurred after instead of before refreshment, had a collision with a *yakumin*. Their story is that he muttered some words of which they asked an explanation when he drew his sword and rushed on them, that is, those of the party who had separated from their companions and were about to return by land. They drew pistols. One was snapped three times, two others were fired, and the party wounded in the arm, but not dangerously as is supposed. As the

²⁸² Cicero Price (1805-1888) served as captain of the *Jamestown* 1862-1865.

²⁸³ Elizabeth Homer Paine (1828-1910).

²⁸⁴ Perhaps William Kidd, the governor's military secretary, or James Kidd, both of Albany.

²⁸⁵ James F. Crosby, and insurance agent in Albany.

Japanese doctors are not very conversant with gunshot wounds and will not amputate, loss of life may possibly follow from ignorance of treatment or mismanagement. Men will be imprudent. But that is not all. It is to be feared that many would prefer to have a collision rather than to avoid one, and pistols are used too freely. Nearly everyone goes armed. Indeed Mrs. Winchester,²⁸⁶ the wife of the British Consul, formerly carried two revolvers. Whether she now does so I cannot say. You see what a love of a country this would be for you and Sue. Ladies can have a fine opportunity for the heroic and can add materially to their charms, prepared at all times to give any one a warm reception. Mars and Venus in conjunction, earthly constellations not in the Milky Way, pure and simple, but tinged with the roseate hue of blood. But such affairs only show perhaps that both parties are not themselves. They have no political significance, yet if too often repeated might cause much trouble. If this were a clear strong case against the British merchants, a good case would be presented to get back some of the hundred thousand paid by the Japanese.

The British gunboat sent to the Inland Sea has not returned. She has been absent 12 days and many speculations exist as to cause of absence. Many think she has been so damaged as not to be able to get back, perhaps aground and then destroyed, while others believe she has not been where she could be fired on.

The Tycoon has returned. Yesterday two or three Japanese steamers were observed going up to Yedo. The previous day a small one had anchored off this place. It bore the governor who called on all the ministers to say the Tycoon would return by sea, that he had heard of the firing on the *Pembroke* etc., that he feared through some mistake, not knowing that he was onboard, his steamer might be attacked by some of the foreign vessels and therefore notice was given us he would return in the *Jinkee*.²⁸⁷ Now see what funny creatures they are. He had been ordered to give us the message and he obeyed orders, though the necessity had ceased. I said to him, "Is the *Jinkee* to return for the Tycoon?" "No," says the governor. "He sent me to see you and give you this notice," he remaining at Uraga (some 20 miles down the bay). I was to return and give him the answers of the ministers. But as you say the *Jinkee* went up this morning so it appears they have altered their plans. Orders are literally obeyed always, if possible. The party ordered to carry a message or do anything, obeys it no matter what may have occurred to render a change advisable or necessary. He cares not, he is to obey orders, and would do just as the Irishman did who carried the wounded man down to the surgeon and found his patient, who had asked him to carry him below, minus a head taken off in transit.

I cannot write much to you this time. The mail closes in one and a half hours and breakfast is to be taken in that time. I was obliged to get ready two home and three other

²⁸⁶ Jane Blake Winchester (b. 1820).

²⁸⁷ The *Jin-kee* was purchased from the British in 1862 for \$150,000, according to the *Commercial Reports Received at the Foreign Office from Her Majesty's Consuls*, 1862.

dispatches yesterday. My dispatches since January number 52 to Secretary of State and nearly 90 to my colleagues and the Japanese government and some of them are so long as to be a dreadful bore to somebody. That is one comfort. My visit from the Governor yesterday lasted nearly two hours. By the way the Governor told me the *Wyoming* had destroyed all three of the vessels of our friend Nagato. But after all he has thus far got the best of. He beats us all on paper, as he has reported to the Mikado that he has driven off the war vessels of the Dutch, Americans and French. As all these ships left without being able to do all they wished to do, he has some foundation for his "boasting." But then he needed none, as he could have erected as large a fabric of misrepresentation without any foundation whatever, without our having any opportunity to whisper in the ears of his divinity (the Mikado) that Nagato was slightly fibbing. A lie may travel slowly here, but the facilities for travel are so few that it can never be overtaken.

It is a little doubtful whether this will go forward without interruption as the French mail arrangements are not yet completed. But it will be in time for the first English mail near the close of the month from Shanghai, though I hope it will go on without such delay.

I forgot to say that the surgeon of the *Jamestown* is a Dr. Vedder²⁸⁸ of New York with family from old Schenectady. One of these days I may find some kinds of interest in common.

But our war news is more promising, I hope rebeldom will soon cave in and then we will doubtless have a large fleet here. It will be a long while before the Treaty Powers can take away their ships. Long thirty twos are the least powerful arguments which will be available for some time, not for use against the government but to put gently and ask the government whether they are not good fellows with whom it is best not to have too close, or even a speaking acquaintance.

I took tea last evening with Dr. and Mrs. Hepburn, with whom Mr. and Mrs. Rodgers of Shanghai are staying. It looked good and homelike. Mrs. Hepburn asked me to come often, but much as it looks like home, it is too suggestive to be entirely pleasant. Then again we talked of home and Mrs. H[epburn] asked whether I was not a little homesick to which however I could give a negative response, as I would say I was a good deal so and not by any means a little.

I took up a paper yesterday (*Tribune*) and read the list of deaths, thinking I might find Albany represented. True enough there was Captain Willie Temple, how sad!²⁸⁹ It was but as yesterday he was a child. Changes occur with such rapidity I will find myself requiring to be pushed very considerably, should I be spared, to return before acquainted with all the changes which have taken place in the circle of my acquaintances. Yet I watch the

²⁸⁸ Alexander Madison Vedder (1831-1870)

²⁸⁹ Captain William Temple succumbed to wounds received at the Battle of Chancellorsville in May of 1863.

papers closely and vie with the fair sex in the regularity which characterizes my perusal of the message column, marching along to the music of the wedding march.

The first funeral of a resident took place yesterday, except that of a little girl who died last year from the same disease occasioned by imprudent exposure to the sun at noon. It is remarkably healthy here. The deaths heretofore have been among the sailors and others who came here sick from China. The cholera is said to be here and known to be very bad at Shanghae. Here it probably only exists in the form of *cholera morbus*. The Japanese do not discard decayed vegetables, but eat them when in a condition which would almost sicken us to see. They place vegetables in a kind of mixture of bran and pickle it and after they have fermented for months, they are in prime order, an odious improvement on sour kraut. Every man, woman and child should have the cholera annually if it were not for something miraculous somewhere which preserves them from the legitimate consequences of their own folly.

I shall be guilty today of committing a great price of extravagance and send you nearly a blank page or else run the risk of having my letter excluded from the mail. If the French, whose mail line has just been started, are as punctual in closing as the British it will not do to experiment. The mail closes to the minute and that is the only way to make people prompt.

And so, my darling, as I have only 15 minutes left to close and get this to the Consulate of France, particularly as Ber predicts I will be too late now, I shall close, but I cannot do so without having the comfort of at least mentioning the name of my precious Charlie and sending a message of love. Give him several kisses and for you and him and Sue most abounding love. My precious wife, farewell in hope of an early meeting.

Yours Ever,

Robt. H. Pruyn

The last lines written in great tribulation as Ber is hurrying me. Says he will have to run etc.



No. 1 Kanagawa, August 3 1863

I have sent you six packages of letters by different mails in July my dear wife, and now I have an unexpected opportunity to send my first of the August series via California. Yesterday afternoon the ship *John Jay* from Shanghae put in for supplies, having thirty one passengers, some sick and most of them flying affrighted from Shanghae. It was expected to leave here early yesterday morning. The other ship to California is daily expected, having

on board the wife of Bishop Boone²⁹⁰ and others who seek health and safety from the cholera, among others Miss Connor who came with Mrs. Hepburn, and ran from here afraid of the two-sworded gentry and now thinks them less dreadful than the cholera.

In my last letters via Marseilles a few days ago I informed you of the arrival of the *Jamestown*. The *Wyoming* is still here. But my opinion now is that we are to have peace. The Tycoon has returned to Yedo. He has not complained nor is he likely to do so of the little amateur war and get up with his Prince of Nagato and is at heart I supposed much obliged to the Americans who started the ball and to the French who so soon helped roll it on. We will know more in a few days as we have all proposed to go down together and play a quartile for Nagato to dance to. It may be the Tycoon may wish to have this music stopped, which he can have done, provided he will “grind the organ himself.”

With this exception and a collision between some Englishman and a Japanese, in which the latter was wounded, everything is peaceful and will probably so continue, so let your anxiety for us cease. It would be in some respects a gain if I were at home and had entered the army as I suppose would have been the case had I not come here. You could have seen me often but you would have been constantly alarmed and anxious for my safety. I wish to extract a little comfort for you.

We have a delightful day, if anything rather cool. I have now a woolen coat on and yet the sun by now will be rather too warm to be agreeable. The country looks delightful. We have frequent showers and every field, valley and hill is clothed in the richest green. Nature always wears a clean face. She is bathed as regularly as are the inhabitants, without any of their drawbacks.

You would be surprised at the improvements now in progress here. Land is as high in price as at Albany. Our State Street house would rent here for \$2,000. Lots which three months ago sold for 3,000 will now command five thousand.

August 4

I am not inclined to send many letters by this vessel. Though with 31 passengers, she is an old condemned whaler, 37 years old and badly officered at that. The Captain is said, by the owner himself, who is trying to get rid of him through the Consul, to be unfit for his place and first and 2nd mates are even worse. The vessel was nearly a month under way here and at the same rate of progress may reach San Francisco by December or February. On the other hand two clippers will soon be on their way there. So I retain business letters. Two of the sick passengers of the *John Jay* were landed yesterday by order of the surgeon of the *Wyoming* and are not expected to live. The vessel is in a sad state, the man saying it is a purgatory from which he himself would escape if a good ship was now here bound

²⁹⁰ William Jones Boone (1811-1864) was a Bishop of the American Church Mission in China. He traveled with his wife to Japan in hopes of improving her health. After staying briefly in Japan, they left, not to return to China but rather to go to Egypt, where Mrs. Boone died in January 1864.

for San Francisco.

The British fleet leaves for Satsuma's dominions tomorrow, unless something unforeseen occur. Four vessels will remain which with the French 3, our 2, and the Dutch 1, will still give us 10 ships of war here and leave us safe whatever occur at Kagosima, Satsuma's capital.

The British Steamer *Coquette* has returned from the Inland Sea, where she was supplied with provisions and informed if she passed through the straits, she would not be fired into unless she fired on the batteries first. So it appears Nagato has had enough. But then he may not feel so subdued after he has had time and opportunity to get breath again.

The Governor of Kanagawa who has just returned with the Tycoon informs me that information received at Osacca was to the effect that the *Wyoming* had destroyed the steamer, bark and brig and inflicted great damage as here.

We are daily expecting mail of the 10th June, but it will require another arrival to give us the decisive result at Vicksburg, as we have a stray paper from London of June 10 giving New York news of May 30, which has by some accident preceded the mail. If [Union General Ulysses S.] Grant has fully succeeded there it will be a terrible blow to the rebels. We hope for the best and feel greatly encouraged by the signs of increased activity. Action, action. Action should now be the only watchword, keeping the enemy ever in alarm at every point. This will wear him out.

This long waiting for news is dreadful. You have the experience so far as letters from me are concerned. I have the same experience with the addition of anxiety for the Army news. I have never doubted and have always felt only one result was possible, that the Union was worth fighting for fifty years but then we are by nature impatient.

I enclose you Armsby's letter of which please say nothing to him. You will see what a reservoir of news it was found to be. It was open when received and if accessible it must have amused anyone having opportunity and inclination to read it, though unable to understand some of the allusions. But what a terrible picture of ruin is painted in a few words. How many have reason for thanks that they were not engulfed in the same vast drowning maelstrom. Looking back from the peak of this point of observation I am amazed when I look at the temptations and associations at the narrow escape. But I will not philosophize any more.

If you think proper you may subscribe for me to the endowment of Rutgers College and liberally. I would have preferred to have it delayed till I return. But that may prove an injury to the effort in our Church where I presume something will be done. I suppose Viele will give \$500 to \$1,000, probably the latter sum. Do as you think best. I prefer to have it so that you can say you have acted on your own responsibility which I presume you will have done before this reaches you and therefore say nothing more.

I see Dr. Rogers was surprised by the gift of \$2,000. I will believe half of this. I do not care which, the gift or the surprise. The first is the most likely. I am glad of it. Such surprises will be necessary to be repeated at respectable intervals. I am surprised he has

failed to answer the letter I wrote to him when I heard of Theodore's death. I suppose Bessie has found a congregation of beaux and has frequent services, day and evening. As she is not in the list of the engaged, I suppose when her father cut the Church, she felt bound to dissolve with her part of it, so that Down is among the "unattached" to use a military phrase. It is perhaps quite well that Dr. Clark has no grown up or growing up daughters. I think Bessie had something to do with the migration southward, in sowing seeds I mean. Certain estrangements were not lessened in view of her flirtations, more demonstrative than serious though they may have been.

There is a subscription of mine of \$250 made to the hospital when it was started. Though not wanted and only intended to remain for the interest, I think as it is a debt it had better be paid if it is not. It can of course be reinvested with other funds. It is not worthwhile to be troubled twice each year to pay the interest.

I believe that will dispose of everything of that nature which requires attention. Though this, I presume, has already been thought of by you and done. I thought it might be overlooked because not presented or interest asked as has often been the case.

You see a little piece of business will creep in each letter. But I think all is disposed of now. Especially if I get the long promised information as to what has been done for me since I left. After what I have written it cannot be I shall get a meager outline merely.

August 5

The departure of the *John Jay* is postponed until tomorrow at day light, at which time it will, without further delay, sail. I received yesterday a letter which Mr. Brown is translating, said to be a summons from the Tycoon to some of the most powerful Daimios to meet him at Yedo to arrange for the expulsion of foreigners. He is now free from actual restraint. Whether this movement is serious or not we cannot even anticipate. The rulers of Japan are performing a play on a grand stage, which is farce, comedy and tragedy intermingled. We cannot tell, until the curtain falls and the actors walk the streets of everyday life, which will predominate. All we can now do is to watch the motions and guess what is the prevailing tone. The faces are masked and no feature or emotion betrays the real feeling. We have all kinds of rumors to which I have learned to pay no attention and all kinds of speculation to which I never attribute any value. Meanwhile everything goes on merry as a marriage bell and the disinterested observer, neither blinded by interest or led away by feeling, would be inclined to laugh at the idea of danger. We have business and pleasure flowing freely in their accustomed and almost well-worn channels, everything seen almost in palpable open conflict with what is heard. We have no marrying and giving in marriage, because there is no raw material, but with that exception we are as unconcerned as the antediluvians and yet a storm may come here as suddenly and out of as clear a sky.

Everyone goes armed in this Eastern world. Since I have been about I have slept with a pistol under my pillow and most of the time with one also by my side. The pistol is

carried even to Church. Mrs. Winchester the wife of the British Consul formerly carried two pistols in her pocket. I cannot say whether she is still on a war footing or not. But this is only precautionary and does not even give us a moment's thought.

Why did Mr. B[radford] R. Wood return? Simply because he was tired of absence? I can easily see it was not much of an object for him to stay as his expenses must have more than eaten up his salary. But I am surprised that with his wealth he and his wife did not "do" England etc. and the continent before they turned his face homewards. I presume there were some private reasons affecting his wife's property which will not be made public. There may be political reasons lying back of these aroused by him which I would find no difficulty in fathoming if once aware of their existence, knowing him and his political bias as I do.

I am by no means as fleshy as that condemned photograph would indicate. I weigh nearly indeed just 11 pounds less than in California and nearly 8 pounds less than my normal weight at Albany. So you will see I do not carry much surplus fat. But such as I am, I am highly favored with good health and freedom from pain, even a toothache. I am pronounced industrious because always seen writing to you or some other public character. At any rate I keep very busy. Business has of course been created by all the marchings and counter marchings which are constantly taking place. It bids fair to be almost doubled this year unless we have more peaceful times. I hope you will have cut out from the papers every article bearing on our little warlike flurry here. I have curiosity at least to see how it is received. I am at any rate glad we had so little force to act, because with small means we did vastly more than our neighbors with most ample means. It will either have had no effect at all if the Tycoon attempts to carry out his policy or a good effect in causing him to abandon it. It will in no event add to our danger of expulsion. I speak of an attempt. We must go and cannot be made to go of course.

No. 1 of August, [Sheet] No. 4 August 8 1863

Yesterday, my beloved wife, your letters of January and March via San Francisco arrived with books, clothing, cake, medicines and an assorted cargo in good order, the New Year's cake, strange to say, as fresh apparently as when baked. I tasted one last evening, and found it good though with rather a spirit of turpentine flavor, Bertie thinks because packed in a glove box but I cannot say till I have investigated further. I am heartily glad you did not send a suit of clothing for me. The dampness is so great here as to make a large stock very undesirable and I have enough on hand for present use.

I shall not notice your letters now as I propose starting a letter via Marseilles this very day will not fail to reach you early in November. It may be not very long after this, though it is possible the *John Jay* may disappoint us all and make a quick passage.

I thank Dr. Newcomb for the pen and Dr. Armsby may as well prepare to receive the Tycoon at the Observatory. He may therefore prepare a grand collation one week after the receipt of this. The Tycoon will be accompanied by the man in the moon with whom

he is distantly related, spending a few days at that half-way house on his journey.

Don't send any more clothing. Ber will go crazy. He now wears at least two suits a day of linens. My tailor finds little opportunity to do anything for me. To be sure he is slow, but thus far with the exception of a coat and two pants, Ber has had him to himself, and while I had him Ber employed an outside tailor and had two pants made. When I leave here I wish to leave all superfluous clothing behind and travel with as little as possible.

We have a very warm day, by no means favorable to letter writing and both mails close this afternoon. As usual I have government dispatches to get off. I shall have one to go by the *Sea Serpent* and content myself with them today.

I am glad that the articles sent arrived in such good condition, though the Japanese do not deserve the praise you give for admirable packing as all was done under my direction and most of it by Ber or myself without any aid. Until foreigners arrived, articles were transported short distances and not liable to the violent usage which civilization legalizes. There are no baggage smashers in Japan and a Japanese would as soon think of beating his wife child or mother in the way our trunks are tossed about as to deal so with his wares. He has no conception of the unceremonious way in which his fragile wares may be handled. If left to himself in packing them, they would be too small for kindling wood on their arrival. And I have great fears as it is with all the care I have taken for the safety of some boxes I have via Panama.

I suppose that the young gentleman to whom you have given letters will soon show himself. I cannot act as host now, as I have no house. I will do what I can with safety and propriety. But it may be as well to say here, be careful if any person from Japan calls without letters from me. This Eastern world has a good deal of drift wood. I see a man is lecturing on Japan in California who was said to be an escaped convict or something like that from Australia. I rather think Dr. McGowan's²⁹¹ lectures on Japan are of the humbug species. I imagine his knowledge of the country is almost entirely derived from books. Get Kaempfer's *Japan*²⁹² from state library and Sir R[utherford] Alcock's book²⁹³ and Hildreth's²⁹⁴ and you will learn more than you need or may wish to know of Japan.

No. 1, Sheet 5 August 8 1863

In your January letter you say you send Dr. Armsby's contribution to the box but know not what it is. I have not discerned anything as yet, but shall give a more minute examination when I shall have sent away these sheets and my Marseilles letter. I have as yet not found time to examine even the titles of the books sent.

The flannel you sent will come very good as all I had were burned up, two coats made

²⁹¹ Daniel Jerome McGowan, 1815-1893.

²⁹² *The History of Japan: with the life of the Author*, by Engelbert Kaempfer.

²⁹³ *The Capital of the Tycoon: a Narrative of a Three Year's residence in Japan*, by Sir Rutherford Alcock.

²⁹⁴ *Japan and the Japanese*, by Richard Hildreth. Hildreth also wrote *Japan as it Was and Is*. It is unclear to which book RHP is referring.

up and a large bundle sent ashore for my use by Captain McDougal. Betsy has my thanks for her very acceptable pin cushion. It is useful but it is pleasant to be remembered. Sue had better come over as she proposes and bring me home. I will promise to pack up at once. Perhaps she can bring someone to succeed me with whom she will be willing to stay a year or so or will she ever be obdurate. At any rate let her come.

1 p.m.

I am just trying another New Year's cake. Excellent, but flavor remains. I see the box once contained merino shirts, not gloves as Ber said, but spirits turpentine is unmistakably somewhere.

I do not send a telegram from San Francisco on the arrival of the *John Jay* because I suppose some notice will be taken of my dispatch to the government and so you will hear I am still alive.

5 p.m.

At 4 o'clock the mail for England closed on a letter for you and Sue, though I think I shall have another chance for the same mail at Hong Kong or Shanghai by a later steamer. I enclose the 2nd of a bill for 50, the first of which I sent a month ago and had forgotten all about the 2nd.

I shall close this letter now as one of the officers of the *Wyoming*, the surgeon, has been here for more than three hours and it does not look polite to hand him a book and write on. So I have to do. I keep in sight my latest papers and thus find ways of pleasantly and profitably employing visitors.

I am delighted to hear of the continued success of my Church and Sabbath School. From what I have seen of Dr. Clark's sermons I should judge the congregation would never be afraid, when he rose in the pulpit, that he would possibly say something which had better be left unsaid. He writes like a man of solid, good, never failing sense, who is never betrayed into a silly speech or a stale jest or a low expression. If any of his sermons are printed I should like to see them. I have read two, one in the *New York Pulpit*, the other in pamphlet form proceeding before New York and Brooklyn Missionary Society. But I must now bring to a close this long and straggling letter, of the content of which I am almost as ignorant as you now are. I have laid it aside for several days as business, visitors or other letters made it necessary. And I dislike dull reading too much to read it over. So it must stand just as it is. I hope it will reach you in September and find you all well and in good heart.

I send you my usual messages to the long list of friends. You may spice these up and consider everything as emanating from and improved by me. If I find time I shall send my dear little boy a letter which will please him better if addressed directly to himself. Meanwhile, my precious wife, let us wait and pray and hope for a speedy and happy meeting which I will do as much to bring about as you would advise if you could for a

few minutes stand me. A few days may change and probably will change the aspect of things very much. Silk is now coming in slowly, stopped it is said by government. If so the end of the rope is nearly reached. Something decisive will occur before this month expires sufficiently so I hope to decide to some degree my movements in hopes that it may form a speedy happy meeting my dearest wife with your loving husband.

Robt. H. Pruyn

Love and kisses for Charlie, my precious boy



No. 2 Kanagawa, August 8 1863

I have the pleasure my dearest wife to send you this day letters via California which will probably reach you many days in advance of this, which I send westward so as not leave too large a gap in your receipt of letters. I am sure it will give you more pleasure to receive this at a later period than in the company of those which travel towards the rising sun. I had the pleasure yesterday of receiving the boxes of clothing, books, etc., etc. Though the accompanying letters were of the date of January and March they were nonetheless interesting as I had already been assured of the good health of you, my darling, my precious boy, and dear Sue, and all as late as May 24.

What a great comfort it must have been to the family of Theo Rogers to read the account of his death and funeral published in the *Observer* as given by a Southern officer! I am afraid that many more happy homes will be made desolate before this criminal war ends. What a mountain of woe is Dan's and his compeers chargeable with. Higher than Ararat, no ark will rest upon its summit, no beauteous boy crown it or soft eyed dove bear the olive from its sides. Whether successful or defeated, the verdict of humanity must cover the plotters of treason with disgrace. Even success cannot gild their conduct or characters with one beam of light.

You will see, my darling, how impossible it is to speak with any propriety of my return. A few weeks ago I thought ships might detain me because it might be best I should see they were accepted and paid for. Now I hope to get that business so advanced as to leave me at liberty to act independently of that consideration. But graver questions have arisen and I know however anxious you may be for my return you will not wish it at the expense of my reputation. In the tossing of the waters it is impossible from day to day to predict where the next day will find us. I can only say you cannot be more anxious than I am for the arrival of the hour when I shall leave these shores, pleasant as they are to the eye. Here everything is only of the earth. Material beauty, nothing like home or of home.

Aunt's loss must be severely felt by Uncle Saunders. I can easily imagine he must sleep less soundly now that he is free from anxiety on her account. He is like the workman

accustomed to sleep amid the thunder of machinery and who wakes when the air ceases to be vexed. The occupation of his life is gone, unless he remarries a more confirmed invalid or a most inveterate shrew of at least a hundred horse powers.

I agree in the main with what you say as to property. I can see now I shall have at least as much as you have. The Governor has just sent me and he will exchange for me the same extra amount as I had last January. I had half as much extra a few weeks ago and I feel sure therefore of a large saving this year, at least double what I derive from my salary or double, almost. Those two largest drafts I sent you, will it be best for me to remit to you, or keep for investment at home when I return? As to the works, I was willing to sell, as I have advised you. I would sooner prepare to sell if a good opportunity offer. Should it not, when I return there can be little difficulty should a good opportunity not offer. My idea would be to put \$5 to \$10,000 each in as special partners if we can find good mechanics with any capital of their own and Haskell might go in to watch over interests. The real estate had better not be sold. I shall be very willing to be with you "at least four fifths of the time." You will have to drive me out or drive out with me if I can succeed in inspiring you with confidence in my ability to manage a horse. Perhaps you yourself may even venture on horseback.

I hope all your pleasant anticipations as to our future movements may be more than realized. We will have the pecuniary ability to go where we please and as often as we please and I pray that opportunity may be afforded as to enjoying ourselves and to do good to others. It will give me such heartfelt satisfaction to let you see what I can be when free from the annoyances which business entailed on me the last few years. We will try and beat the General and Aunt Sue even in getting to Church.

Your letters and an occasional newspaper item serve to show what great changes even a year brings with it. If spurred to return how many familiar forms will have disappeared from our Church, to say nothing of the city. I am pleased to learn that my letters to Charlie give any pleasure to the Sabbath School children. I will try and send more very shortly.

It was just as well that W[illiam] I. K[ip Jr.] left us. It was about time. I had given his father plainly to understand that no salary or allowance could be expected. I allowed him exchange of *itzabus* so as to yield him profit of nearly \$1,200 and yet as he was going away he asked whether I intended to allow him any portion of the extra and I had just received, as then he would have enough to carry him home to Europe etc. without drawing on his father. As what I had allowed really came out of my own pocket, this was a cool request. I told him I thought his father could better pay his draft for \$500 than that I should make such additional contribution, and I do not think I was as popular with him when he left as when he arrived. Ber did not regret his departure at all, as he thought that his arithmetic had been sadly neglected, No. 1 being the extent of his acquisitions. He sent me a very pleasant letter on his departure and I wish him well.

Your letters of April 14, 28 and May 12 and 24 all arrived the same day this week. So I had within two days of each, and then letters of January 7, April, March, and May. What

an age ago the latest May 24 was written! But one was read with as much interest as the other, except that the latest testified to your continued good health and comfort to a period more closely allied to the present. If I could only have and send a weekly telegram. At Yedo I was more particular about being with Bertie than here. Still I always watch pretty closely and do not allow him to be much away except at the Consulate or for a short country ride with some gentleman or lady. I have not taken one ride since I left Yedo, but must resume my rides shortly. All my *yakumins* are at this place now. They are very anxious I shall return to Yedo, always meeting Ber and myself with smiles and never failing to ask when we go to Zenpukuge.

I succeeded yesterday in getting a lot for the Church for Mr. Burns and Mr. Ballagh which will be worth \$20,000 a few years hence. It was after a hard struggle and only after I was able to show the Governors here had been guilty of falsehood. They now seek to avoid this by charging it on the priest and yet he is confined to his house for having told me the truth. The lot was promised (or part of it) to Mr. Harris. But they have refused to give it as it was temple property, saying they could not take from their temple and give to ours. I found that the temple grounds only covered a small part of the lot, told the officials if they lied any more or any longer I would take them on board the *Wyoming* to Yedo and have them disgraced and they believe I will do what I will say since they have heard our cannon at Simonoseki and so surrendered at once. The innocent priest suffers. And strange to say we are better friends than ever. I have my war paint on. But do not mistake, my darling, I am on the best of terms with the government and its officers. The government, it is said by some of the officers, is much obliged to us for what the *Wyoming* did. I addressed the ministers a congratulatory letter to which I have yet received no reply. I have at least half a dozen letters as yet unanswered. They are very busy in consequence of the Tycoon's absence and return, and it takes days to translate. All the ministers have written many letters lately and the translators have little time to eat or sleep, though it cannot be said any Japanese has a set time for either. They are always eating or smoking and they are ready for business at midnight as pleasantly as at noon. I suppose the possession of a good bed is a great provocative to slumber and as they have no beds, what is the use of sleeping.

The Tycoon has returned to Yedo. The minister who paid the British indemnity has been disgraced and is imprisoned at Osacca. They have no Bible here, but the daily lesson "put not your faith in princes."

I shall be able to send by another vessel a letter to catch this mail at Hong Kong if not at Shanghai and shall therefore content myself with a short note to Sue and close this for that purpose.

Kiss my dear boy for me. He must be growing vastly. How I long to see him and you! Although I cannot now say when I can come, rely on it, it shall be as soon as I can do so consistent with duty. Perhaps the government may disapprove of my manlike tendency and may recall me. Never mind I did write. The *Wyoming* has made a sensation here. Our

country never stood better, was never more accepted by Japanese as well as foreigners. The impression she has made will never be effaced from Japan. It will always be legible to the government and people. And the short and decisive actions in which she was engaged will save trouble, the effusion of blood, property and life. But I think President and people will approve. There is no difference of opinion here. Everyone believes it was done at the right time and effectually.

Adieu for a few days when I trust you will receive a more acceptable letter from your loving husband.

Robert



No. 3 of August 63—I think it should be No. 4

Kanagawa, August 12 1863

I have reason to believe, my beloved, that this letter will reach the mail steamer at Shanghae which will carry to you my letter of last week. If so you will most probably have it in two months, which will be a quick passage via Marseilles. Nothing has occurred this week to disturb us and we hope to be spared any new sensation till we hear of the doings of the British fleet. It is supposed by many that a treaty will be made with Satsuma. If so it will go far to ending Japan's nationality and disintegrate the empire into petty principalities. Certain it is that no officer of the Tycoon can enforce his orders in the dominions of the great Daimio but the situation of things here in that respect has its parallel in the former condition of the highlands of Scotland and in portions of Ireland. We will learn however the assertion of the government that the hostility of the Daimios is what embarrasses them is untrue. The officers of the government do not hesitate to be guilty of falsehood and we know not what is true or false till we have tested it by such means as we can command. A Prussian steamship of war has arrived with the minister to China on board to exchange ratifications of the treaty with this country. The arrival is opportune and will aid in bringing things to a head. You will see, my darling, I can no more leave my post now without dishonor than could a military officer in the midst of a battle. But bear up courageously, our absence shall not be unnecessarily prolonged even for a day.

On Saturday we are to have a grand affair at the French Minister's on the fete day of the Emperor. I dine there and it is said he is to have some theatricals, but I doubt it. I said we had no sensations. I forgot the Japanese pilot that took down the French ships of war to Simonoseki was murdered a few days ago near the spot where Richardson was murdered. It is said he had been foolishly talking about it and some of the followers of the Prince of Nagato overheard him. This port still continues busily and there are many

frequent arrivals and departures of French. We have now Bishop Boone and family from Shanghai and young Mr. Vail, son of Cashier of Bank of Commerce New York, is here again. The cholera still rages at Shanghai. See how uneasy you would be if I were located there. I dread Japanese swords much less than that Asiatic scourge.

I have this moment received six suits from Hong Kong, best white linen, pants, Marseilles vests and linen or grass cloth jackets. Price \$39. This will show how unnecessary to send clothing. I think I told you I paid \$16 for the cloth dress coat. I had ordered some for Ber and for self but the reply was that my pattern was lost. On the arrival of the articles I found it was just the reverse. But he is well supplied now and will keep the tailor busy. In this eastern world a jacket of white is full dress. At Batavia, where more ceremony is observed, the guests go in full dress and the host furnishes the jacket. At Shanghai they are taken along. Here the same course is pursued at the diplomatic dinners: white jackets, pants and choker and no vests are allowed to be worn.

August 14

I was engaged yesterday in preparing several dispatches. It appears to me each time I write as if Japan were exhausted and yet I have the material for two dispatches still on hand which I shall be compelled to keep for the next mail. I find Ber this morning laboring under an attack of ophthalmia, which is quite prevalent. It generally lasts two or three days only and is treated simply with cold or tepid water. Mrs. Fisher used salt and water. But Dr. Hepburn, whom I have just seen, says the water will do as well minus the salt. He and Mrs. H[epburn] have had it. Mrs. Hepburn has her face swollen now with the lacquer poison. Anyone who touches new lacquer will be poisoned. I suppose Ber will be an impatient patient. He is asleep yet, and so, for the time, is well off.

I must again caution you about people coming from Japan. I have written you that a man said to be an escaped convict from Australia who was compelled to leave here is lecturing in San Francisco. I write again because I have supposed it possible some such scamp might try to impose on you.

I have written you that the New Year cakes were good. The taste like spirit turpentine has disappeared and the cake also very nearly. I have made up my mind that the butter was a little rancid and that occasioned the peculiar taste.

I hope you have received the teas and sweets sent by Mr. Overbeck and that they have not been sacrificed by rebeldom.

I have been writing this letter on a new table oiled and I see this half sheet is soiled. The other one was ruined. So you will have an ill looking letter such as I do not like to see. It is somewhat difficult writing as I do, liable to constant interruption now from a visitor and then a merchant with his wares. Just as I have succeeded by chance in capturing a strong idea it is released by some interloper and I never succeed in reaching the game I was prepared to bag and so you are deprived of the best portion perhaps of your repast. The papers of May are just in, having been more a month on the way from Shanghai, a

British war steamer which stopped at Nagasaki having had the custody of them. Fortunately the letters were not detained. We are now expecting another mail on Sunday and with other anxieties that of Vicksburg looms up. We hear that the *Wachusett* of 9 guns has arrived at Hong Kong and hope the report is true, as the *Wyoming* is ordered home. We will always find it necessary to have ships of war here. A struggle will some time come, probably deferred for some years, but no eastern country has been opened without a war and Japan will not prove an exception.

I see in the papers just received the announcement of the death of J. B. Wilson, Mrs. R. Van Rensselaer, Mr. Meads and Mrs. Brant; a fearful record for a few days. I see also Cashier K[endrck]'s return announced. What does that mean? And how does he look. I think K[endrck] was naturally a fair man and really more served against than servicing. His perfidy to Uncle J[acob] H. is without a parallel however and is abominable. I suppose he is needed as a witness. I suppose years of litigation will be the inheritance of some of the stockholders. I fortunately was neither poor nor rich enough to own stock there. My sale years ago was, after all, more fortunate than I have been inclined to regard it. I sold with the intention of replacing at a lower price, which I could not do. Otherwise I should have been disposed to hold as some of it was the first property I ever held as an investment.

I see Mr. Corning is to retire. Who can manage his business? He will find it impossible to keep up the reputation of his house. You cannot expect to find sons so sagacious and able a man as he has proved. Now we will see whether he can give up business. I take it for granted however he will keep acting engaged in the Central Railroad. If he do not he will surely break down.

I should advise that you keep any surplus funds you have so subject to order that should the war soon stop and prices go down you may be ready to buy Central Railroad stock when it again goes down to old prices as it is bound to do. I am glad to see the state has purchased the land back of the Capitol. Had they done it when I proposed they would have saved money. But it is well now.

I wish you would send any articles you see about the *Wyoming* affair. You need not cut up the papers as you do, the postage could probably be no more if all the paper was sent and you will be saved considerable trouble. I am not sure I shall be able to write much more today as I am soon to have Portman with his documents and I cannot say that I will have much spare time before the closing of the mail at 4 p.m. But such as it is I will give you all I can possibly write, though I feel that my letters are but a poor return of what I receive from you. We have very uncomfortable weather now, only made tolerable by cool evenings and nights.

I suppose if the government should disapprove of what has been done and recall me, you could submit with a good grace. I do not fear any such result however especially if well acquainted with the case.

No. 3 of August 1863, Sheet 2 August 14

I regret now I did not give you some description of the uses to which the articles I have sent are applied. It is too late to do so now. Give some standing room to them, keeping them from the furnace or stove heat and I hope to be permitted to give many lectures on them. Those ivory carvings etc. are all expensive, ranging from 2½ *itzabus* up to a price it will be best not to name. Every *itzabu* here could yield a dollar sent home so you can guess. I had one offered yesterday to me at 24 *itzabus* and purchased quite a large number so I expect you will have in all before I get home at least 200. I suppose now you must have half this number. I have about 100 on hand. I bought a perfect gem yesterday and I sent you a perfect beauty, either by George Fisher or Mr. Egerton. It was a boy seated, inlaid cap on his head and a little deer at his side, tortoise shell tuft or tassel on top of cap. If it arrives, hold on to that by all means.

You may say to Mrs. Paige she shall have a ticket for my first reception. I have the most beautiful cabinet in Japan all boxed and packed but I wish to be home when that is opened and I can't say when I will send that. But you will receive by *Benefactor* another consignment this fall. The vessel is expected here daily. To guard against loss I must divide up my shipments, as no insurance money can replace them. Many are unique and duplicates cannot be found in Japan. The cabinet I have was on sale here many months at \$1,000. I did not suffer myself to be extravagant as that. It is larger than our sideboard and as beautiful as that small one you admired so much. It will make a sensation if it arrives safely. My *itzabus* come so cheaply it is a great temptation to bring these beautiful articles, which you will appreciate as you get more familiar with the work. I expect to send by *Wyoming*, when she leaves, some silk etc. I have asked Captain McDougal to go to Albany and he says he will. He is a pleasant, companionable, and good officer. Should he visit Albany I hope Charlie will show him some attention and get some of my friends to do the same. He should be promoted. The *Wyoming* has done wonders with 6 guns against more than 30. I think I have informed you, she destroyed the steamer bark and brig. I wish Charlie would ask Davison to advocate it in the *Journal* or through some New York paper.

We will be disappointed in ships for California, as one here abandoned the idea, and the other sails direct for Simoda without coming here. But I understand still another is expected here at the end of the month.

I expect to order for you direct from Manila some of the celebrated *pina* goods, made from the pineapple: cuffs, collars, skirts etc. I will pay the bill, all except freight and duties. I understand the goods are slightly yellow but whiten when bleached. As I shall have to trust the selection to Mr. Green of the House of Russell Sturgis & Co. and give him directions by letter, you may possibly not like the articles as well as if selected by me. As Mrs. Governor Weller²⁹⁵ said to me in Washington, she wished me to send her silks etc., etc., and that she would be the best dressed woman in the New York. You see I wish you

²⁹⁵ John B. Weller (February 22 1812 – August 17 1875) was the fifth governor of California from January 8 1858 to January 9 1860. His wife was Elizabeth “Lizzie” Brockelbank Stanton.

to be just as careful of yourself as if I were home to admire. I will send enough for Sue. And as Abby is getting dressy I suppose she will not forgive me if you can spare none for her. So I will send a liberal order, and you may spare a very little of it. Keep enough for years' use. Some dresses will be sent whose name I now forget. I am advised by Mr. Mugford, the agent of Augustine Heard & Co. who formerly resided there, what to order. There are drapes as high as \$1,500, which I do not order. Handkerchiefs \$100 to \$200. I shall be moderate. Only spend in all about \$300. Now don't be foolishly absurd and part with too much of the invoice. You will never need more. I am told they wear forever. My object in sending is two-fold: to show you I remember you, and to serve to keep you from forgetting. You will see therefore how proper and even necessary the order was. I expect to send by the *Wyoming* some of the thin gauze silk drapes you wished. They have fine gauzes in China of which I shall send you a few dresses.

Mr. Portman has at length come and I must stop for a few minutes while I get my public papers ready for the mail. I wish you could read these documents as you would then have some little better idea of what is in progress.²⁹⁶

Since writing this I have had a very pleasant letter from the Gorogio (which means five [*sic*] wise men) in reply to my letter informing them that the President had directed presents to be sent for the officers who had acted so handsomely to the officers and crew of the wrecked ship *Chevalier*. Everything goes on smoothly to all appearance. Will the cloud gather and burst? The sky is clear and we will hope no storm will come. It is difficult to believe that a people so exceptionally polite can be so excessively and monstrously cruel.

I am now longing for the arrival of the mail. When I have the letters from home I expect to be able to sit down at once and give you good measure in return.

I am sorry I am unable to write no more to you and that I cannot write to Sue and Charlie. I hope the letters sent by the way of California will procure a pardon for the failure to write to many.

When I sat down I expected to be able to fill several sheets but have been frequently interrupted and I could not avoid glancing at home papers.

My precious boy, I hope, still continues your greatest comfort and takes good care of you and Sue. For him and her I send love and kisses and for yourself darling an avalanche of all of them, but not cold—let them be melted ones.

With the usual messages to those who kindly remember me etc. My undying love for you, my dear wife and dear child,
Robert H. Pruyn

I have not heard anything more about ships. The letter received today leads me to think that will come next in order. I will try to write definitely to Charlie next mail.

²⁹⁶ Dispatch at <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1863p2/d408>.

Sheet 3

I have received Charlie's statement of account. The balance on hand I wish applied to the advances made by you and Sue, those being sufficient for that. Receipts subsequent to the date to which it is closed to be used by firm and invested as before directed, subject of course to such modifications as circumstances may require. It is impossible at this distance and with such changing conditions to do more than indicate a wish or preference. I hope the debt to the New York Life and Mortgage Company will be discharged.

But let business go, you will doubtless see that all is rightly done.

A box of tea was sent in the *Benefactor*. I hope the enquiries you instituted met with success. I sent half a dozen boxes at a later period to Shanghae from which place it has gone or will go care of Messrs. A. A. Low & Co. I hope it will escape the rebels and that Mr. Verbeck's tea and preserves have been preserved.

I enclose a small bill in London from which you need not make any present. Use it for a New Year's present for yourself, Charlie (my precious boy), and Sue. My letter by next mail will suffice to send wishes for a Happy New Year which I also send now. Would I were there to say in person all I feel even now crowding in my mind. We are strange creatures of circumstance. I could not have believed I could have existed so long away from home. If you wish to know how I feel at times, order Sir R[utherford] Alcock's *City of the Tycoon* and read it, only don't get frightened by seeing how the fear of assassination constantly stalked before him.

If you or anyone think my stay in Japan contributes to my pleasure, or comfort, you are far from the truth. The feeling of isolation, especially in Yedo, is at times dreadful. But you know I am not given to constant despondency, although subject to occasional fits of the blues, pure indigo too. Try it once. It would suffice to send some persons I know to this lunatic asylum in six months. Oh what a home body I will be, a broom stick will be needed to drive me out.

But it is within a few minutes of the time of the closing of the mail. Mr. P[ortman] is copying two dispatches for me and unless he is soon here it will be too late. Here he is. I have finished my dispatches which Portman is sealing and meanwhile I close with messages of love, overflowing, longing, but yet hopeful love. Oh my darling wife and child, how I long to see you. May the happy time come swiftly. Love and kisses for dear precious Charlie, for dear Sue and your precious self, my one dear wife.

Robt. H. Pruyn

Vicksburg taken that is the news, and also that [Confederate General Robert E.] Lee is hard up at xxx.

Love to all, Charlie, Abby etc., etc.



No. 5 August Kanagawa, August 20 1863

I have delayed commencing another letter, my beloved wife, as we are daily expecting the mail which has been due some days and as no mail will be dispatched homeward till September 3 from Shanghai, to guard against any interruption I have concluded to lay at least the foundation for small package.

And first as to the political condition I can only say no change has taken place and probably will not until we shall hear the result of the British Expedition which will probably be within ten days. The Japanese government promise well as to the Prince of Nagato but as usual say it will take a long time. They are like a man desperately involved who only wishes to gain time and hopes he may find something turn up which will better his condition. This is invariably their first thought instead of addressing themselves seriously to make the best adjustment practicable. The only thought and desire is: give us time, a year, six months, a month, a week. It was so in the case of the British indemnity and when finally they consented to pay, the British Minister refused to receive it as demanded and agreed on, in installments, and insisted on payment of all at once, which was finally done.

Yokohama is fairly garrisoned by foreign troops. The U.S. has only as yet landed a guard of six men each night at the consulate to take care of any poor drunken sailors who may be ashore on leave. I think we are reasonably serene, though attacks may be made, but if made I think they will be only on stray individuals. With all their apparent ferocity and contempt of death, I do not think the Japanese as a race brave. Their courage is only shown in night attacks or cutting down a man behind his back.

You may probably hear of an attack on one of the French guards. As first reported it was an attack by 4 *yakunins* with swords. The guard was nearly dead. This was serious as the Japanese might have been some of the officers whom we asked in as exterior guards. Divested of exaggeration, the *yakunins* degenerated into common coolies. The French guard puffed up into a drunken one who had roughly reprimanded in unintelligible French the coolies who were looking into a window of a foreign resident, one of whom, after some words, had returned and cut the sentinel slightly with a knife, and though I cannot get all the facts as yet, I know they are far from serious as the French Minister who says he is not quite sure about it, would then certainly not be so much in the dark and it is understood the sentinel is to be punished. I only allude to this for fear you may see exaggerated accounts in some paper.

[August] 22

The mail or part of it has arrived bringing papers as late as June 13 and letters to same date. None of these are for me. I only received my *Galignani* to June 17 and my London papers to June 27. No letters or papers from home. I suppose mine will arrive by some other vessel, having been detained somewhere and somehow I cannot imagine wherefore

we are still in suspense about Vicksburg and our English friends say Lee and his army are in Pennsylvania. I hope this is true if it will only unite the ninth. It is difficult at this distance to comprehend that any can be so blind and so dead to every sentiment of honor and patriotism as to weaken the government at this time of extreme peril by suffering party feelings to control their language and acts. Do our people deserve a country? And especially so magnificent a one as we have. The body politic appears almost utterly corrupt.

We have had for four days high winds almost indicating the approach of a typhoon. The opinion now is that we have been on the edge of one. You can imagine what one is when you read of its doings last year at Canton.

The *Wyoming*, which was ordered home, is now ordered to remain on this station but to cruise near the Straits of Simoda for a while to look for the *Alabama*, *Virginia* etc., etc. When this is done she will probably return here if further orders do not present. The *Jamestown* is only of service as a guard ship. Sailing ships are almost useless here where the winds blow steadily in one direction at certain seasons. She is the only ship of war in these seas without steam power. So you see our country is not the country of progress here, so far as our navy indicates it. Ber has entirely recovered from his attack of ophthalmia and shows very little trace of it. I have thus far escaped and the season has approached when it disappears. It has been very prevalent as many as fifty having been attacked on one ship. But it appears to come in a mild form and easily managed.

The attack on the French guard, after having assumed all kinds of mitigated shapes, has finally dwindled into a scuffle between two Frenchmen, one of whom slightly wounded the other. It was probably regarded as more creditable to the guard, both in a moral point of view and also to uphold his courage.

I have just had an interview with two Governors of Foreign Affairs from Yedo and have urged an additional payment. I should now advise that the ships be hurried on as fast as possible especially if under contract. If contracts are not made they had better be made unless the prices shall be found unreasonably high, or there shall be a prospect of a speedy fall in the price of labor and materials. The ships will unquestionably be promptly received and paid for. I shall try and write to Charlie this mail. When he sends me a statement of the contracts he had better send a list of his drafts on Messrs. B[arings] B[rothers] & Co., so that I may see how much he has realized and what proportion is for premium. I write this for fear I may be prevented from writing to him more at length.

No objection is made to my return to Yedo and I am now only waiting for my bed, bedding, etc., which I have ordered from Shanghae. How it will be when these articles arrive I cannot say. Objections may then be stated. It is difficult to judge of these things in advance. Japan is a chameleon and its lines change even as you look.

Mrs. Rodgers tells me that her husband wrote to her while in New York, she must disbelieve everything till she heard it from him, that if she heard he was dead she must not believe that till he wrote. If such exceeding caution was judged needful in China how much more needful in Japan where we discredit everything ourselves. The publications I

often see in European papers and in our own are often so ridiculously foolish as to be painful.²⁹⁷

I suppose, however, you are often anxious, but I do not see how I can help it so long as we are here, so we will try and get away as soon as it can be done honorably. Think how much better you feel even now than if I were in the army, and take courage.

I suppose you have seen charges that the Americans are supplying the Japanese with arms etc. The British merchants as well as our own and those of Holland have until recently sold all they could. But more has been done by the British than by others. The guns which were fired and proved most destructive at Simonoseki were British guns, and the *Lancefield* and *Lanrick* from which they were fired were British built ships and sold by British merchants, who are just as ready now as ever to supply arms, if they could find purchasers. All the muskets and rifles which have been imported, or nearly all, have come in British ships and there is one British ship carrying 10 guns now here for sale. But the British Minister informs me that the government has, on his applications, issued orders prohibiting the export of arms from Hong Kong and Singapore. These are two free ports and therefore are *entrepots* for such and other articles sent East for a market and there they wait for the best market. But it is not to be expected that the U.S. will have justice done as long as it suits better to falsify the record. The British Minister has had a correspondence with me (and was beaten) on this subject.

[Sheet] 2 August 25 1863

I had the pleasure and happiness to receive last evening your letters of April 22 and of June 8. I am pleased to hear Emma Pruyn is married but regret she is to leave Albany. It is difficult to do justice to persons who act with apparent folly at such times, and did we know everything, we might perhaps alter our verdict. But it appears to me some have presumed a course which they would regret before now, even should Emma be taken from them, and which they will doubtless chance if she is preserved to them. You did right to go to the ceremony and I regret you did not send a handsome present, that is if you did not. In that letter you say you had gone for certain information from Charlie which you communicate. Don't give yourself any more trouble in this direction, as I see my letters are not understood. Just what I do know was sent and all that I did not know was left precisely as it was. It matters not, my darling, so let it rest.

It is very singular that Dr. R[ogers] has not visited you. He must have some course which he thinks justifies sit. If he is satisfied with himself it is all right. I have not heard from him, though I wrote him as good a letter as I could after he had left us (which by the way I sent through you) and when I heard of Theodore's death. I shall be very much pleased to receive the promised sermon from Dr. Clark.

²⁹⁷ In B4 F9 of the RHP Papers some of the last items are newspaper clippings that RHP has written "Bogus" on. They report of attacks in Ōsaka.

In that same letter you say you cannot see that my staying here is justified by any reasons you regard as conclusive. The truth is, my darling, that changes occur here so rapidly that by the time my letter reaches you, arguments, conclusive to my mind when written, have been greatly modified. The whole question to my mind is simply this: shall I shirk from duty? Shall I leave here as soon as difficulties arise? Subordinate to questions such as these which admit of much variation of form are others personal to myself. Shall I place myself in a situation where I shall be subject to the stigma of having been unequal to my position? I wish now that our relations shall assume some satisfactory position, if peace prevail, so that my successor may find things to all appearances at least, as satisfactory and peaceful as when I arrived. If war come it will probably be short and decisive. I repeat I shall be ready as soon as I can find it right to ask to be relieved.

The ships I can make of secondary importance. If they are commenced they must be finished. If not I presume it may be as well to wait till a larger payment is made. To this I have received no reply as yet, which makes me think the government knows that trouble is sure to come. I shall stir them up in a few days on this subject. Should things continue as they are I can leave in a year. I think I can say you may rely on that if God spare my life I shall be able to leave in the fall of 1864. If it is possible I shall leave before that, and certainly so if leave of absence be granted me. It will not do to leave here in any other season if it can be avoided.

I was sorry to hear of your cold which had affected your eyes. That is something new for you. You must be more prudent. But it is best if you err at all to err in that aspect. Go out often. I believe greatly in fresh air and exercise and plenty of it.

I have already consented to the sale of the Works and now repeat that if good price be obtainable I should not only be willing but should prefer to sell. I shall then be able to devote all my time to home matters. Still, I should not advise any sacrifice. I see no necessity for that as we can, by patient waiting, effect a good sale or we may form a company or put in capital as special partners. I repeat this as possibly my other letter may not reach you.

I was delighted to hear Mr. Brooks had visited you, as you will now understand more clearly the chances of getting letters to me that way. The experience you have had as to the boxes proves it is not very reliable. You had better send no more clothes. They can be obtained here. But if any box is sent put two or three good neck ties in, a few boxes of the best Maine sweet corn—a kit of good mackerel would not be unacceptable. But if you send no box at all it will be better, as I believe some parties have sent a liberal order for the articles named with a list of which I furnished them.

You will now also be better able to decide about leaving that money in his hands. Do as you think proper. I cannot tell at this distance.

Mr. Brooks is certainly very much of a gentleman, very pleasant, cordial and obliging, and he bears the reputation here and at San Francisco of being a good business man and quite responsible. I regret he was not able to make a longer stay at Albany.

I have no doubt North Pearl Street will soon be a business street and the next move will be to alter dwellings into stores on the west side which can be easily done as the basements will be sufficiently high. So we will go before we are driven out and if you get so attached to the hill I shall be prepared for a flight there. You may make a purchase if an opportunity appear which will please you.

I rather think Charlie is safe in your care more so than he would be in mine, only do not pet him too much.

You have not yet told me about the Church debt. I suppose it is paid down to \$5,000. I wish you would say to Uncle Jacob H. that all should be paid before the war stops. It will be easier to get the money now. If you are willing to do so and think it right, offer for us \$500 on condition that the balance is at once subscribed and paid. I may enclose a letter which you can keep or give to Uncle J[acob] H. as you think proper. I feel very anxious to have that debt paid not only for our credit but safety. The Church will be so much stronger, and we may expect financial troubles at the end of the war.

I have just learned the mail will close tomorrow and I may be unable to write this letter as I have dispatches to prepare but will enclose it, if possible. I wish first to write a letter to my precious boy. I find it difficult to sit down and write when so many days may elapse before a steamer leaves and yet, when the time is fixed, very often only a few hours intervene before the mail closes. It has stormed grandly for several days. My morning baths have been interrupted and I do not rise early and so have lost much valuable time for writing. The mosquitos still are too troublesome to make it pleasant to write in the evening and no one hour of the day is my own. I have Mr. Brown now at my elbow, but as he has taken up a paper, I take up my pen regardless of his presence.

It is a sad thought that so much time will elapse before you can read these lines, but every time I write I feel pleasure at the thought that when received so many days will have vanished from the period of our separation. It was well that neither of us ever thought it would be so prolonged. The turning point has been reached and passed and I can now venture to begin to number the weeks ahead. Each day is regarded not as one left but as one taken as if from an intervening obstacle. As rapidly as they pass looking back to them they drag wearily along.

I hope your teas and Chinese sweetmeats presented by Mr. Overbeck will arrive safely as also the boxes I sent by Mr. Egerton.

General Burgeoine, you have probably noticed, has joined the rebels. He was badly treated by the Chinese government and his course, if not actually justified, is not severely blamed by the newspapers at Shanghae, our own countrymen, and by many British naval officers with whom I have conversed.

The notice of Strong's death had escaped me, though I remember you had written he was quite sick. There is a fearful sacrifice of the young on both sides. Mr. Brown's son, who left Rutgers College, is with the 25th Connecticut Regiment and with General

Banks.²⁹⁸ I suppose Francis and Augustus²⁹⁹ are on the Potomac or rather perhaps chasing Lee in Pennsylvania. I wish Lee could pounce only on the Copperheads there. I suppose some will be better Union men when he leaves than he found them.

The British fleet has returned from Satsuma and I will give you an account of the terrible punishment the admiral has inflicted. This you may have copied and given to Davison for publication if it has not already been published in our papers. It will be sent in various forms and some perhaps a little wide of the truth. The *Wyoming* will probably leave here tomorrow and will be about a long time, perhaps not return at all. This will depend on further orders but as the cruise on which she is bound will carry her over 3,000 miles off we cannot expect a speedy return. I regret her departure but orders must be obeyed and we can probably better spare her now than 6 months hence.

[Sheet] 3 August 26

The British fleet left here as I have already informed you on the 6th instant, in all 6 steam ships besides the *Euryalus*, flag ship under command of Vice Admiral Kuper, leaving seven vessels for the defense of this place, at which we also had the *Wyoming* and *Jamestown* and three French and one Dutch ship.³⁰⁰

On the 11th the fleet reached Kagosima Bay.³⁰¹ Look at the map of Japan and you will see a bay 40 miles deep. On this is situated Satsuma's capital city Kagosima. The fleet entered the bay in the afternoon and at nightfall sought an anchorage which was found with difficulty in the dark in consequence of the great depth of water. Fifty, sixty fathoms were sounded and no bottom found. Finally by accident a bank was found with 15 fathoms where the ships came to anchor. Early the next morning two officers came on board with the usual questions: Who are you? Where are you from? Why did you come? How many guns have you? Catching sight of a Japanese pilot they asked him why he had brought foreign ships there? He said he had not, he had never been there himself and did not know the bay, that he had engaged to take the ships to Nagasaki and that when opposite the bay they had turned in, that he had told them they were going to wrong way. But the admiral had said *eemashe* (all right or well) and had gone on. Colonel Neale directed the pilot to go away and the officers then left. The ships then left their anchorage and steamed up the bay anchoring before the city immediately under the batteries.

Other officers came off and asked for letters for Satsuma. They were asked if a Japanese steamer had arrived. The reply was why should one come? To show you the way.

²⁹⁸ Nathaniel P. Banks (1816-1894) was a politician from Massachusetts and a Union general.

²⁹⁹ Francis ("Frank") and Augustus ("Gus") were RHP's brothers. They both served in the Union Army during the U.S. Civil War.

³⁰⁰ What follows in this letter is a description of the Bombardment of Kagoshima, also known as the Anglo-Satsuma War (*Satsu-Ei senso* 薩英戦争), a battle fought between Britain and the Satsuma Domain in Kagoshima from 15 to 17 August 1863.

³⁰¹ See dispatch at <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1864p3/d451>

Mr. Eusden,³⁰² the interpreter, said ships of war do not require to be shown the way. But the Tycoon's government promised to send a steamer to inform you why we had come. The officers then whispered together and said "that Beast at Yedo has deceived us." They then received Colonel Neale's letter and promised an answer next day. They said [the Daimyō of] Satsuma was at his castle 50 miles off. Shortly after, officers again came off and said the *Karo*³⁰³ or Secretary of Satsuma would see Colonel Neale and invited him on shore to an interview, that Colonel Neale could bring as large a suite as he chose and might also bring an escort. Mr. Eusden said that Colonel Neale would not go ashore. That it was not customary for high officers to visit an inferior thus, that the admiral and Minister would see the *Karo* on board the flag ship. The officers then left to deliver the message and shortly after returned, receiving the invitation to go ashore, saying they had a building for business with foreigners, that the Dutch had landed, the building was not far from the water, and with great anxiety waging various other arguments. Colonel Neale says it was evident treachery was meditated. They were finally told that Colonel Neale did not ask an interview with anyone but wished his letter answered, that if an interview was held it must be on ship board, that the British were accustomed to see Japanese but the people on shore were not accustomed to foreigners. Besides, they had come many hundreds of miles to this port and that for that reason alone it was proper the high officer should come on board.

In the afternoon an officer represented as being next in rank to the *Karo* came along side, wished to know if Colonel Neale would see him (the preceding communications had been with Mr. Eusden). He being answered in the affirmative he wished to know if all his attendants (about 50 in number) might come aboard. After a little hesitation this was allowed and as each official came on deck he was gently taken by the dress and placed along the side of the ship, and opposite to them the marines drawn up under arms. When the officer reached the cabin he was for some reason speechless. Finally one of his attendants said he could act as spokesman, but at that time an officer came in and whispered. The chief went out and finally returned and said he had brought a letter aboard but a boat has just come with a flag, that there was some mistake in the letter and he must go ashore again, which he did.

The ships were immediately got under way and placed at an anchorage some, but not entirely, out of the range of the batteries. At 8 o'clock the officer returned and this time handed in a letter in Japanese. He was asked to state its contents as Colonel Neal might then give him a message in reply which would be of service. He stated he was ignorant of

³⁰² Richard Eusden (1825-1904) played a number of different roles in pre-Meiji and Meiji Japan. He worked in the British Legation starting in 1860, fulfilling consular duties. Later he went to Hakodate, after which he moved back to Edo and served as interpreter for the British from 1861-1867.

³⁰³ 家老

its contents. His business was to deliver the letter and he could hold no conversations. He then left.

The letter was that murderers were bad and murderers should be punished, that sometimes they escaped and Daimios protected them. But in this case of Richardson's murder it was not certain that [the Daimyō of] Satsuma was in fault, that it was the law and custom of Japan (and was it not of England also) that the people were obliged to get out of the way of high Daimios and if they did not they could be beaten off, that this was the fault of the Tycoon, that he should have put this in the treaties, and as to the indemnity, [the Daimyō of] Satsuma would appoint a commissioner and the Tycoon another, that they would meet and investigate the affair and Colonel Neale could then see who was to blame, the Tycoon or [the Daimyō of] Satsuma.

You will remember I have already informed you this British demand was for £25,000 indemnity, and the trial and punishment, execution of the murderer in the presence of British officers.

Colonel Neale, considering this letter evasive and in other respects also unsatisfactory, placed the affair in the hands of the admiral.

It had been ascertained that 4 steamers of Satsuma were at some place in the bay and it was conjectured they were at the upper end of it. Some officers were therefore sent out in a small boat to ascertain their locations, which they were successful in doing. The next morning at 4 a.m., three of the British fleet proceeded to the place where they were moored and took possession of them and brought them to the British anchorage, it being Colonel Neal's intention to hold them as a pledge and proceed with negotiations.

At 12 o'clock the crews were piped to dinner and almost immediately thereafter the batteries, mounting in all 31 guns, opened fire. Just before a furious storm had arisen, a regular typhoon, blowing in shore. This probably precipitated affairs as doubtless the Japanese thought the fleet would be still and be destroyed at their anchorage, or if they got under weigh would be blown as here. The Admiral was prevented from bringing broadsides to bear in consequence of the great depth of water which prevented the use of springs to the anchors and the ships lay steam on until the anchors could be raised, nearly half an hour. Then the ships passed on, the *Euryalus* leading, and steamed by the batteries delivering broadsides one gun after the other. Then returning to their anchorage they fired from the other side. The *Racehorse* got aground but was with difficulty pulled off by the *Argus*. The admiral I should have said hoisted the signal "burn prizes" as soon as the firing commenced and now when the fleet reached its anchorage a dreadful sight was seen. A fearful storm was raging. The town (of 180,000 inhabitants) had been fired by the shell and rockets sent into it and the wind spread the flames fearfully. Even the green trees on hill sides were in flames. Colonel Neale says by night three and a half miles of flame made the air thick with rain and heavy and low clouds, lurid. The three steamers were burning, also five large Lewchew junks which had been fired, as also were the large factories of Satsuma, furnaces, machine shops and one mile of buildings. The ships and junks drifted

from their anchorage. And fire and storm and rain and wind combined to make an appalling spectacle.

Captain Joslin³⁰⁴ of the *Euryalus* and Commander Wilmot³⁰⁵ standing side by side were at once killed, a shot took off the forehead of the former and the back of the head of the latter, and in all 56 were killed and wounded.

The fleet left the next day after firing into the castle of Satsuma, which Colonel Neale thinks was also fired, as a large number of shells were seen to fall into it and smoke and flames were visible as they steamed out of the bay.

The probability now is that everything will remain as it is, unless other outrages are committed, until more ships and perhaps a small land force is sent out. To do more against [the Daimyō of] Satsuma now would appear vindictive and we are now promised a peaceful solution of the Nagato affair. It is very possible therefore that we may have unexampled quiet for a long time, though I fear they have an exaggerated idea of their strength. A merchant was talking today with Ber and he appeared to think that [the Daimyō of] Satsuma alone could whip the British and said wait till you fight with the Tycoon, and then you will see how little you will be able to do.

It may be that this nation will, after all, not prove more wise than the other Eastern nations and may only be able to learn the alphabet of civilization at the cannons' mouth. Eleven inch shells are grim teachers but they can safely dispense with the bunch and perhaps they are mercies in disguise and do not, when they burst, open as a Pandora's box. I had hoped, and a year ago fully believed, we should escape bloodshed and here we are. Americans, Dutch, French and British have thrown shot and shell into the hitherto secluded and sacred soil of Japan.

We will hope and strive to avoid further lessons like those already forced on us.

The *Japan Herald* has just come in and I enclose its account of the affair with a map of the bay. The other maps would not be worth the postage.

I forgot to say that when the Japanese steamers were burnt, orders were given to put on shore officers and crew, some of whom had remained on board. But the captain and doctor of one of the vessels, one or both of whom had been to the U.S. and to Europe with the embassies, begged they might be permitted to remain, as if sent ashore they would be obliged to commit *hari kari* (which means the happy delivering and ripping themselves open) or else would certainly lose their heads.

I have been busy for four hours today with two governors who have been sent from Yedo to see me. The mail steamer leaves tomorrow afternoon. It is now 4 p.m. I shall get up early if possible and write some more tomorrow, being obliged to devote this evening to dispatches, which Mr. Portman will copy tomorrow.

Yesterday the British minister handed me a copy of one of Governor Seward's

³⁰⁴ RHP misspells the name. This is John James Steven Josling (1825-1863) of the Royal Navy.

³⁰⁵ Edward Wilmot (1828-1863) was second in command on the *Euryalus*.

dispatches to me which has not yet come to hand. It is a reply to a long one from me of February 16,³⁰⁶ which Governor Seward has sent copies of to all the Treaty Powers. But that dispatch is an infant compared with what I have since been obliged to send, and though containing important and stirring information, is now entirely eclipsed. I hope my directions to our dispatch agent at London will be complied with and I shall hereafter receive my mail without unnecessary delay occasioned by his directing my letters etc. to care of our Consul at Shanghai.

We have reason to rejoice in good health and pray that God may, in his infinite mercy, continue his great blessings to us and our precious ones at home.

The weather today is quite beautiful. The wind has died away and the typhoon has blown out, having done considerable damage and perhaps sent some hapless vessel to the bottom.

The Dutch Consul Governor (Dr. Graeff Van Polsbroek³⁰⁷ acting temporarily as Mr. DeWitt has gone to Java) gives a grand ball on the 4th of September. Here would be a grand chance for our ladies. They would command a very high premium at least for the evening. I believe they can muster a dozen dancing women in the place, girls and wives, so I shall most self denyingly stand aside and look grandly on. I believe he does not call it a ball, but I presume it is that in plain English.

August 27

The ladies will compare me with the gentlemen like four leaved clover in a large field of that succulent favorite of cattle. I trust ladies will not be offended by this fragrant companion even though it has the effect to reduce them from the pinnacle of ornamentation to the dull level of uselessness.

Should I be able to attend I shall give you a kaleidoscope view of it. One thing is quite certain, the grounds will be beautiful. The Japanese lanterns are always used properly and exceedingly beautiful. Did I write you about the *fete* of the French Minister? I have really forgotten. I think however I must and therefore will only say that the 15th was the Fete Napoleon. We had of course a grand diplomatic dinner accompanied by the music of one of the French bands. The grounds of the French Minister and some of the French officials and merchants were resplendent with light which fringed also fences and crept up the side and floated over roofs of buildings and over all in one of the hills surmounted by a guard house and flag staff recently erected by the French admiral. Their thorns and lanterns formed a radiant crown. Two gigantic letters, N.E.³⁰⁸ could be read for miles. But morning came, poetry melted into prose, prose the most miserable. The gay and myriad hued lanterns did not, it is true, sicken you with the smell of Japan vegetable wax, nor did they

³⁰⁶ See <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1863p2/d372>

³⁰⁷ Dirk de Graeff van Polsbroek (1833-1916) was appointed Consul General and Political Agent in July 1863.

³⁰⁸ N.E. stands for Napoleon III and Eugénie, his wife and empress.

offend the sight with oleaginous sides. All but a few dozen had been stolen. Scarcely enough remained for the faintest testimonial to Japan honesty.

The gigantic letters had disappeared from Japanese soil leaving not a trace. Shall our civilization, our arts, our literature, our religions fade away as rapidly and completely from the limits of its territory? No, beneath and behind and around those is a potent living influence which cannot be exhausted in a night, which shall not be extinguished with the dawn and is fed from a diviner source.

I rose this morning a few minutes after 5 o'clock and I went to my ocean bath. The sun rose full orbed and increased as it appeared to twice its usual size. As I left the waters two rainbows appeared in the west, one spanning the heavens and as rich in its hues and perfect in its form where it was set against the emerald hill side as where its crown beautified the heavens. The other was only partially unveiled. It was modestly rested far beneath its companion, did not venture to blend its hues with earth or sea and left you to wish that it had more generously vied with its more comely brother.

I was engaged nearly all morning with some governors from Yedo and am unexpectedly obliged to prepare for the mail ten hours in advance of the time forwarded yesterday morning. The *Wyoming* sails for Hong Kong at 9 and I am of course much hurried.

I think four closely written sheets like this will lessen in value as you wearily read on. I will not destroy any of them, though having the Antigone precedent of the Sybil's leaves. I fear no considerable value could be imparted even by such a time honored expedient, especially as not knowing what I have written I could only destroy with as little method as I have written.

I think I will be so prosaic as to lay the foundation of another vessel to be dispatched to you as soon as this feeble bark is launched on the wide waters. It will at all events go laden with precious memories and with loving thoughts and wishes. And then above all it will be received with loving hearts, read by beaming eyes (that is if this cold has spent its force) and cherished by loving hearts in my far off home, which, may God grant, may soon be in reality what it is now only in name.

I am now each moment expecting Mr. Portman with copies of my dispatches. So I must bring this to a close. I always then feel as if I wish to say much but as I attempt to fashion sentences the inclination disappears. Why should I blind myself to the inexorable distance which separates us and indulge in wishes which I know cannot be realized? I shall hope that the time may soon arrive when the lines of duty shall meet those of inclination. It would be difficult in a single letter to explain all the ventures which must influence me. One word only now. My treaty is not yet signed, though formed and signatures promised. Long and persistent labor may still be needed and then prove fruitless except of disappointment.

And now, my dear wife, time is exhausted and I must close, with the usual messages to my tired friends. To Charlie and Abby and family and all, I wish to be most

affectionately remembered. Also to Cornelia and Alida and Mary and families. Kiss Sue and my precious boy for me and receive for yourself my dear and loving wife the longings and the loving thoughts and prayers of your far off, but never forgetful, husband.
Robt. H. Pruyn



No. 1 September
Kanagawa, September 11 1863

This is the first mail, my beloved wife, which has left since the one which carried our letters of August 28th etc., etc., and though so long a time has elapsed the fruits which will reach you in the shape of correspondence will be scanty in number and of poor quality. I have been obliged to recline gracefully on my back or side for the week past, having had an attack of my old threatened disease of some severity. It is now disappearing though it will be some days before it bids its final adieu. As the mail closes this afternoon, I can no longer put off writing which I have thus far done, day by day, in the hope of making up in each morrow for past delinquency. With this exception my health continues good and indeed I feel unusually buoyant, and as to Ber I can only say he has the appetite of a practical agriculturist, or as it would have been expressed in ancient times of a ploughman, and I hope he has laid the foundation with the blessing of God of an excellent constitution.

On the first I visited Yedo having the day before received a letter from the Gorogio that my temporary quarters had been made ready. Having had a small American steamer placed at my disposal we had a merry picnic party. Mr. Fisher and Miss Mann went up because Dr. Hepburn thought it would be well to give the little Jennie a change of air and a little tossing on the water. Of this last they had more than was pleasant and even more than was needful medicinally. It was hoped, though they did not intend to go ashore, that they might have a good moonlight excursion in the small boats to the river, and perhaps a little up the river, thus penetrating the city by night and seeing it in its night dress or undress as the fashion might prove to be. But the wind was blowing steadily up the bay and the excursion was abandoned. Mr. Brown and family also went up. He went on shore for a few hours, but Mrs. B[rown] and children were fixtures on the steamer, that is, so far as the waves permitted anything to be fixed. It was such an excursion as you and Sue would have delighted in, making you acquainted with the lowest depths of fishing, stirring up all bitterness in your composition and graciously relieving you of it even to its dregs. If people will persist on having such nasty stuff in them is it surprising that so pure an element as water should rise up against it and say to the villainous compound of nastiness and bitterness come unto me, I will make you clean and sweet. What obligations then do

we owe to water, sweet, suffering water even though it be salt!

The other guests went on shore and a merry company they were, besides being exceedingly hungry and not behind hand in thirst. We slept that night 20 at the Legation and dined and breakfasted them and feasted them all the time except when asleep or in the saddle. If it is a matter of astonishment how much parts company with one when sea sick, is it not almost miraculous what capacity of storage we have. Our tonnage by measurement is small but there is an elasticity in the human stomach only equaled by that of the conscience.

I embraced this opportunity of taking up many who had not been to Yedo and a very few who had. Captain Price and Surgeon Vedder of the *Jamestown*, Captain [F.] Brine of the Royal Engineers and a very enthusiastic gentleman, Mr. Lewis, a relative of the late Sir G[orge] C[ornewall] Lewis, Secretary of War, who has been all over the world. Yedo was perfectly quiet and as pleasant as ever.

It is my purpose as soon as my furniture arrives from Shanghae to return to it and take up my residence there. This is of course subject to contingencies. It now appears perfectly safe to do so, but I shall be prudent. I remained there two days, leaving the second evening and returned in the steamer. Mr. Portman and some of the guests remained another night and returned the next day by the Tokaido (road).

We did not hear an unpleasant word, see a drunken man, hear a child cry or see a sign of angry feeling towards us or any one during our entire visit. Some of the *yakunins* said to Dr. Vedder of the *Jamestown*, pointing out the two Englishmen of the party to him, "American, Nipon good all the same, English no," at the same time emitting a most noisy and pretentious guttural sound.

I am now interrupted by the call to breakfast, after which the French Minister makes me a visit to arrange an unpleasant affair growing out of his account of a Frenchman claiming to be a naturalized citizen of the U.S. He and Mr. Fisher have had a long and sharp correspondence. I am taking it coolly and think I shall win. I shall write as much more as time and comfort will permit. And if obliged to send a scant quantity, will hold myself indebted for the deficiency which I hope to more than make up by next mail.

The latest letters which have reached me are of the 17th June via Marseilles, accompanied as usual with sundry parcels of earlier dates. We are in sad doubt as to home affairs. We have an unpleasant telegraphic report that Washington has fallen. We are patiently, yet anxiously waiting for letters etc., by a mail daily expected to confirm or remove the painful intelligence. Has such humiliation arrived? Perhaps it was needful. The party spirit of the North is a disgrace to the country and to human nature. Men might as well quarrel for a piece of rotten wood while the ship which bore them mid ocean was settling beneath their feet. At this distance all these selfish differences vanish as appearing insignificant. They are utterly forgotten. I have no patience to read a word of the subject. And yet men of intelligence, fortune and worth find their judgement and actions warped and biased by miserable politicians whom in their hearts they despise. Men whom they

will not recognize in social life are permitted simply because they are noisy and active to lead them. We fairly drive them into positions where they often wander and are astonished to find themselves. The only excuse they can give to their own consciences is it is so difficult, really impossible, to abandon one's party. If it were not too serious I would say they only desire to have a party, but are not worthy of a country.

I have amicably arranged the matter at issue between the French Minister acting as Consul General and our Consul, as M. de Bellecourt³⁰⁹ says he yields, as a proof of friendship, to me. Since that Captain Price, Mr. Brown and M. de Bellecourt have been in and between the drops I find opportunity to send a few lines more. You will have heard from Bertie the particulars of Mr. Mason's sickness and death. It was awfully sudden. I first heard of his sickness at noon and then he was in a state of stupor from which he was roused with difficulty. And yet he had been attacked only that morning. He died about 6 o'clock. I remained in the office taking charge of Mr. Fisher's business, there being a number better fitted to render efficient service to the sick.

Mr. Mason you will remember was our Elder. He was an excellent Christian, consistent and devoted. He died while a letter to his old Pastor at Ottawa Illinois was half finished. The last sentence he wrote was "Who shall limit the grace of God?" His death is a great loss to our Church. I cannot see at present how his place can be supplied. Dr. Hepburn as a missionary of the Presbyterian Church cannot consistently, as he thinks, identify himself with the movement. Although it is intended to be liberal in allowing the services periodically of clergymen of the other denominations, the organization must of course be denominational.

Mr. Mason was perfectly resigned, calmly gave messages to his absent sons and fairly slept life away. Mr. Brown preached an admirable funeral sermon last Sabbath which I should be pleased to see in print.

This reminds me that I was giving thanks for the excellent sermon of Dr. Clark which you copied and sent to me. It is very expressive, full of good sense and no whip syllabub. I hope much Jacob H's predictions will prove true, that our Church will be stronger for the change. I am also rejoiced to hear of the effort, expected to be successful, to discharge the debt. I am sure money can be collected more easily now that it can a year hence.

I am very much exercised about Bertie leaving. I do not of course wish to influence him to remain and yet while anxious he should have the benefit of returning overland, I cannot bring myself to think it will be safe for him to return that way alone. There are so many changes, at Shanghai, Hong Kong, Ceylon, Suez, Cairo, Alexandria etc., etc., and yet though I say so now I cannot bring myself to say "Return by way of California." It is now my purpose, if leave of absence is approved, to ask to be recalled so as to leave here a year hence, as the best time to leave is as late as November. Before that we have

³⁰⁹ Gustave Dushesne, Prince de Bellecourt (1817-1881). He served as the French representative in Japan under various titles 1859-1864.

typhoons, a bad change of climate is met in China, and as near as I can now learn there are similar objections all the way through. While later, say, November or December, southerly winds prevail, the heat of China is avoided, the Red Sea reached in more tolerable weather, and comfort and safety all the way through better consulted. I know, my darling, that is a long point to look forward to. As I had before remarked a considerable part of it will be far behind in the dim past before this reaches you. I still hope, most anxiously, for the permission I have asked for. If it does not come I do not see how I can arrange better than indicated. Every day is regarded by me now when it has passed as one taken from those piled up between us. It is neither comfortable or right to view time thus.

A steamer has just arrived 7 days from Shanghae. She has a part of the French mail on board but we are ignorant of the news as it was put on board privately for the sole use of the owners of the ship by a vessel which communicated with the mail steamer. The mail is expected to arrive this evening or night in the French corvette *Le Monge* so we must be in suspense some hours longer.

Dr. Simmons has returned from Shanghae. He may possibly return overland to the U.S. If so, a good opportunity will be afforded for Bertie as I would not fear to put him in his charge. He is disgusted with Shanghae, but is undecided as to his movement. His wife has gone to the U.S. and though he was in a fair way here to make a fortune, he became discontented and went to Shanghae and now he is back again. You see what trouble wives make.



Kanagawa, September 24 1863

I received yesterday my dear Jennie your letters of May 25, June 26 and July 3 and 10, the last two via Marseilles. It is quite evident that other letters are yet among the missing, some of which I should much like to see. Though several of those received contain allusions to one of the ships having been commenced, none has yet come to hand which gives any information as to builder or terms and only one incidentally speaks of it as a gunboat and I therefore infer it is the smaller of the two classes. Then again, as I have before written, you speak of a copy of your father's will having been sent and a letter from Dr. Clark, both of which are yet on their weary way or lost.

The New York papers to the 14th are here and though none arrived for me and what will come during this or even the next month will scarcely be up to xxx, there are many merchants here whose principals mail papers up to the day of the closing of the mail which connects with the P[er]insular & O[riental] line and I always have access to their papers now that I am an outcast from Yedo. We are therefore rejoicing over Lee's repulse at Gettysburg, (though the telegraphic news says he has recrossed the Potomac losing only

1,500 prisoners) and the capture of Vicksburg and Port Hudson. How much has up to this moment transpired, of which we are in profound ignorance! But we will hope and have strong, unboundless faith in the triumph of right. The next mail must bring us important news, sharing I hope cheering news of successes of the army of Rosencranz and further victories of Generals Meade & Banks. The Vroman of Ohio and Indiana should by this time have captured Morgan and his freebooters.

I have just learned that the French Admiral will dispatch a steamer to connect with the French line and though I must reserve for a few days the most of what I have to say for the British mail I thought it would be pleasant to slip in a few lines midway. We may hereafter expect, at least as long as the admirals are here, to have three mails each month, with a stray mail once in an age from San Francisco. Though it is only by an accident a letter can reach me that way short of 4 months.

I believe a letter to reach me by the French Mail must be marked for that line and it is not worth your while to do so unless you watch so as to connect with their line from Marseilles.

You will please say to Charlie that the bill which Russell & Co. sent to his order of the Central Bank March 25th last was not on account of ships but remittance for myself. When I received Russell & Co.'s account I found it was entered in special instead of private account, but that and the one for the same amount sent to you May 21st of the Agra Bank by same firm were intended by me to discharge the mortgages on my house and on the Works. I hope the one of Charlie's realized a good premium though I fear yours will arrive too late as I am happy to see gold is going down finally. The above remarks also apply to a small bill sent (of same bank) to Charlie May 21, £238 ¹⁸/₁₀₀.

With regard to tea, if Mr. Low will examine he will see a box was sent by the *Benefactor* from me and Mr. Smith sent him an invoice. So Mr. Baker who purchases the tea for him has this moment informed me 5 or 6 boxes I bought which are now on their way in the *Burgermeister Duckwitz* or some such name from Shanghae sent forward by Mr. Baker through Olyphant & Co. of Shanghae to Messrs. A. A. Low & Co. for me. Mr. Baker says Mr. Low will give you a package of his best Japanese tea in lieu of mine on the *Benefactor*. I suppose that will be necessary to make their accounts straight.

As soon as I can get my public papers complete I will notice in detail your letters, which I shall be able to do by first mail and the letters will probably reach you as early as this. I will try then to answer Dr. Vanderpoel's letter.

No change of great consequence has occurred in our relations with this government but I fear the hostile party has at length hit on the most effectual means of injuring trade and driving away foreigners. They are assassinating the large merchants engaged in the tea and silk trade, particularly the latter. Within a few days we have learned that at Yedo and Osacca this intimidation has been resorted to. Where it will end it is impossible to say. As my furniture has not arrived, I am not as yet called to decide about retiring to Yedo and I am extremely doubtful whether it will be prudent to do so. I do not distrust the

government. I only think it possible that an attack might be made on me for the purpose of embroiling the government with ours. You may rely upon my being prudent and doing nothing without due thought.

It is unnecessary for you to send any other articles to me, either clothing or food. If it be impossible for you to refrain, you may send by one of Mr. Low's vessels a good half barrel, or two kits will be better, of good mackerel. We get pretty fair butter from San Francisco.

I am delighted at the good news you give respecting the Church and I pray that it may continue to prosper in every interest. Dr. Vanderpoel, in his letter of June, says \$14,000 has been solicited for the debt. The balance should be obtained and Uncle J[acob] H. should see his prediction proves true.

I should be very willing to live on Washington Avenue or on State Street, should that crash come which I have foretold and still foretell will come. When the war closes and a good opportunity appear, you will be able to demonstrate your business capacity in making a purchase. I will see you have funds subject to your order to pay for it. Some fortunes will yet be lost as rapidly as they have been made. Hudson River Railroad stock at 178 does not betoken a good sound state of affairs, unless you strike off the 1 or at least delete it half. I see by the letters from home this is not anticipated. But I cannot see how it can be avoided while business is seeking new channels and the false values now attached to all securities and stocks, except government, are wiped away. I am glad to know we will have no debt. I cannot see why the one on the house has not been paid, when Charlie had a balance to my credit more than sufficient twice over to pay it. Let him now pay you and Sue all advances and of course himself too and after paying that mortgage he is welcome to use all he wants for himself or the Works. But you and Sue must be paid and I should advise you to invest what you have to spare in government bonds or Central Stock as soon as it falls to its least.

I have been interrupted by the unusual appearance of a lady, the first, for ought I know, who ever entered this house, as both Mr. Walsh and Mr. Hall are old bachelors, though both would object to being called old. Captain Gardner of the steamer *Scotland*, his wife and a little Charlie of about 6 years who was born, I believe, and has always lived, afloat came in, and I have lost, and you have lost, a good sheet of this letter, though when I began it I did not expect to send more than one by this steamer.

I hope you had a pleasant visit to Saratoga. I shall be disappointed should I hear anything had occurred to cause you to forego it. I am sure it would be a serious loss. You certainly needed some recreation and change of air and scene. And at this season I suppose you would be missed by none except the dogs. I suppose, however, from the way in which both you and Sue (and little Charlie also) write, you will have put them out to board at Congress Hall.

The riot at New York was shameful. I hope the national and state authorities did not yield to mob law, but put down the rioters with a strong hand. We have a dangerous

element in our country, especially if once suffered to gain even a temporary ascendancy. I think the mob is not the tribunal to pass on the constitutionality of a law. That would be going back beyond our court of xxx. The telegram tells us the mob was put down by force. I think that was rather more respectable than to make speeches to them.

It has been quite gay here. We have 1) our bands of which we have three with music three times each week, and often in the evening on the English Admiral's ship, 2) The Dutch Consul General gave the 4th Unit a ball, 3) We have had several concerts by Miss Bailey. The tickets at front \$4, 4) We are to have a regatta on the 1st and 2nd of October with about \$1,500 of prizes for rowing and sailing. As we have over 500 ships here, 20 of war, we will have a sharp race, 5) We are to have an amateur concert for the benefit of the hospital. So you see what progress Japan is making in the fine arts?

We have moreover a horrible amount of drunkenness. I took advantage of one or two outrages to see the British Minister, and after consulting, we had a meeting of the consuls and established through them a note that sailors shall not be on shore after sun down. This is to go into effect on 10 October. We shall then have a vast improvement. A horrible example is set to the Japanese. It will be a long time before any result is produced here to elevate these people with such scenes before them.

I shall send you by the way of California next month some Japanese books which will give you the ideas they have of foreigners. One print represents a drunken sailor, another on Sabbath with men and women dancing around a tablet. Have they heard of our Shakers?

I have just had a present from the Minister of an *obang*, a Japanese gold coin nearly as large as this side of the sheet. And also one for the State of New York, and other coins. The gold coin is worth about \$80.

I have some good coins for my dear little Charlie. So I am pleased to see by his letter to Bertie he is making a collection. I have some Chinese coins over 1,200 years old and also Japanese. Let him be industrious or he will have a small number compared with what I shall contribute.

As I am unable to write more, he and Sue must be content with this letter. I hope to do better this and the first part of next week, and show both of them I have them in mind.

We have delightful weather. Grapes are in season and soon we will have the orange and the persimmon, which in this country is large and good.

You must remember I have but three opportunities now each month to send you letters. You must not therefore expect letters often. I shall embrace every opportunity which offers with great alacrity.

And now, my precious wife, I will close and take this to the French Consulate, and with warm kisses sending love for you, my darling, and my sweet little boy, and dear Sue.

Ever Yours,
Robt. H. Pruyn

Bertie is well. He was out when I had the message about the mail, and had no chance to

write. He is much exercised about his boat and the regatta. He has five Japanese in his employ who are getting to be very good rowers. I went out with him on the bay last evening to hear the music and remained till driven in by a slight shower.



No. 3 September Kanagawa, September 28 1863

My beloved wife, I sent you a few days ago a letter which may possibly go by the French mail from Shanghae, if it can be prepaid through. The officer having charge of the office here was not informed as to this. If Messrs. Russell & Co. were obliged to keep it for the British mail it will reach you at the time you receive this cover.

We have a dismal rainy day, rather unfavorable to correspondence. But the mail will close in a few days and something may occur to lessen my home contribution, which I think best therefore to gather at once.

You will desire at the outset to learn whether any change for the worse or better, affecting my comfort or safety, has taken place.

So far as the Treaty Powers are concerned, and it depends on the action of their representatives, all is unchanged. We are all writing instructions. The Japanese government has informed us that the Prince of Nagato has seized the fortress of an adjoining Daimio and that they have ordered those Princes to march their forces against him. If this be true, and also an apparently well founded rumor that one of the Tycoon's vessels has been fired on by hostile Japanese in the Kino channel,³¹⁰ the civil war, which as long ago as February the government notified me it feared, may be already inaugurated.

While so far [as] our relations are concerned no great change has occurred, some person or persons representing the hostile element have made a great discovery. Instead of intimidating foreigners, which has not proved successful, they are endeavoring to reach them by driving away business. To do this it is said two prominent merchants of Osacca having business houses and agents here have been killed and others threatened. Stores have been closed here in consequence of these and kindred movements and if these measures have been taken not accidentally but in consequence of a fixed intelligent policy they have at last hit upon the best and perhaps the only course which can restrict or suspend foreign trade. The merchants of course are timid (I mean the Japanese) and can be frightened so as to keep back goods. Silk which is the great staple for export has come in very slowly and though in excess thus far of last year's receipts the daily supply is now very small. It is estimated that more than three million of dollars has now accumulated here.

³¹⁰ Kii 紀伊 Channel

As my colleagues think I should not return to Yedo without some formal promise or guarantee of protection, I have asked the government to send me such notice and also of the improved conditions of Yedo for transmission to my own government. When I return I wish to be fully justified in doing so.

We have a large naval force here and in June last by telegraph³¹¹ from San Francisco the *Wyoming* and of course any other vessel of U.S. here was made subject to my orders. This arrived long after that vessel had made such legible marks at Simonoseki, but satisfies me in advance my conduct will be approved.

You know, my dear, I am not to be trifled with, and that I believe with Jackson in taking the responsibility. You cannot have all the fighting at home. I wished to keep my hand in. It has done good. We are vastly more respected here by Japanese and foreigners. None stand higher. The government is far from displeased and we appear to be satisfied all around, unless indeed Mr. Nagato is crying for his steamer and ships.

You must not be disappointed if a letter do not reach you about the same time this arrives, for Mr. Hall modifies Bertie's news about the ship for San Francisco by the information that she is up for the island of Vancouver and is to stop at San Francisco if encouragement offer, which is very problematical. If I can be sure my letter will be properly cared for at Victoria I shall send, if it has to go even so far north as that.

If you watch the *Tribune* you will occasionally find some good letters in it from Japan written by Mr. Hall. I continue on excellent terms with my colleagues and now feel as if these relations will surely continue. Sir Rutherford Alcock is now daily expected and Lady Alcock.³¹² She is the mother of Miss Brown's Mr. Lowder and of course is now the mother-in-law of that Lady. It is said their baggage or a portion of it has arrived, at least so says a servant who says he saw it and read the name. But we do not believe things here till we see them ourselves. Colonel Neale said nothing of it when I last saw him and so the baggage may be all we shall see.

I am glad to hear of the promotion of Augustus³¹³ and hope he escaped injury in the services of battles near the Potomac. I trust he will do well and distinguish himself. Those who get safely through this war will derive great satisfaction from having faithfully done their duty. But the sacrifice of health and life will be dreadful. I have this moment been interrupted to subscribe for a series of four concerts by Robbio (violin) and Sipp (pianist).³¹⁴ This is a part of official duty. You will remember how well I slept at one of Madam Otto's concerts and you see how soothing a prospect I have now. I have sent you a program of the last concert I attended. Those printed for the Ministers and ladies were

³¹¹ See <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1863p2/d392>

³¹² Lucy (Windsor) Lowder Alcock (1813-1899) married Rutherford Alcock on July 8 1862 in Brussels, Belgium.

³¹³ Augustus Pruyn was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel on April 23 1863.

³¹⁴ A. Robbio is listed in the concert program as a "pupil of the immortal Paganini" and Rodolfo Sipp as a "pupil of the immortal Liszt." RHP Papers, B4 F6.

on silk. The proceedings of the regatta etc., jumpings and runnings, I will send via California at end of month by *Onward*.

But I am warned that I must close. Mr. Portman will be here in a few minutes with the balance of this budget to be examined and signed and in half an hour the mail will close half a mile distant. Bertie has succeeded in getting ready a few lines which I enclose.

I think I have exhausted all I can find time to say. You will not expect me if Bertie leave, unless I have leave of absence. Then I shall come if affairs here will permit. I am a soldier here and must not desert my post or all I have sacrificed and you have sacrificed will be lost. I wish at least to look back with satisfaction to my official record.

And now, my darling wife, again I send you my loving wishes for your health and happiness. God bless you and my dear child. May we soon meet and then we will be very slow to separate. Adieu, my dear, precious wife.

Robert H. Pruyn

[Page(s) missing]

These grapes are, I believe, all of one variety of the color of our Catawba, but sweet and without any astringency in the skin. I think they will be of very great value. We have the Rebecca grape. Say to Dingwall I wish these called the "Jennie" grape.

I shall also send you by the same ship via San Francisco a large supply of lily roots of several varieties. The white and pink and pure white are truly magnificent in size, far surpassing any of our varieties and fragrant beyond description. I cannot say so much of the other kinds. I send over 400 bulbs. At the same time I shall send seeds of flowers and trees which I will then describe, and I propose trying some of their dwarf and other trees, especially their beautiful maples which Mr. Hogg thinks may possibly reach you in good order. You will have to arrange with Mr. Dingwall or some other person for the preservation and propagation of these trees and plants.

There is very great speculation in land here now. When I came here lots could be purchased for \$1,500 which will now bring from 6 to 10 thousand dollars. Rents are very high. Mr. Brown and Mr. Ballagh, who have come over from Kanagawa, have to pay \$50 per man for very inferior accommodations in small wooden buildings poorly finished and very few rooms. I have made an arrangement for them with the government and exchange of *itzabus* are allowed so that they get sixty five dollars per month profit cash or thereabouts. It varies each month. We have an American colored baker here, who is now making, as Colonel Fisher says, over \$1,000 per month profit on his sales of bread. See what that would yield in New York adding exchange. Building is going on rapidly as if all were peace and no trouble possible. Dwellings, godowns/warehouses and stables etc., etc., are built of stone as also are the walls and fences of lots, all cut stones and the place looks shining and flourishing. I had an idea a few months ago of giving up the lot on the Bluff for a Church and purchasing a lot in the settlement getting from the government an allowance of exchange to pay for it. I was offered the lot for \$3,000. I took Mr. Hall to

see it and we agreed it was not worth the money. It has been sold by the gentleman who then purchased it at \$3,000 for \$5,000 and now six thousand has been offered for it and I think \$8,000 might easily be obtained. Mr. Schoyer, who was an auctioneer when I came here and with little credit even and not much means, has always had great faith in real estate here. He now owns property which will not sell for \$75,000 and yet will when he has completed certain improvements or perhaps bring him in \$27,000 per year. He occupied a low one story building about three times as long as our woodhouse and about forty feet deep. He has divided this into six restaurants which rent for \$100 each per month. This property he xxx occupies. It is in dispute with the Japanese government, but he will probably succeed in holding it.

I do not know that this can interest you at all and yet you would scarcely understand our position unless I dwell on this topic. You will see how far off from a state of panic that people are, and yet reading these letters you would have reason to think each inhabitant rose every morning with his throat cut.

I know really very little of what is now in progress here, but I often think, if spared to return, I shall not know anything because I shall distrust all that is written, and not knowing what to believe, resolve to believe nothing.

The *Wyoming* has gone to the Straits of Simoda. The *Jamestown* is here. A telegraphic dispatch via San Francisco informs me the *Wyoming* will obey my orders and the effect of this is to place all the ships which may come here at my command, which the *Wyoming* and *Jamestown* virtually have been to this time.

September 30 1863

I continue, my precious wife, my rambling letter commenced two days ago. The quarter ends today and besides my correspondence with government growing out of events in progress, I have had to close the quarterly accounts and prepare the usual drafts. I send you, by the way, the seconds of a small bill I took from Mr. Brown which may be of value if the first has not reached you. I make it payable to Charlie to distinguish it better from the other I sent for five pounds less, endorsed over to you.

I send also by this mail a case like this containing a letter for Sue, little Charlie, etc., etc. I wrote you when sending the first of this bill it was for a New Year's present for you and Sue and my dear little boy and Happy, Happy New Year's to all of you.

Unless you can find something which will please my dear boy more I think you had better order for him *The London Illustrated News*. I do not mean for New Year. I think of this because you once wrote he still continued to be pleased with the old numbers. My *London Punch* and *Littell's Living Age* I wish kept up. The numbers I had were destroyed at Yedo and they are not worth now trying to keep hereafter to send home. But I suppose I can fill my sets when I return.

By the time this reaches you, my darling, nearly two years will have passed since we parted and two eventful years in our history and in the world's history. It is well we then

anticipated no such prolonged separation. It is fearful to look forward to and yet at times it appears we parted but yesterday. Indeed I can call up freshly the days when the letters and parcels for Japan first flowed in to me and I began to realize I was to leave you. By the time this reaches you a large portion of the time we are yet to be separated will have passed. It may not be well to say precisely what my intentions are, as the government may like, when the proper time arrives, to fill my place quietly. I shall, if spared, be prepared at a very early day to make these formally known. Everyone agrees in saying that unless we return by the way of California, which we could scarcely at any given time find opportunity to do, we should leave here late in the fall or in the winter. If therefore this fall passes without permission to leave as I have written, next fall shall not, if life be spared. That is a long weary time, I know my dear, to look forward to. But the risk of China with its summer diseases and the fearful heat of the Red Sea are barriers to a spring or rather summer departure, as my successor could not reach here till summer unless I wrote now. Passengers have often died on the Red Sea from exposure to the heat and at times the steamer when running with the wind has been obliged for two or three days to go back on its course to give passengers a breath of a breeze and the needful refreshing relief.

But my dear wife, faithful, loving heart, believe me I wish I could leave now. I could willingly be prepared in a few hours. And when my face is turned homewards I hope I shall have the health and strength to stand up under the full, supreme enjoyment I shall experience. With abounding love and kisses my dear wife, your husband, R. H. P.



Kanagawa, September 30 1863

I wish, my beloved wife, that every cover you open shall contain a few lines to you. And although five sheets like this go forward in another envelope to your address I must seal up a few loving words in this.

It is now 1 o'clock. The mail closes at 4 o'clock and Ber has not yet commenced writing. He is at Mr. Brown's engaged in recitation. He said (while studying) he proposed at this hour to commence writing, so I suppose he will soon be in. He also said, when I showed how tolerably industrious I had been, "You have nothing else to do. If you can prepare my lessons for me with the same profit to myself I will write." He is quite faithful to his study and just as faithfully rides and is rowed out on his boat, and I suppose if he stays with me it will be more on my account than his own. I wish to make things as pleasant for him as possible. You must therefore not expect too many letters from him as you will be disappointed. Writing is not a pleasure to him at any time. To me you know it is only the manual labor and time which are in the way. And yet my dear you must have a great many letters from me which you scarcely find worth reading. I know many are written

very slovenly but I would write very much less than I do if I did not often write with persons talking around me and always exposed to interruption which is most easily stopped by attention to it. And when the plague or the pleasure is gone, brilliant ideas will not return. I must laboriously pick up the tangled thread of my discourse and seek new inspiration as I have just now done, in a cup of tea.

I will show you how to live. When I get up if at 5 to bathe, a cup of tea, on my return another. At 9 breakfast, two cups. At 1 o'clock a cup of tea. After dinner at 4 o'clock now a cup of tea. At 8 o'clock two cups. To bed at 10 o'clock. Is not that regular and old maidish. That is my routine except that when I get up as late as 7 o'clock I take only one cup before breakfast. See what a drinker you must be when I get home. The tea kettle ever boiling and hot water always. Never mind we can endure that kind of hot water.

We are expecting the arrival of the mail of London August 10 on Saturday October 4th, when we shall know whether Russia is at war with England and France. If so our relations with this government may be affected. We wish to hear that Lee is entirely used up and of further successes of Grant and Rosecranz. It now appears to me that the rebels must soon be entirely exhausted. Is Charleston taken? That we are hoping for but hardly expecting yet. While I write, heavy guns at Yedo are sending their booming sound over the water. They have been firing all morning. But that is not strange. The Japanese are ever practicing with their guns and they are tolerably expert.

I have this moment learned that a British ship will leave in a few days for San Francisco. I shall therefore content myself with one sheet more and then get ready another parcel to start eastward for the rising sun.

So much for safety. We are comfortably located with Walsh, Hall & Co. yet, but will move shortly when my furniture arrives from Yedo at a residence here which will be probably soon be at my service. Meanwhile we are extravagant in recreations. I have thus far, shall I say, very cheerfully contributed about \$50 for regattas, concerts, etc. of which I shall by this mail and in November via San Francisco send you programs to show what decided advances we are making in our legation. At the last concert 14 ladies were present in different stages of development as to dress, some going to the height of full dress, only one, a German lady, guilty of the atrocity of a hat. If she did not blush for it, the feather in her hat did, which I think was blue as well as red and white. And on Saturday Signor Robbio, as good a violinist as I have heard since ole Ball and Burke, with a pianist named Sipp is to give a concert. Then on the 1st and 2nd October our regatta takes place, and as we have more than 20 ships of war here all the time a merry winter may be expected unless the Japanese make us dance to other music or a war with Russia scatters the fleets of England and France. And yet time drags very wearily, because each day is counted as one to be hurried over or got rid of rather than enjoyed or used.

Dr. Clark's letter came to hand via California. I presume the other missing information may someday reach me. I was very much pleased with the dear letter and hope to return an early acknowledgement. I hope his services still prove attractive and that he may be

useful as well as popular.

Your letter received at the same time dated June 1862, was quite refreshing. It commenced with an acknowledgement of the receipt of my letter from Honolulu and said "Since it was old comfort (it was two months old), etc., etc." Yours certainly was the winner by many lengths having lived serenely to the good and mature age of 15 months, perhaps full 16 months as not being dated. I am unable to fix its birthday. It was in a good state of preservation and very welcome notwithstanding its weary pilgrimage. I cannot tell whether it has been in hospital at San Francisco or whether it was mailed on the *Flying Dutchman* and been on one of his goblin cruises. It neither was discolored or flamed by brimstone.

I notice what you say about the difficulty from the overflow of water from Mr. Andrews' house in our coal cellar. You are mistaken in supposing he has a drain through there. His cellar is drained on State Street and no difficulty existed till after the improvements were made by him.

I have not as yet executed any order for J.V.L. Pruyne nor for Dr. Vanderpoel, as the best china is to be had at Nagasaki and I have been expecting to visit that place when I could make a better selection for all of us. I shall embrace an early opportunity to execute all communications sent on to be sent me.

Bertie is studying hard. I have just asked him whether he proposes to write. He says he has only 15 minutes now before recitation. While I do not regard him as a good correspondent or ever likely to be one I can testify he is not idle. He has been anxious to return this fall. Should leave of absence be granted we will both leave. And I have consented to his going if he desires to do so particularly if he is tired of Japan. But as he grounds his wish entirely on his desire to study, I represent to him that however much you would be pleased to see him I am sure you would not like him to leave me and I shall try to give him ever greater facilities for study than he can have home. I have little faith in his being able to pass 4 years in college.

[last page(s) missing]



Kanagawa, October 1 1863 8 p.m.

A few moments ago I received information that the British ship *Somass* bound for Vancouver Island was to sail at 6 a.m. tomorrow and might possibly stop at San Francisco and I avail myself, my beloved wife, of this opportunity with all its uncertainty to send you a loving greeting, although only this morning by a steamer to Shanghai for the overland mail I had the pleasure of sending two well filled covers which will probably reach you

about the same time as this.

I have little time to collect my thoughts so as to avoid saying what I have already put on paper for a westward flight.

First of all let me say Bertie and myself are well and in as good spirits as can be expected. My saddest hours are unfortunately these when I am writing because then longings for home come up with almost irresistible force. Not that you are forgotten, my dear wife, at other times but then you and my boy and home run up every thought and emotion.

I have been obliged to write a business letter to Mr. Brooks and this has to go off to the ship as soon as Mr. Wellman³¹⁵ has finished a cup of tea so that I have only the time to give you the intelligence of safety and health, and to express a hope that this may reach you in advance of my other letters. In which event it will be valued even though so barren of real interest.

Everything remains unchanged so far as our relations extend to this government. Over 50 vessels are in harbor, half men of war. And there is no apprehension of trouble though of course we have plenty unpleasant rumors which we have happily learned to disregard.

We are waiting for instructions and the Japanese government are not likely to assume a hostile attitude.

Be assured we shall be prudent and I think we are perfectly safe. Another vessel will leave for San Francisco this month. Meanwhile, my precious wife, much love and kisses for you and my darling boy and dear Sue,

Yours faithfully and lovingly,

Robt. H. Pruyn

Time is up



Kanagawa, October 12 1863

It appears but as [of] yesterday, my beloved wife, that I had the satisfaction of sending a package of letters to you and Sue and my dear boy, and yet in two days another since monthly mail will leave this port. In the interval nothing has occurred to interfere with the pleasure or lessen the comfort of this community. Thus several numbers of silly rumors have been fledged and some have been in full feather, having attained the dignity of flight perhaps to the corners of the earth in a newspaper extra.³¹⁶ According to this silly goose,

³¹⁵ F. O. Wellman worked for Walsh, Hall & Co.

³¹⁶ The *Japan Commercial News* published an extra with the claims that follow in RHP's letter. The *Japan Commercial News* was published weekly between May 1863 and May 1865.

to continue the figure, Osacca the second city of the empire has been bombarded and captured by hostile Daimios who are marching with 50,000 men on this devoted place. The rival paper issued an extra forthwith denouncing the whole story as an unmitigated falsehood, evidently determined that this place should not compete with ancient Rome in the honor of being saved by the cackling of a goose.³¹⁷ This necessitated another extra from his feathery compeer which diminished the biped so materially as to preserve only the piping of a snipe. The place is once more preserved from destruction. A gentleman told me a few evenings ago of a hoax sometime since perpetrated on the *New York Herald*. It appears that excited, probably by the hilarity of a supper, it was proposed to get up a letter to that veracious and in this instance voracious sheet. This was done and the letter flavored and spiced by each in turn. The earth was made to yawn and destroy twenty thousand unsuspecting people, old Fusi-yama was aroused from its lethargic slumber of nearly two centuries and vomited forth its hidden fires, humanity flamed forth in passion and turned earthward instead of heavenward its most repulsive features and an earth and ocean were made to vie with man in a first class sensation letter, which was forgotten as soon as sent until one of the party was enraged to see an extract which had been most innocently copied in a Boston paper.

In a few days by an opportunity which will be afforded via California I will send these articles. So great is the difficulty of getting at the truth in this country, arising probably from the immense number of wells, that it is impossible to say what really has happened. The French Minister issued a circular yesterday saying he had dispatched his interpreter to the governor of this place to ask information and had been assured there had only been a Custom House difficulty at Osacca. The best opinion is that an effort was made at Keoto by the Prince of Nagato to get possession of the person of the Mikado in order to compel him to order the assassination of the Tycoon. He was asked to go to a temple to offer up prayers for the expulsion of the foreigners. But as he never leaves his palace this is probably a canard unless the temple was within its enclosure. The conspiracy was discovered and when Nagato's followers appeared before the palace firing guns etc. they were attacked and driven off.

Yesterday we had at the Catholic Church the grand ceremony of blessing the bell which has recently [been] cast for it. It was an official invitation which carried me, as well as my colleague Colonel Neale, there. We were in plain clothes. The French Minister, admiral and officers in full uniform, Dutch Consul General Prussian and British Consul in a kind

³¹⁷ The *Japan Herald*, on October 10, wrote, "An announcement is now being distributed through the settlement in an 'Extra to the Japan Commercial News,' which is headed 'MOST IMPORTANT NEWS; BOMBARDMENT AND CAPTURE OF OSACA BY THE DAIMIOS, and stating that "Authentic information has been received of the Bombardment and Capture of the Imperial City of OSACA (and some say of KIOTO also), and that the Daimios are advancing with an army of 50,000 men for the Capture of Yokohama.' This is simply manufactured Sensation intelligence, and that only."

of half full dress. The bell was well watered and wiped with clean napkins. It was duly crossed and prayed over and under and all around. Meanwhile the band of the *Sémiramis* at intervals played sundry magnificent pieces of music, prominent among which, while the most fervent prayer, judging from its rapidity, was in progress, as had in fine, superb style in the most beautiful portion of the Daughter of the Regiment. We may now reasonably conclude that the bell will be both melodious and durable and as we had from the Abbe Girard a grand oration in French in praise of bells which give forth sounds of rejoicing at births and weddings and of Sorrow at Sepulture of the dead, we know they are likewise useful and this though not often thus called on may likewise serve such a purpose.

While the race was in progress, I caught sight of a most monstrous and unusual apparition which struck the whole company with amazement and for a moment engrossed the attention of all. It was a man with a stove pipe hat! I can scarcely find words to give you an adequate idea of the strange sensation it excited. I did not know what to do with mine, the only one I had seen since I left the United States, until the fire at Yedo came to my relief. Was that destroying element provoked by such an atrocious invasion of Yedo?

October 13

By the last mail I received your letters of June 8th and 12th and July 16th and 24th and papers from New York to July 29th inclusive. Charlie's advice as to the subscription for Rutgers College was good. They will make up the amount just as well without me and then what I give will be clear gain. This may not satisfy the committee, who so far as its Albany representative is concerned, may wish everything their own way. But as I see the work was to be finished by this time I hope the effort has been crowned with the success it deserves.

I see you do not understand the use of those ivory carvings, and although I think I have lately written you in relation thereto, I will at the risk of repetition enlighten you. Every Japanese carries a tobacco pouch, which is held by the girdle which passes around his person. Now take as a specimen the silver chain and ivory which you rightly thought could not be a bracelet as the charm was too large. Place the tobacco pouch at the other end of that chain and you have the finished article. The chain passes under the girdle and the ivory hanging over it outside, answers for ornament and to hold it in position. For such a purpose the hundreds of thousands of the small ivories are carved and according to the rank and wealth of each person is the value and beauty of the ornament. The poorer classes have carvings of wood and chains of silk or cotton. You will see therefore that time and labor are not wasted according to their ideas. The only ornaments worn by the most noble and wealthy are these and decorations on their swords. They waste nothing on jewelry and very little on dress which though generally of silk is most always of some subdued color and as fashions never change, I presume these most expensive dresses perform a long service. I hardly know what I have sent you, but if the little carving you describe is the one I think it is, it is as good as any I have seen. Though I may now say I

have several hundred ready to send, but will divide the risk. They are fearfully costly however. I will not dare to say how much so, till I can do it in person and so increase your surprise.

With reference to the coat for my use, I simply wished an ordinary blue civilian's dress coat and hope it has a rolling collar as you have sent a frock coat, because my uniform is useless when the epaulettes are taken off. But with a good pattern we can get clothes cheaper here than at home. I have a good dress coat from Hong Kong for \$16. So you need send nothing more to wear. We are not any way related to Miss Flora McJimsey.

I expect to send a few silks for presents via California in about two weeks. By the way I cannot imagine what the bill for \$103¹³ is for, unless for the care and express charge on Ber's dog, which in that event has proved a costly arrival. All that I recollect sending by Mr. Egerton were three small boxes on which there could be no such charge. Indeed I am not sure I did not send only two small boxes. I have not been able to change my mind with these things or else my memory is failing. But I presume Mr. Brooks' letter to arrive will explain this soon. I will give you a list for the distribution of the silks.
Adieu for the day, R. H. P.



Kanagawa, October 14 1863

My Dear Wife,

As the mail was closing the government of this place made known to the Consuls that a foreigner had been wounded or killed about 2½ miles from this place. Colonel Fisher reached the spot in advance of the British and French guard which was sent out and then found the body of Lt. Camus, 3rd Battalion D'Afrique, a most amiable officer and friend of the family of Admiral Jaurez. His body was taken to the residence of the French minister and when I visited him I saw it. You know I am not so much given to such sightseeing and would rather go miles out of the way to avoid it than make any effort to minister those to what I regard as morbid appetite.

Shall I describe the awful appearance? If you do not wish to read it pass it by. I should first say, Lt. Camus was entirely unarmed and it is impossible he could have given any provocation. He had remarked only this morning that he thought it unnecessary to carry armor, that he thought the Japanese very friendly and had never been molested, and had no fear. The people in this neighborhood say he was murdered by these two-sworded men.

His right arm was cut off just below the shoulder. The left shoulder was cut through and the arm only connected to the body by a shred of flesh. The same blow had sliced off the left side of the face and passed clean through the body to the region of the heart. Another blow had severed the jugular vein, yet another had from the side of the neck

severed the spinal column. The nose had been cut across and laid open, also the chin.³¹⁸ But enough. There were other wounds but this description will more than suffice. I do not give it because I suppose it will make you feel comfortable, but you will soon undoubtedly hear enough of it from other sources though no account will go to the U.S. by this mail. I have given Bertie good advice to be more careful than easy and what I preach I shall not fail to practice. All that we can do is be prudent and then commit ourselves to the care of our Heavenly Father whose eye never slumbers and whose arm is mighty to deliver.

I sent you this day via Marseilles a package containing 9 sheets for yourself Sue, Abby and Anna Lansing and only have an opportunity to send this by the kind attention of Colonel Neale who puts it in the foreign office bag so that Queen Victoria renders you, though indirectly and unconsciously, this service. I hope the diminished revenue will not affect the national credit.

You can readily imagine, my dear wife, that I have little time and perhaps even less disposition to send you a loving letter at this time. It is near 10 o'clock and my government dispatch has been written and signed.³¹⁹ But fearing this news might be made public by the government, I thought I would send you a few lines to assure I shall be more cautious than ever and see to it that Bertie shall not expose himself. It is now 13 months since Richardson was murdered and we may have another year's immunity. Our Japanese friends have thus far distributed these atrocities till they have almost become annuals.

I think it very possible that this man was murdered because an officer, and that a merchant or priest, gentleman or even a gentleman connected with either legation might have passed unharmed. The Japanese officials avow a strong friendship for Americans. A few days since some of them said to Dr. Vedder of the *Jamestown*, "America, Nipon all the same." I think none of them, unless perhaps the followers of Nagato, would attack an American knowingly. The followers of this Daimio are not likely to reach this place as he is now almost at open war with the Tycoon having seized one of his steamers and some officers sent by the Tycoon to require his presence at Yedo.

I do not know that I have informed you that one of the Tycoon's steamers has also been fired on from one of the forts of the Prince of Awa³²⁰ who avows himself to be a friend of the Tycoon and has sent a letter to Mr. Hall, whose firm has done business for him, asking him to inform me that it was done by lawless men who acted against the order of the commander of the fort and requesting that any of our steamers should keep well to their appropriate side should they enter the Inland Sea at that point. It appears quite probable that the Tycoon will have a civil war on his hands. We are in the Tycoon's territory and he will defend himself when he protects foreigners.

³¹⁸ See <https://perma.cc/ME6H-KZM4>

³¹⁹ See dispatch at <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1864p3/d453>

³²⁰ Hachisuka Narihiro 蜂須賀斉裕 (1821-1868) was the Daimyō of the Tokushima Domain.

But, my dear wife, I must now close with my sweetest love for you and my darling child and dear Sue, with kind remembrances to all friends as ever faithfully and forever yours,
Robt. H. Pruyn



October 14 1863

When I closed yesterday I was under the necessity of returning a visit of Bishop Boone of Shanghae and fulfilling an engagement with an excellent photographer. I propose sending you a new view of my face not from any vain desire of repetition but because the last attempt was regarded as so much of failure as even to provoke mirth. I have reason to believe that the present effort will be highly successful as we have the artist who was in the Crimea in the employ of the British government.³²¹ I have ordered from him some magnificent views of India, China and Japan, which I will send via California when they arrive. Let Charles Benthuisen³²² prepare three albums, one for each of the countries, Turkey Monaco red, with heavy paper, and you will have as magnificent books as ever graced a parlor. Accept them as a New Year's present. They will arrive shortly after, if not in time. You never saw such views as you will have of Delhi, Lucknow, Peking, Yedo etc., etc. The panoramas will have to be folded. Let some competent person attach the views to the heavy paper with gum Arabic or such better means as photographers use. There will be sufficient for three volumes. In the Japan views will be some taken by Mr. Saunders,³²³ Mr. Brown, etc. which had better be placed in the same Japan volume or perhaps there will be sufficient for two volumes.

The Academy Festival must have been very pleasant. I see that Bradford,³²⁴ in giving the names of some of the old scholars, grouped them very appropriately at least so far as our names were given. He made our Dutch ancestors feed strangely on corn meal. It made my throat dry to read of their prodigal performances in the *suppaan* line. I was not aware his family was so thoroughly Dutch. I never saw or heard of such evening meal and such Indian meal. Though I have a distinct recollection of the willow walk and I have a faint

³²¹ Felice Beato (1832-1909) was an Italian-British photographer. His photographs are some of the earliest taken in Japan.

³²² Charles H. Van Benthuisen ran a printing, binding and paper warehouse in Albany.

³²³ William Thomas Saunders (1832-92) was a British photographer.

³²⁴ Alexander W. Bradford. He was one of the committee of alumni who planned the 50th anniversary of the Albany Academy's founding.

recollection of Tivoli.³²⁵

How is it with you?

I am pleased to hear such good news of Cornelia and family. I shall set her down for an early letter. I do not see Mr. Rochester's³²⁶ name mentioned though I suppose he was before Vicksburg. The last 4th of July was a glorious day, standing next to that of 1776 and perhaps really ranking with it in importance. The day of 1776 would have lost much of its true value if Lee had been successful on the last 4th. The revolutionary dead at Gettysburg must have stirred in their graves rocked by the thunder of the artillery which thundered in that little cemetery. Let it be a hallowed one, next to that which lay at the foot of Cavalry.

I hope Augustus may have the star which he covets. If he deserve it, it will probably answer as well. Is Francis still in the army?³²⁷ I have looked in vain for his name and with pleasure because such mention is generally made on the list of killed and wounded. Our army is too large to expect much notion of subordinate officers now.

Bertie is with Mr. Brown reciting his lesson. He says I have nothing to do but to buy curios, write home, send two or three dispatches each mail to the State Department, talk once a week to Colonel Neale and M. de Bellecourt about the country. But add to this the interminable talks with the Japanese government and my letters to them numbering thus far to them and my colleagues 109 this year with about 70 to our government and you will clearly see I am far from idle.

I often fear however that my letters to you are very lame, although of the hop skip and jump order. The man with the cork leg went very handsomely when once in motion and I fear to stop too long for ideas but write on and thus have the benefit of the acquired momentum and velocity.

I shall conclude this day's labors as the mail is about to close with a few more sentences to you my dear wife.

I think you had better present that cigar case "E pluribus unum" to Mr. Weed. He is the best smoker and a good true union man. The President has one and there is no other. You may give it to him or to Governor Seward as you and he think best.

If health and life are spared, I shall have a busy fortnight. A mail will arrive and two will leave. So I expect at once to prepare for them. I have this moment received two long letters from the Japanese government which are not translated. One is about my return to Yedo and as near as I can make out they wish to have me remain here a little longer.

I was ready to return to Yedo long since but my furniture has not even yet arrived though now it's on its way from Shanghai. But you may rely on my being prudent. I shall not needlessly expose myself.

³²⁵ This refers to an area in Albany, now the Tivoli Nature Preserve. RHP mentions it once again in a later letter, implying that he and JALP had gone there while courting.

³²⁶ Montgomery Rochester (1832-1909) was RHP's brother-in-law, married to RHP's youngest sister, Mary.

³²⁷ Francis was not discharged from the army until January 1 1865.

Bert is getting restless and I suppose will have to go home. I have written to Russell & Co. to see if any gentleman is going overland in whom I can confide to take some little notice of him. I have heard that Mr. and Mrs. Cunningham³²⁸ and family will go home in January. Mr. C[unningham] is of the firm of Russell & Co., having charge of the Shanghai branch of that house. He has made a large fortune, more than half a million in two years. I shall not consent to his return by that route alone. And yet I am satisfied to have him leave me. I do not feel as if it would be right to detain him. I must not be selfish. One year is long to be alone but it will soon pass and then perhaps I may have a leave of absence now. If so I think I may safely leave though it is difficult to say what may happen here.

Colonel Neale tells me he intends demanding answers within a fixed period to all open questions. This will embarrass the government which wishes to be let alone. In this they resemble our Southern friends. I think the government likes us better since the *Wyoming* gave Nagato his thrashing.

I do not know as I have thanked you for Dr. C[lark]'s sermon. It is a very excellent one. I have received his letter. Please say to him I hope to send an early reply, also to Dr. V[anderpoel] by next mail.

My hand is really cramped now, for the first time since I have been to Japan. This paper is difficult to write on.

And now, my dear wife, I must close this very hurried letter. I did not intend the package should go off without a few lines to my dear boy, but I must see Mr. Portman at once about these Japanese letters, as they may require immediate attention. I am very careful to give prompt attention to such business. I am a standing rebuke to them. Formerly my letters were unanswered for weeks. The government is now unusually prompt. I attribute it to my example. I keep them up to their work.

Kiss my precious boy for me. Oh that I could see you and him. And my dear little Charlie, kiss your darling mother again and again for me. With kind remembrances to all enquiring friends, particularly to Uncle J[acob] H. T[en] E[yck] and also to the usual attendants to our prayer meeting Mr. McE[lroy] and family, Vosburgh, etc., etc., and with unflinching love, my dear precious wife, and darling Charlie and Sue from yours faithfully, Robt. H. Pruyn



October 15 1863

Having risen rather early to get my letters in the foreign office bag at Colonel Neale's

³²⁸ Edward Cunningham was a partner of Russell & Co. 1850-57, 1861-63, and 1867-77. He was also U.S. acting vice-consul at Shanghai 1851-54 and consul for Sweden and Norway 1853-64.

I write a few lines, although I closed a letter to you, my darling wife, at 10 o'clock last evening.

At 12, Ber came to my bed unable to get asleep in his own. He had been with me to the French Minister's and had a glimpse of the murdered Lieutenant and he could not sleep till he got beside me and then he at once went off in a 15 knot sleep and slept like an infant. His great distress this morning is that he has had only 7 hours' sleep.

The funeral is to take place today.

I do not see what can be done but it will surprise if the French government does not become somewhat rampant and make demands of a serious character.

I could not forego the opportunity of sending you these few lines, though they only serve to give you one day's later message.

I can only expect we will be very guarded in all our movements. Therefore be not alarmed.

Send love to my dear boy, to Sue, and abiding love to yourself, my precious wife.

Faithfully,

Robt. H. Pruyn



Kanagawa, October 29 1863

I had expected, my beloved wife, to send you by the ship which leaves here on Saturday for San Francisco a letter of unusual length though perhaps of ordinary interest. But the week has been one of extraordinary occupation. On Monday the Consul General of the Netherlands and myself went to Yedo on the invitation of the Gorogio to receive a communication of importance. The meeting was to have been held at the Governor's residence at this place but on Sunday we were requested to proceed to Yedo as all the Gorogio wished to be present and could not leave Yedo at the same time.

We were annoyed to have the request made that [damage] Port should be given up, with a promise of friendship [and] trade if done and a pretty strong intimation of the [damage] this Port remain open. We were told we had been first advised of this as the first treaties were with us and requested to say nothing to our colleagues of France and England about it, as they were to be invited to Yedo and might decline to come if informed of it. We said that was quite probable, that we most certainly should not have accepted their invitation had we known the nature of the communication to be made, but that it was our duty to advise our colleagues of all that had been said and we should most certainly do so at once. Of course conferences have been the order of the day and writing the order of both day and night. Another invitation has been sent to meet the Gorogio on Saturday which all of us have peremptorily declined and have demanded that anything to be said

must be reduced to writing. We have also declined to listen to any such propositions, but that we will transmit any communication they wish to make to our respective governments. You see this is an extraordinary country, something new under the sun always turning up. Micawber³²⁹ would have had a glorious chance here. It will be very difficult to get the government mail matter ready and unfortunately the mail via China closes the day this leaves. Copies of the complete records of this interview must be sent home and given to the other Ministers for the same purpose.

I shall not fail to write at as much length as possible. The Japanese merchants at this place have lately been threatened and several of them have given up business and two of them tore down dwellings and stores to prove they have done with business. As we have more than 20 ships of war here I think we are safe from any attack. And we are likely to have more ships. The British Minister has been informed by his government that orders have been given the Commander in Chief in China that forces must be sent here when he, the Minister, asks for them.

With the above exception nothing of interest has transpired. Theatricals (now on the *Sémiramis*), concerts, jugglers, exhibitions are the order of the night. A Mr. Simmons,³³⁰ an excellent juggler, is now here. He was unable to pay his passage to San Francisco and gave an exhibition. Tickets \$2 and received \$400. His hand bills gave the representation of a man holding his head under his arm. It is said Japanese circulating these were arrested by the governor. One version says because it was understood as threatening foreigners. As the handbills were in English this could not have been really supposed. Another version is that the governor thought it foreshadowed a miracle and was a renewal of the pretensions made when the Portuguese were here. He says at that time there were persons pretending they possessed supernatural power and ascended to heaven etc., etc., and [damage] looked as if it bordered on the supernatural. Mr. Hall [damage] of the *Eldridge* (ship) had several tickets so Ber and I accepted his invitation to see Mr. Simmons whose performances excelled any I have ever seen.

At the concerts Mr. Sipp, a grand performer, uses one of Boardman and Gray's pianos owned by Colonel Fisher and it is pronounced equal to any in the East if not superior to all as it is to most. Perhaps if Dawson were told this he could benefit our Albany manufacturers with a first rate puff. I enclose a few handbills, concerts, field sports, etc., etc.

The *Jamestown* at my request started for Yedo to be there at my meeting. I was to follow next day in the Dutch corvette *Medusa*, which I did but the pilot ran the *Jamestown* aground. Sailing vessels are useless here except to be in the harbor. The winds are so continuously in one direction as to render movements by sail almost impracticable.

³²⁹ A reference to a character, Wilkins Micawber, in Charles Dickens' novel *David Copperfield*.

³³⁰ Mr. Washington D. Simmons' real name was John Simmons. Born in England in 1835, he served in the British Navy before becoming an entertainer.

I have been elected Elder of our Church in place of Mr. Mason and am to be ordained tomorrow evening. A British officer of the fleet will join our Church on Saturday. So you see God smiles on our feeble effort to promote his glory and to do good here. Without our congregation no such opportunity could have been afforded to him. We have lost two of our small number however, Mr. Gulick and Mr. Thompson having gone to Europe to pursue their studies, intending to return after two years. But we will gain two more, Mr. and Mrs. Ballard (Baptists) who are expected here each day.

The government has addressed me several letters saying that I shall not return to Yedo. I consider it most prudent now to follow their advice. I begin to feel they are right in anticipating that the hostile Daimios could seek to attack me there and they might find or make the opportunity. I suppose the government is as friendly to foreigners as it can be. I remain on good terms as ever with the Japanese government and officers and my colleagues. I have received no answer as yet to my application for leave of absence and do not see now how I could leave if it came. But we will not anticipate. About January I expect to send home papers which will gladden you, though the time of my return may appear to you too remote. Yet it will be known and you will have something to look forward to.

I see you were expecting the arrival of the *Hotspur*. I [think] Mr. Verbeck sent his teas and preserves in that ship. If so, the ocean, not the rebels have them. The ship was wrecked last winter in the China Seas and a more voracious devourer than Confederates has tea and sweetening. I think I sent [damage] by *Benefactress* but really forget. I am certainly getting [damage] five or six boxes of tea via Shanghae should reach you at this time. Let me know if they come.

I expect to send by Mr. Hall (Mr. Brooks [damage]) some magnificent photographs of scenes in China [damage] and Japan and wish Van Benthuyzen to get up those [damage] albums to put them in, one for each country. You have seen nothing like these. I also send some coins [damage] State Library and for Charlie. Two of them are [damage] each. One for the State, one for Charlie. Also [damage] about which I will write you. Some are for Mrs. [damage] Seward, Harris, Miss Weed, etc., etc.

I have also sent three boxes of silks [damage] by the ship (British) *Maggie Atkinson* care of A. A. Low & Co. I enclose bill lading. I wish you to insure [damage] on these. Let Charlie say to Mr. Weed that many of these are for the ladies above named and if an order is given to admit them duty free I can of course give some away. Nothing need be said of their value. The boxes, though they look large, do so because two of them have two wooden boxes each and all of them an inner tin box addition. I would not have sent so many but duplicated my order after the fire and before I knew how many were saved of those first made. Though there are about 100 duplicates I think we will find persons willing to take them as presents. I will send an invoice and estimate of prices etc. for your private use.

Among the coins I send via San Francisco are a large number of the small ones. As I

expect neither to send or bring more of these, be saving in their distribution. In one of the boxes are some magnificent ivory carvings, all of which I wish kept. You had better have some cases made for these having shelves one above the other so as to show them, unless you prefer to delay for me. You might at least have a small case to show the finest of them. The inlaid beads I send, some flattened, are very beautiful and costly. Keep these. The ivory boxes are for you and Sue. The large one for you. The little boxes within are superb specimens of lacquer. The cigar stand with figures at the side for myself. Give Weed the plain round one which is gold lacquered. Be very careful in opening all these small boxes. They contain small and delicate pieces.

I send some little plain lacquer saucers for [which] you will find use. Give Weed half a dozen for ashes of cigars. I send a large number of scarfs, which [damage] can use. Keep a few for me.

I hope this letter will reach you about Christmas and [damage] that it will bear to you and Sue and my dear boy my [damage] Happy, most Happy New Year to all of you and my relations and friends.

I received last week your very welcome letter of [damage] doubly welcome because you were about leaving for [damage] where I hope you found health and enjoyed [damage] greatly. I was very much grieved to hear of the death of [damage]. It is very sad indeed. We hope to hear good [damage] home again next mail. The fall of Charleston or something [damage] and I hope to have several letters from you, my darling [damage] no Washington letters. I sent you by last mail a [damage] two enclosed to Governor Seward because his was [damage] in the British mail, bag sent to the foreign office by Colonel Neale and I was afraid your letters of not so enclosed [damage] be delayed longer than if sent first to Washington. I [damage] these will not fail to reach you.

If unable to send by this mail a letter to General Seymour³³¹ to accompany the coins I shall by next mail when it can be [damage] to him with the coins. Meanwhile however J.V.L. Pruyne can have charge of the coins and the Japanese letter. But the formal presentation should await my letter. The large coins are the *obang*. The others I will enclose in papers with names. I hope the Siamese coins reached you safely. The small gold dollars I send are coined in Manila and were presented to me by Captain McDougal.

I have ordered for you and Sue a set of sables of 25 skins each. These will be purchased at the Amur. The best are only found in Kamchatka. They will cost a little over \$400 each and could be worth in gold in New York more than \$1,200 each. If Charlie wishes a sable for Abby he can order one through Mr. Hall of C. W. Brooks & Co. Yours may reach you this next summer but perhaps not till I reach home. The fur in these is nearly 1½ inches deep and yours are to be most carefully selected from all that are bought. If you do not wish them, you can sell them. They will form the largest size capes and cuffs. I wish to atone for my absence as much as possible, though I do not feel entirely responsible for it.

³³¹ Truman Seymour (1824-1891) was a major general in the Union Army.

But as it is nearly 11 o'clock, I will close my darling. I am thoroughly tired out. I have been engaged in packing two boxes for you and in writing for the government³³² the entire day and my back aches. It is wonderful that my head does not but I have been remarkably free from this affliction. My head is as clear as a bell, though this country would appear sufficient to crack any head.

Good night, my precious wife and child. You are about commencing the duties of the day. Darkness surrounds me. We cannot even enjoy the same day so inexorable is our distance from each other. But thought and love have no material limits. Kisses and good night.

R.H.P.



Kanagawa, October 30 1863

I assure you my dearest I have had a busy day and feel thoroughly tired out. I have just heard the 9 o'clock evening gun fired and I expect to be occupied at least till midnight, and as Mr. Hall has kindly consented to remain on shore and take all my letters with him at 8½ a.m. tomorrow I hope to add a few lines in the morning. I do not know as I have said that Mr. Hall is of the firm of C. W. Brooks & Co. who own the vessel now here.

With regard to the silks sent via New York I would say you may find many patterns like those in the boxes now sent and others better.

I think you had better give Mrs. [Abraham] Lincoln a pink, also a white dress with the stripes on, Mrs. F[rederick] W. Seward one of above kind or a green one. Mrs. Ira Harris same. Mrs. Edwin Morgan same. Mrs. Governor Seward black with stripes and a plain one. Harriet Weed same, and Mr. Weed, for other daughter, a handsome one.

You may wait for most of these till the *Maggie Atkinson* arrives and Charlie may say to Weed if he think, but you will send a dress for Miss Chase. It is quite an object to have the things come in free of duty. If they do not come in free of duty, you can confine your gifts to the President, Governor Seward, Weed and [Ira] Harris. But I hope Mr. Weed will be able to manage all. Charlie had better speak about it to him as soon as you receive invoice, perhaps he can get the order for the admission of the three boxes at once when you receive this with the bill of lading. If so then you will be ready for the articles as soon as the ship arrives.

With regard to the photographs sent by Mr. Hall I would say I will send you a printed description of the India and China ones. The writing is rather obscure and you may not be able to decipher some of it. I expect to send shortly a panoramic view of Yedo not yet

³³² See <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1864p3/d454>

ready. The album of Japan views I send should be broken up and all placed in one volume having room for some new views, say a dozen. Perhaps two volumes will answer, say one India and China and one Japan. Be careful and have a good artist paste in the views with gum Arabic or best material in use. Accept these as a New Year's present also. I wish I could give you a better one and I know more acceptable, a good kiss. The panorama views can only be partly matched. It may be well to have them first booked with silk. Let the books have plenty of leaves (short) at back so as to admit of all these being placed in and not bulge out, you know what I mean, short stumps of paper.

I shall be delighted if all these reach you safely as I know you will never tire of examining them. They require close examination and will never weary you as you will see new beauties each time. You will have to be very careful with them till they are properly secured in a book. Let the books have a good wide margin. The pictures will show much better. In the book for Japanese views (large) leave a page or two for panoramas of Yedo.

I will send you no more silk so do not be frightened. I hope to escape the asylum at Utica. It may be well to send Mrs. or Miss Olcott a dress. Of course Abby and Sue don't need dresses. I think you will find some for little Abby.

Let Dr. Clark, Wyckoff, and Armsby see the photographs as soon as they reach you. Also Dr. Vanderpoel and Van Vechten³³³ and Mr. DeWitt.³³⁴ I like those who can appreciate such things to be gratified. What a splendid architecture enriches India. It is a pity heathenism is enshrined in such splendid abodes. The panorama of Lucknow only enhances the Palace, the city itself is magnificent and of course covers much more ground. The panorama is twice as large but I could get no good copy and perhaps you have enough. Certain it is you will have two of the most splendid books in Albany. I have asked Mr. Hall to insure what he will forward.

October 31

Every time I resume writing, dearest, I think of some of the articles in the boxes. There is wood for a cane which was presented to me by Lieutenant Commander Young of the *Wyoming*, which was part of the British ship *Meriden*, flag ship at the bombardment of Fort McHenry on which Key wrote the "Star Spangled Banner." This ship has been long used as a hospital ship at Hong Kong and is now broken up and lying at Macao.

There are some books descriptive of foreigners by the Japanese artists. You will see how the U.S. flag predominates. Please send one to the State Library and one to the Congressional Library and one to Mr. Weed. I wrote till 12 last night and then, Mr. Hall coming in with some friends, I foolishly took a glass of light ale for the first time in months. As I was a little excited I thought it might serve to make me sleep well, which I did, but

³³³ Although there are many people named Van Vechten in the Albany Directory, this is perhaps The Reverend Jacob Van Vechten.

³³⁴ William H. DeWitt (d. 1872) of Albany.

for the first time in a year, if I recollect rightly, I have a headache.

The day is beautiful and there is no doubt the *Eldridge* will sail. Indeed she is now moving from the anchorage to a point where the wind will strike her more favorably. But I write on as long as Mr. Hall remains. But here he is, saying he is ready to go, but will wait half an hour. He is very polite but I should not detain him especially as I can resume writing for the mail which closes this afternoon. What you gain here, you would therefore lose in that direction.

And now, my precious wife and dear child and dear Sue, I send you all my most heartfelt wishes for a Happy New Year. May God bless you and keep you and us, sparing our lives, preserving our health, filling us with his love and granting our family a full and free salvation through his Sovereign Grace.

Please present the compliments of the season to all my friends. I take it you will have sufficient New Year's presents for all. You will be able to find a dress for Abby if you wait for the other silks for most of the Washington ladies. Give her one for New Year.

The silks cost me 60 *itzabus* here and at that rate taking account of exchange etc. should really be worth as many dollars in New York. But they are made to order and are very heavy and rich and of such silk as you cannot buy even here, certainly not at home. The pink silk cost 65 *itzabus*, the others 54 and 55, I should have said, instead of making an average.

Farewell, my darling wife and boy till this afternoon. Meanwhile with father's love and constant thought and longing for you and home, accept this poor substitute for his actual presence. May God spare us and enable us soon to meet is the prayer of father and husband,

Robt. H. Pruyn

Sue you must wait till this afternoon.



Kanagawa, October 31 1863

The vessel is not yet under weigh which carries to you, my beloved wife, via California as long a letter as I was able to write, and early tomorrow morning these lines will take their departure towards the setting sun, destined I hope lovingly to meet its predecessor as it shall terminate its eastward flight.

I am happy to assure you that Ber and myself enjoy excellent health, though the prospect I had of improving in weight has not been realized. If you can imagine such a thing possible I think I am even thinner than when I left home. I have sent you two vignettes which will enable you to judge for yourself. They are far from good. I may secure better ones, better printed by the time the *Onward* leaves.

You will find in the packages sent to you a letter addressed to General Seymour and some coins, also a Japanese letter and translation, all of which with my little Charlie's coins and your silks and ivories I hope will arrive in good order. Charlie may consider the large *obang*, worth here now \$100, a New Year present. It was given to me by the Gorogio. Strictly speaking you know I cannot receive presents but as this was given in acknowledgement of *Harper's Family Library* of 176 volumes (which I had purchased from Mr. Harris) the day before the fire, I suppose no exceptions can be taken. The government were about presenting such a coin to the state and I offered to buy one. General Takemoto Hyatto no Kami³³⁵ said this could not be done, nor could one be given. It would be a precedent which would occasion trouble but if I could give anything, say a book or so, he thought it could be managed. Thereupon I reminded him I had already presented *McCullough's Commercial Dictionary*, 2 volumes, and said I will now present for the use of the college in Yedo this work, the *F[amily] Library*. Remember now they belong to the government. If anything happens to me come and take them. This was at 5 p.m. At 2 a.m. only 78 volumes were left and some of them damaged. I had afterwards to jog their memory as to the present for the state, and as General Takemoto had gone out of office, I was obliged to bring the whole subject to the attention of one of his colleagues. You will have the result. Let me soon give you the coinage of Japan. First, copper cash of which I send you some old and new specimens. The old the smallest and best. About 1,400 of these make one *itzabu*. $16\frac{1}{3}$ *tempo*³³⁶ also make one *itzabu*. Next we have the little silver $\frac{1}{4}$ *itzabu* called *isbi*.³³⁷ Then the gold $\frac{1}{2}$ *itzabu nishi*.³³⁸ Then the silver *itzabu*.³³⁹ Then the gold 2 *itzabu* piece *nebukin*.³⁴⁰ Then the gold 4 *itzabu* piece called *cobang*.³⁴¹ Then the *obang*³⁴² now worth 262 *itzabus*. So that if I sold that *obang* it would yield in the United States in bills more than \$150. So you see Charlie will be a large capitalist. In giving prices the Japanese say an article is worth so many *rio*.³⁴³ But there is no such coin. It is simply a designation like the Pound Sterling. A *rio* meaning simply 4 *itzabus*. I forgot to include a parcel of *itzabus* which omission I will supply by first opportunity. I think I have included in the coins for the state all the above varieties. I had some very old and curious copper coins sent me from Yedo a few days since, but no price was given. Had I sent them now the value would have gone up too much. Being able to hand them back if an excessive

³³⁵ Takemoto Hayato 竹本隼人 was a Foreign Minister.

³³⁶ *tenpō* 天保

³³⁷ *isshuban* 一朱判

³³⁸ *nishuban* 二朱判

³³⁹ *ichibugin* 一分銀

³⁴⁰ *nibukin* 二分金

³⁴¹ *koban* 小判

³⁴² *ōban* 大判

³⁴³ *ryō* 両

price is asked, there will be a tumble in the copper market. The Japanese are sharp at a bargain and they get rare prices from some visitors who buy in a hurry. The market is spoiled this way. But such occasional successes make it difficult for others to purchase on reasonable terms. Fourfold is frequently asked, two fold the real value and selling price always. The only exception is silk. One price is asked and no abatement made. It is far more pleasant to deal thus. For if by chance a raw dealer comes along who has had little if any dealing with foreigners you suppose he is marking up his goods unreasonably and you fail to buy when you could if you knew he were honest. The true value of the article depends so much on age and merits you cannot always discover at sight that to purchase properly great experience is necessary. I have had, as you can see, considerable experience and I can purchase now to very good advantage. The dealers now know I can make a tolerable guess as to the real value of most of their wares. I think I do not on the average pay more than 25 percent beyond what a Japanese purchaser would pay. One thing is remarkable about these traders. They never run down each other's wares, nor will one standing by prevent you from purchasing an article inferior to one he has on sale. They invariably aid each other. Everything unsold is cheap and good whether they own it or another. There is nothing like opposition anywhere or in any thing. If you are in a store neighbors will join in and often express surprise you do not at once give the price asked and praise the article and pronounce the price reasonable and uncommonly low.

We have had a little episode which has given all the Americans much satisfaction. When Captain McDougal left here for the south, he carried a British mail for Hong Kong and also, as an act of courtesy of course, Mr. Morrison, the British Consul at Nagasaki who was on his way to England on sick leave. When the *Wyoming* reached Hong Kong (as we learn from the *Daily Press* published at that place) the *Wyoming* entered by the eastern passage, keeping up steam and sufficient headway for steerage, and without dropping anchor, sent a boat to the shore with the mail and Mr. Morrison. Before her boat could get back the captain of the port made his appearance and commenced reading the Queen's proclamation requiring vessels of war to depart within 24 hours. As the *Wyoming* was not to anchor even for an hour he was left to read without any hearers and when the boat returned Captain McD[ougal] quietly steamed off for Macao. Before reaching that place he met the steamer *Emeu* (British) of the Peninsular & Oriental Line with her shaft broken in two places and offered to tow her into the harbor of Hong Kong. This offer was gratefully declined as a boat had been sent for a steamer which was momentarily expected. Captain McDougal then said he would lay by her until a vessel reached her so as to ensure her safety, which he accordingly did and then pursued his voyage to Macao. This courtesy of Captain McDougal in such marked contrast with the offensive manner in which an odious order was enforced by Governor Robinson³⁴⁴ of Hong Kong is very appropriately

³⁴⁴ Sir Hercules George Robert Robinson (1824-1897) was the Governor of Hong Kong 1859-1865.

commented on by the press, and the Governor most roundly censured. The British Admiral Kuper sent to Captain Price of the *Jamestown* a warm letter of thanks to Captain McDougal for his courtesy on this occasion. You may give the substance of this to Charlie for Mr. Weed to use as he sees fit. But perhaps it will reach home before this letter arrives. I wish it to appear in some form in our papers and Mr. Weed will know the best way. I do most sincerely hope Captain McDougal will be promoted for his great gallantry at Simonoseki. He is an excellent officer.

A week ago the regatta commenced and continued two days. I will send a program via California. The British fleet had 74 boats entered. The *Jamestown* had three boats, one of which, the first cutter, took a first prize and two, the captain's gig and launch, took second prizes in their respective classes. Both these boats would have been first if the race had been fifty yards more, as they were rapidly gaining and were not beaten five feet. Neither were expected to win either prize. The whale boat of the American merchant ship contest beat all the whale boats, including three of the French fleet. It was rowed by a crew of blacks and I had the band play "Dixie" as they came to the stand to receive the prize. There was a curious and novel race in cook's tubs from a vessel distant about 200 yards to the stand. The tubs were propelled by a double paddle, one end of which was dipped on one side and the other on the opposite side, and as there was a great tendency to whirl around as to go forward the paddle had to be whirled around the head very briskly. One of the tubs reached the stand safely, one was blown far off its course and two most treacherously slipped from under their occupants, who managed nevertheless to reach the stand, either in or above their tubs, somewhere between them and the bottom. The boats of the *Jamestown*, having only ordinary service sails, did not compete in the sailing match on the following day, which by the way was not very interesting as the course was long, part of the time hidden by the intervening vessels lying in the harbor and besides occupied quite a long time. One class of vessels was started however immediately (and without waiting for the return of the preceding class) on being able to reach the place of starting and thus the race was enlivened as much as possible. As some vessels sailed very badly, the fastest of the class came very near the slowest of another and we consequently had about a round robin of sails. The bands, one from the *Sémiramis* and the other from the *Euryalus*, stationed on either side of the stand, gave us choice music well played. I believe the home way of expressing this is "discoursed sweet music," which is most abominable.

When I have completed this sheet I think I will try and stop. It is now nearly 11 o'clock for I have been interrupted to examine, sign, and seal my dispatches. Everything is out of the way for this mail so I will let tomorrow's mail take care of itself for the present and think only of you and home. You may therefore expect a small contribution by the way of Marseilles, which will leave less of an unpleasant gap in your receipt of letters.

Mr. Cochran's papers in Mrs. Dudley's will case have not yet reached here. I brought with me my memoranda of what took place when she signed etc. the will so I am ready. Who knows but what I may yet be home to act if the will stands. I suppose considerable

and perhaps a long litigation will take place.

By the way, the narrow scarfs I send are much used here by gentlemen, both around the hat as a protection from the sun and around the body as a substitute for suspenders. Therefore keep a few. You will find some superb specimens of agate. The elephant is carved from wood and lacquered. You will find a stand for it, I think it is marked. The packing rather used me up. I was all in a tremor. I would rather write all day. But the Japanese do not understand packing for a sea voyage and it is easier to do things than see that others do what is needful. Though Ber thinks it is impeding. It is a relief for me to forget it. In my morning walks I dodge the sentinels. I do not fancy the continual presenting of arms. As it is I cannot avoid the operation being gone through with at least four times before breakfast. My French colleague is the most particular. If I called on him ten times a day each time a file of his guard would be turned out as I left. I am the only minister who has no guard. British, French, and Prussian have sentinels and guards. I have declined one, though I have consented to allow a guard each night at the Consul's. Mr. Fisher, while he is building, is outside of the foreign settlement and he has a wife and child and Miss Mann and he feels easier and it is quite proper. I will avoid it as long as it is safe.

It does not look as if the Swiss treaty will be made soon or the Prussian treaty ratified. I see some European papers have said I have not favored the Swiss treaty. This is a mistake. I have however been compelled to insist on other treaties being made if that one is. This accounts for the charge. The Swiss minister³⁴⁵ is a very excellent man and I wish him every success.

I have just stopped and given Charlie a blast about sending his Charlie to an Episcopal school. I am afraid Abby has no good government. You and Sue should interfere and give him no peace if his wife shirks her duty now. What a miserable set of men we Dutchmen are! We are worse than nothing. I will join M[aurice] E.V[iele] in forming a society with exclusive privileges.

I have sent you a few small tortoise shell boxes. I hope they will reach you before New Year's. They may prove quite useful for the little ones. How is Baby? I hope she is well. I suppose she misses me a little.

I had intended to send seeds and grape vines at this time, but Mr. Hogg has gone to Shanghae on business and I feared to undertake it. But we have reason to hope the *Onward* will go to San Francisco in a few weeks. I have some lily roots for you, magnificent lilies as large as your head and so fragrant you can scarce bear to have them in the house.

It is now midnight. Therefore once more good night. I hope to rest well, and with renewed spirit write a few pages tomorrow. Good night, dearest.
R.H.P.

³⁴⁵ The Swiss minister was Aimé Humbert (1819-1900). RHP never mentions him by name.



Kanagawa, November 16 1863

I have just finished a letter, my beloved wife, to Mr. Cunningham of the firm of Russell & Co. who returns to the U.S. by the French steamer of December 20 or January 20, accepting his kind offer to allow Bertie to accompany him and his family. He has offered to allow him to travel with them on the Continent or to make suitable arrangements with some friends for his earlier and more direct return. So you see, my darling, I am disposed to give you all I can, although unable to give you all you desire. I pray that Bertie may reach you in safety and I know he will prove a very large installment in what you desire. Before you get well over rejoicing at his return, and while the hoof and hide of the fatted calf which you will have eaten are still left, I will come hobbling along.

I was inclined at first to oppose Ber's return as it put to flight certain projects I had formed for visiting Jerusalem and other historic and sacred places, but as I do not wish to be selfish I am very willing to embrace the opportunity now presented, as Ber will be about a month at Rome and can go through Switzerland etc., etc.

Mr. Cunningham is from Boston and has had charge of the affairs of his house at Shanghae. He once before returned from the East with a fortune, which he lost by endorsing I believe. He has been in the East now less than three years and goes home with a fortune of over half a million. Fortunes have sometimes a rank growth in the East. His has been made so speedily by the rapid growth of Shanghae and the enormous increase in the value of real estate there. He has a wife and two small children. Bertie may derive much advantage from his association with a gentleman of Mr. C[unningham]'s extensive information and excellent character.

Japanese affairs are improving. [The Daimyō of] Satsuma has agreed to pay the bulk of the British indemnity, £25,000, and the government has withdrawn the letter of aggression threatening the expulsion of foreigners. It still wishes to negotiate for closing this port but that is all for buncombe. There is a good deal of humbug here as elsewhere. There is much of human nature in Japan and the person who comes here expecting to be nearly out of the world finds himself greatly mistaken. The government has given me leave of absence as requested for six months, conditioned on things being so much settled as to allow of my absence. I think 6 months will elapse before I can avail myself of the leave and then it will not do to go via Suez but, life and health permitting, you may expect me one year after Bertie and perhaps in less time if he prove a laggard. The next mail may bring letters that allow earlier leave.

I do not expect to go to Yedo to reside, at least not this winter. But I am today sending up some furniture which has arrived, hoping I may safely return next spring. I might perhaps be safe there now.

But in the present position of affairs frequent conferences with my colleagues are necessary. Besides it would be very dull to be there alone as Portman occupies a separate house. It will be lonesome enough here without Ber. I propose remaining with Mr. Fisher till February, when I am provided a house here, or till March should I conclude to go to Yedo.

In a few days a vessel will leave here for San Francisco by which I will send you a photograph of Ber and of myself, not to show how handsome we remain but that you can see that we are not very unwell.

My last letter from you was from Saratoga August 12. I am delighted you went there and hope it has proved serviceable. I want to see you as stout as you once promised to be, but I fear you are not keeping that promise but getting thin like Sue. Then again I wish my dear little boy more rugged and strong. I wish I could have been with you. That carpet [ridden] so extensively in the *Arabian Nights* is the thing most needed in these out of the way longitudes. Railroads and steam are slow coaches with these distances. I should have delayed any ministerial labors till balloons were perfected. Then you and I could have soared above sea sickness and triumphed over the waves and distance at the same time.

My letter today will not be a very long one as I have many letters to write but you will receive another cover by the same mail as a vessel will leave here in three days which will meet it at Hong Kong.

We rejoiced exceedingly to hear that Sumpter was a heap of ruins and hope by next mail to hear that the city of Charleston, that hot bed of secession, is in our possession. Our home affairs look encouraging and I hope no reverses may have befallen any of our armies. I think we may then feel sure of an early peace. This war has been a sad blow to our country. It has given occasion to bad feeling and ill-natured remarks. I am at a loss to know which has been worse, to be at home and witness the excitement and see the wounded, or to be at this great distance and see the ill-concealed or unconcealable joy at every revenge we have sustained. The old Adam makes me often desire to see a day when we can indulge in some not very good natured return. John Bull is ignorance personified sometimes. And it certainly is too hard to bear at times when the specimens I meet sit in judgment on our affairs.

Charles' purchase of U.S. stocks for me was very judicious. But I wish the Life & Trust Company paid and the [debt] of Savings Bank, which I presume however has been done. Let him keep his eyes on your old house opposite the Delavan³⁴⁶ for me and buy it if it ever sold near the late price, making due allowance for the currency. I will be able to furnish you with enough to pay for it with what you have the coming year. I begin to yearn more and more for old things as the objects of the past fade more and more away.

I have little inclination to add much to this letter as everything written till December

³⁴⁶ The Delavan House was a hotel on the corner of Broadway and Steuben in Albany. It advertised itself in the 1863 city directory as the "Largest and most Popular House in Albany."

1st can be sent if no accident happen to reach you much earlier.

Captain Price of the *Jamestown* has been favored with the presence of his brother-in-law Mr. Paine of Troy. A week ago yesterday we had in our little Church Mr. Paine of Troy, Dr. Simmons born in Glens Falls, Dr. Vedder in Schenectady, Bertie, myself from Albany and many others from New York City, Long Island, etc., etc. It is strange to see neighbors meeting at this remote place. Mr. Paine has been two years in Europe and Bertie can profit by his experiences of travel as he will take nearly the same route.

I have had the satisfaction of having my conduct most beautifully endorsed by the government, especially my correspondence with the British Minister to which you may have seen public attention was somewhat directed, it having been announced that a sharp correspondence had taken place. This is very pleasant. At the same time I am told in almost so many words it is impossible to give me instructions which may prove applicable and I am told to exercise a sound discretion. It is rather strange that in a letter of Governor Seward of July 12, the day before the *Wyoming* left here for Simonoseki to pour shot if necessary into the vessels, that he should have left to my judgment the employment of her guns if necessary for the protection of the Legation, Consulate, or American citizens. We are safer now than before and have gained with the Daimios and lost nothing with the government.

I have thus far had all my conduct approved and hope to be able to say the same when I leave.

I have a few moments left, my precious wife, after having written a letter to our dear Bertie with more cautions than he will have the patience to read. He thinks he is able to take care of himself and has often been inclined to think I was doubtful of it. Such is not the fact, but I was always telling him to take care, either when on the bay or on horseback.

The weather is quite cold for Japan. We have ice in the streets the thickness of a shilling and a good heavy frost. But flowers bloom, the strawberry has blossoms. I yesterday had some cauliflower fresh from the garden, have had green corn also this month, the camellia is in bloom of course and in the fields the tender green is bursting forth just beside fields where crops are being gathered. It is perpetual spring so far as verdure can make it so.

But pleasant as it is I am sick of it. Letters have not yet reached me from Washington, but copies through the British and French Legations have been furnished me, giving me instructions under which I am now acting.

Had I been all ready to go under my conditional leave of absence these would have necessitated my stay. It is easier to get in than to get out of the harness. I know many however would be glad to take my place. And what a grand thing it was considered in October 1861. Shall we receive good unalloyed? It cannot be expected. You will stand by me in my determination to shirk from no duty. This year will probably pacify Japan. The government cannot resist the pressure which must now be brought to bear.

I hope to write satisfactory letters before the ships leave for California which will indicate a good prospect so far as the U.S. is concerned.

I have no time to read over your last letter for the purpose of noticing some subjects I had proposed, but will reserve them. Your purpose as to Rutgers College is all right. I will probably give more than you or Charlie might feel warranted in doing.

Presuming the sum is made up they can wait till I get back. Should it not be you can give \$500 for me to complete the endowment. But it will be as well to delay unless necessary to do so. I can then put mine in some different shape. But you know about my ideas and can act as you think best. If I were home I suppose I would do more than the above, especially under the soothing influences of the persuasive gentleman who overflows with milk, honey, oil, wormwood, and other sweet spices.

But time is up. This must go to the mail or it will not reach you. I could not write yesterday, being in a very lachrymose condition below the eyes. My fountain has not overflowed so much today and writing has been tolerable. But I could not snatch a moment till after 12 o'clock. Visitors and Mr. Portman with some dozen sheets of my letter to be examined and signed occupied me and it is now 3½ o'clock, mail closing at 4 o'clock

My dear, precious wife and boy, adieu.
Robt. H. Pruyn

My Dearest Sue,

Take your share of the above. It is all I can send. Kiss Jennie and Charlie for me and believe me, affectionately, Your Brother,
Robt.



Kanagawa, November 29 1863 Evening

My Dear Wife,

As Bertie is to leave on Tuesday for Shanghae the preparation of the necessary letters and papers for him and my dispatches for two mails, one via San Francisco the same day, will oblige me to make my letters by both routes shorter than usual. I am now unable to say whether he will leave on the French steamer of December 20 or January 20th from Shanghae. But as Mr. Cunningham did not write to me by the last mail I hope it will be the earlier day. As he is very anxious to return home I don't feel as if I should detain him. And as Mr. C[unningham] is a man of high character and intelligence who has been over the route, and Ber will have the advantage of being with his family, and as Russell & Co. have been agents for the line in which they will go to Sicily, I think no better opportunity for his return could be found.

Mr. C[unningham] proposes to pass some time in Rome and I have requested that Ber

shall make the tour of the continent with him, which he kindly offered if I should not desire his direct return.

I am without any letter from you later than August from Saratoga, when you had just arrived, the last mail having failed by reason of an accident to the line east of Ceylon as well as just after leaving England. But we fortunately had an arrival from San Francisco bringing papers as late as October 11, removing our sorrow at the reported defeat of Rosencranz. Every mail we expect decided news and yet with so much of late to gratify them always is found some alloy of anxiety.

I really do not wish to say much about Ber's departure because it makes me think too much of what cannot be, my going with him. I will only say therefore, accustomed to great distances, I am inclined to look on the brightest side and pronounce one year not so very long after all. How very quickly it passes when it brings us to a period and an event which we dread and why, when joy and home smile even though in the distance, should the year prove a laggard? I hope therefore 1864 will not prove a cripple, but with unfaltering step will preserve his youthful tread even when his foot shall pass the winter sorrows of December. May it therefore, while a happy one for the country, be also happy for us as the year I shall be homeward bound! It is a comfort to me to know that, though while I write, a large margin must be added to that year, it will be largely reduced and half obliterated by the time these lines reach you. Though small comfort, it is some comfort. And then it is a great comfort to know, if Ber shall be spared to reach you safely, that the time will pass so much more rapidly when you shall be able to hear so much of Japan and of myself, and accept him as the first installment of a reunion.

Things continue quiet here. The government has agreed to pay Russell & Co. the amount of their bill of damages, \$10,000 for the interruption of the voyage of the *Pembroke*. So you see, my course with the *Wyoming* is not regarded by it as particularly hostile to the Tycoon and affords additional proof of my being right in that affair. I hope my friends did not regard me as having been rash or vindictive when I thought I was only quite fair and only disposed to maintain our national dignity. I see by the San Francisco papers the citizens of California could not well understand our position and am therefore prepared to have some disquietude if not misunderstanding at the East, but I suppose Governor Seward will make it all plain when the proper time comes. I am sorry for the killed and wounded, but I am proud of the affair. But I fear this is only a repetition of what I have said in some former letter. I feel however that you must be interested in the question or my own account if not on public grounds.

I took a ride last week to a temple within 5 miles of Yedo accompanied by Mrs. Hepburn, Mrs. Fisher, Mrs. Schoyer, Mrs. McDonald (British) and Miss Mann, with the husbands of the married and several other gentleman and had a most agreeable time. The government of this place tried to induce me to give it up as dangerous and bid farewell to

Mr. Portman. When I arrived at Ichinomia,³⁴⁷ the village of the temple beyond the river in advance of our escort, we found the teahouse filled with two-sworded men and imagined the governor by some inconceivable mistake had told the truth when he said there was a festival at the place, but I recognized some of my old Yedo guards who reported to me for orders, having been dispatched for that purpose from Yedo, in all 20 *yakumins* there. The same number at Kawasaki where I proposed to cross on my return, and the same number with me, quite a respectable troop. My orders were simple and agreeable: take some *chow chow* and go back to Yedo or ride with me to Kawasaki as you choose. This they were very willing to do. We had a pleasant ride of about thirty miles. And after a few days everyone was right, though Mrs. Hepburn, unused to riding, said that for two days she was almost unable to turn herself in the bed.

I send you by this mail a duplicate invoice of silks sent you by the *Maggie Atkinson*, so that Mr. Weed may procure an order for their delivery with or without duty as may be right, so that the boxes need not be opened in New York. The boxes look large but is because Nos. 1 and 2 are treble, two of wood and one of tin. Indeed on reflection there are at the sides three thicknesses of wood and one of tin. Box No. 3 wood and tin. The tin and wood inside boxes of course are made loose. As I have written fully about these silks this day by the *Onward* via California I need say no more. I also send by *Onward* three books of Chinese paintings, elegant, and four Siberia silver grey squirrel for a cloak, which I hope will have been received before this reaches you.

I have supplied Ber with letters to all our Ministers and Consuls at important points, some of whom I personally know, and with a passport as bearer of dispatches. M. de Bellecourt has also given him a diplomatic passport. These will be of great service not only in expediting his journey but also in their sightseeing.

As these lines will probably reach you so many days after receipt of letter by the *Onward*, there is not much inducement to write more, particularly also as I expect before January 1 to have two more opportunities direct to California.

I will therefore give this route the preference today and send eastward all I have to say and can say, using this letter for the purpose of regularity in the dispatch and receipt of letters, which I will here forth be able to observe better than in the past, as we have now a connecting line with China twice each month.

I hope that shortly after this reaches you, you will begin to receive letters from Bertie. In writing to him you can send to care of Ministers at Rome, Paris and London.

And now, my beloved wife, I will close. I do not feel even like writing to you. Every spare moment I can seize for a little chat with Bertie I wish to embrace.

I said all I know in the way of caution and to health and safety and pray God, in his infinite mercy, may spare him to reach you and that you may be made happy in his presence.

³⁴⁷ Ichinomiya 一之宮

My little boy and also Sue must dispense with a letter this time. I begin to feel as if more and more away from home. With Ber with me I had a little of it, a good piece of it, but I pray we may all be together soon. I shall soon begin to count the months. So courage and hope and faith.

Kiss my dear boy for me. I know how faithfully you will remember our Ber who will now be midway, connecting link between us. You can by writing to Paris and Rome hasten his journey if you think best.

He has been much hardened here by air and exercise and has developed well. I hope he has a good foundation for continued health. After travel he will have had rare advantages, which I hope will be of great service in his studies and that mind, body, and heart will continue to make him a true man.

Adieu, my dear wife, and child and dear Sue. God bless and keep you with my love to relations and friends and the abiding and faithful love, my beloved wife, of your husband.
Robt. H. Pruyn

I think I may have time to fill this sheet, as Portman has not finished the dispatches yet. So it is, we always write up to closing of mail. And I have half a dozen letters and large packages for the Department which I will send via California. The weight will be so great as that nearly \$30 postage will be saved to the government. Quite an item in these war times.

I celebrated our wedding day a week ago by particularly remembering you and drinking your health at Mr. Fisher's, where I dined. I have no doubt you remembered the anniversary.

Mr. P[ortman] has been with me and I have finished my government letters. I have barely time left to send my several messages to my dear boy and Sue who are never forgotten by me. Kiss them for me and receive for yourself an overflowing supply. Give my love to Abby and Charlie and children and to Cornelia, Alida, and Mary and all my friends who keep me in remembrance.

It is a dull and dreary day, raining copiously and getting quite dark at the hour of 4 p.m. Bertie has to take my letters to the British Consulate to see that the postage is properly charged and he is anxious to be off before there is the crowd there which puts off letters to the last. But I dislike to send blank paper.

But I must do so. Adieu my dear loving wife. May God bless you and allow us all to meet soon is the prayer of your loving husband.

Robt. H. Pruyn



Legation of the United States in Japan

Kanagawa, November 28th 1863

My Dear Sir,

This will be handed to you by my son Robert C. Pruyn who accompanies Edward Cunningham Esq. of the firm of Russell & Co. on his return to the United States.

I had anticipated having the pleasure of seeing you this winter as I have leave of absence but the unsettled state of affairs here will not justify my leaving.

Any assistance in sight seeing you can give Mr. Cunningham or him will confer a favor on me, and I shall be happy should any of your fiends visit these uttermost parts of the earth to reciprocate the favor.

I remain, very truly and respectfully

Your obedient servant

Robt. H. Pruyn

Honorable Henry S. Sanford
Minister Resident of the United States
Brussels



Kanagawa, November 30 1863

Bertie leaves me, my beloved wife, tomorrow evening in the steamer for Shanghae for the purpose of leaving that city on the *Messagerie Imperiale* (French line) of the 20th December and should Mr. Cunningham and family be detained, to remain with them till January 20th and then take the same line.

The departure of the *Onward* for California the same day causes every moment of my time to be occupied. I have prepared all my dispatches, 6 in number, and was felicitating myself on the prospect of writing you at greater length than I had supposed practicable, when an officer made his appearance with a message that the governor had arrived from Yedo to see me at 4 o'clock if convenient. As their business relates to the settlement of the *Pembroke* affair, relative to which I have written the governor, I must see them as they probably propose paying the money at once and so I will be able to send news of the payment instead of the promise.

The *Onward* is to leave at daylight tomorrow. Ber in the evening. I will write therefore today by the former vessel all in my power.

I expect you will have received, before this reaches you, the intelligence of his proposed return. Though it appears like cutting me off entirely from home and friends, I do not feel

at liberty to say anything against it. We have canvassed this subject. I have tried to make him and perhaps myself think that it might be well for him to remain. But he is anxious to prepare for college and he is very decided as to his wishes. On the subject of his education I will write at some other time. He leaves me. I should be less willing, knowing you would, were I to stay longer, be more urgent to try to reach me. This will now be impracticable as sufficient time before I hope to leave to justify the expense. I can truly say there are many considerations which greatly lessen the pain of parting. Here he has always of course been a cause of anxiety, not that he has been reckless or thoughtless, only I have never supposed him as prudent as I have been. Here we have of course been less together than at Yedo. He has been often at tea with Mr. Brown and Mrs. Fisher, etc. and then I have always been anxious for him as sometimes of late he has stayed beyond darkness setting in. While I do not think he would incur danger by remaining, I should never forgive myself for detaining him should he remain and any accident happen. Then again I had anticipated the pleasure of traveling with him on our return. Whether I will now see certain places, should I be spared, will depend upon finding some companion desirous of diverging from the line, which it will not do to attempt alone. Bertie can have no chance like that presented. Mr. Cunningham has been over the route twice I think. He has therefore the necessary experience and knowledge. He will be accompanied by his wife and family and will travel carefully and slowly. Bertie cannot fail to improve in the company of a gentleman of such high character and so great attainments. You know Mr. C[unningham] of the firm of Russell & Co. He once before left China with a large fortune lost at home in aiding brothers. Now as the head of the Shanghae house and by the enormous advance in real estate he returns having made more than half a million in less than three years. He is said to be very benevolent, having greatly aided the missionaries at Shanghae and being at the head of every enterprise there. His intention is to land at Messina, stay a month at Rome and proceed through Switzerland to Paris. As he kindly said he would allow Ber to travel with him unless I wished him to hasten on his journey, I have said that I regretted his leaving me principally because he was likely to miss those very opportunities and gratefully accepted his offer. I enclose Mr. C[unningham]'s letter. You will be able to form some estimate of the man.

It is now announced that the *Onward* will not leave till Wednesday morning. I will therefore be able to write more in this direction though less via Shanghae.

The governors have this moment left me. What will happen next? Four governors waited on me to ask what reception would be given to an embassy to the U.S.? They have not asked my colleagues what will be done in Europe, though they asked me, and say they will now submit the question to the government and when decided will see my colleagues. The senior governor, Takemoto Kai no Kami,³⁴⁸ is the sole samurai of all the Ministers and Governor of Foreign Affairs in office when I arrived. Death, fine, imprisonment have

³⁴⁸ Takemoto Masatsune 竹本正雅 (1825-1868) was a shogunal retainer from Kai Province.

visited many, promotions of a very equivocal character have been the rewards of others. It is difficult to say what will be the next move. There are veteran diplomats here who would rival Talleyrand or a Metternich. I think Louis Napoleon would find his match. I do not think an official can be found among the Japanese who will admit the sun shines without doing it in an indirect way and he would deny it, strictly if some superior winked, though its rays at the time might be so dazzling as fairly to blind him. But you will care for none of these things.

Our little Church had 14 attendants Sunday. The Episcopal Church I presume much fewer, at least such was its condition at the last account I had. The chaplain [Bailey] is not very popular and from what I hear does not even among the Japanese stand very high. Indeed Custom House officials, it is said, have lately demurred to sending female servants there. I suppose this is slander however.

I wrote you an English officer had joined last communion in Church. Mr. Brown has had several interviews with some British sailors in the fleet who are members of Christian Churches and one or two who are enquirers. Thursday evening a prayer meeting is to be commenced for the sailors of the fleet here, with a prospect of a very good attendance. Mr. Brown has had a severe attack of the gravel.³⁴⁹ Mr. Thompson of the Presbyterian Mission preached Sabbath before last, Mr. Ballagh yesterday gave us a very excellent servant in the Interview at the Well of Samaria.³⁵⁰

I send you furs of the Siberian grey squirrel which will be enough to make a cloak which will cover you from head to foot. I purchased them from Mr. Hill who has just brought them from the Amur where he has resided half a dozen years. The three furs contain 550 skins, only a small portion of each being used, so as to preserve a uniform color. The legs being reddish would mar the beauty. Mr. Hill will deliver them to Mr. Brooks who will pay for and forward them. I also send by Mr. Hill a package containing three Chinese albums with paintings on rice paper; very fine. Mr. Vail bought these for me in Shanghae and writes me he placed a description of the pictures in the books which I was unable to find. I presume however you will have no difficulty in comprehending their meaning. I will forward the descriptions you will receive. Please add these to my dear precious Charlie's museum. He may be rather too young at present to handle them. They are very frail and you will have to observe great caution in exhibiting them. You will think the Chinese have exquisite taste in coloring. I should think however for what I have seen the beauty of these females is slightly exaggerated, or else they keep their best specimens home, where you will agree with me all sensible and good people should be.

I have received no letters from the government in reply to my dispatches relative to the burning of the Legation or the *Wyoming* affair. Governor Seward wrote me saying I would have leave of absence if affairs here would allow. Perhaps it is not so much actual

³⁴⁹ A common term for a kidney stone.

³⁵⁰ A reference to John 4:1-26 of the New Testament.

leave as promise of leave, but however intended, with absence of these replies and as affairs stand I am not justified in leaving.

Five boxes of tea were sent to you care of Messrs. A. A. Low & Co. in the *Burgermeister Duckwitz* from Shanghae, subject to freight and New York charges. Mr. Baker, who acts as agent here, wrote to Low Brothers requesting them to forward to you.

December 1 1863

But my darling wife, I must close this letter, as I wish to have as much time with Ber as possible. I have a sinking of the heart which does not invite much writing even to you. You will have abundance of time to get a letter to him in Rome care of our Minister there. Should he leave Shanghae this month he will probably be in Rome till the end of March, and if he leave in January, till end of April. The next place to write will be to Paris and then London. Address to him as attaché U.S. Legation in Japan, care of, etc., etc. Rome Paris, etc., etc. In London, to the care of Charles L. Wilson Esq.,³⁵¹ Secretary of the Legation, or else under cover to such respective gentlemen. I have asked Ber to write to you when he leaves the mail steamer at Messina, also from Shanghae in case he does not leave until January, also from Rome, Paris, etc., etc., etc. With this and what you will learn for him by the way you will be able to make calculations as to best place of address.

Only think twenty five mails more and letter writing from Japan may be ended and I may, if life be spared, send letters from the way side! Four of those 25 will have steamed away before this reaches you. Perhaps the number reduced to even 20. See how time flies. I know of only one way of making it fly more rapidly, but the remedy would be too much like disease: give promissory notes payable in 90 days. Better to draw bills on London for salary than that. We will have none of either.

I hope you will not think I have written too little by this mail. Two small sheets go via Marseilles this evening to prevent any break in the regularity of your receipt of letters, though when you see the date you will be disappointed at its having been already anticipated.

And now my beloved, with love and kisses to you and my precious boy and dear Sue and all relations and friends likewise to be remembered. Your loving husband once more says adieu.

God bless you,
Robt. H. Pruyn



Kanagawa, December 1 1863 6 p.m.

³⁵¹ Charles L. Wilson was from Chicago and, before becoming a diplomat was a journalist.

This evening, my dear and beloved wife, Ber sails for Shanghae distant 1,200 miles. He is now writing a few lines and we await Mr. Fisher. He commenced a letter today, which is partly finished, but finds it easier to commence another. Although I feel like crying much more than writing I must send a few more lines. I have only sent you two letter sheets thus far via California, and two small ones via Marseilles, but you will readily excuse the small measure. Nor do I know what I have written.

We are to dine with Mr. F[isher] and then, if Ber receives a message that the Captain of the *Granada* will be there, he desires to attend some amateur theatricals at the United Service Club. If so he will not be off till midnight and I will go with him and see whether I can get up a laugh. He attended the first one given. I did not. They appear to be regarded as not objectionable. Part of Mr. Brown's family were there and I do not feel as if Ber should be denied the pleasure.

I have nothing to add. Hoping you will soon have the pleasure of seeing our dear boy. I shall endeavor to conjecture the time of your meeting and rejoice with you. Yet I do not suppose he can be with you till in May, possibly not before the end of June. You will hear of his movements after February, much earlier than myself and though I do not think he likes to write much, and as he is to write to me, may not be very punctual with you. I shall hope when he gets home you will spruce him up. The dinner bell rang. Adieu my beloved. R.H.P.



Kanagawa, December 17 1863

Geliefde Vrouw,

When you open this envelope you will be disappointed at the paucity of its contents. But it is difficult to write much when you are quite sure that by opportunities, days and even weeks later, letters will reach you earlier. We have a ship which is expected to leave for California in 10 days and still another early in January.

I can give you additional reasons for excuse, such as a most homelike old fashioned cold in the head, which has withstood mustard and hot water to the feet and *nux vomica* and mercuries etc. to the stomach. I am trying homeopathy: a foolish correspondence which the Swiss Minister has forced on me, and a long letter of 3½ pages (now being copied) demanding of the Japanese government indemnities for the property destroyed at the Legation fire and for outrages here, but I will not occupy the time left me in excuses. But as my morning visitors have been driven away, will devote a few minutes to you and then send Ber a letter to Shanghae to be forwarded to Rome if he have left on the steamer of the 20th December.

I have received letters from you to the middle of September. Those for Ber I will send

to him and continue to do so, as long as there is a chance of their reaching him before he arrives home. I am in hopes he will get many from Shanghai this month. Mr. Cunningham expresses such hope in a letter received since Ber left and says he does not in any event expect to be detained beyond the 20th of January. He says he proposes to give Ber the charge of the expeditions on the way, which will relieve him and be useful to Ber. I will send you via California his very pleasant and satisfactory letter.

I shall repeat my caution to Ber about flannel and changes of clothing to meet the changes of temperature.

We have nothing very important here since last mail, except the entire British indemnity has been paid and I shall demand \$32,000 tomorrow. This evening I am invited to an entertainment on the British ship *Persens*, but shall not go as my cold would be increased. Captain Kingston of that ship is the President of the United Service Club just formed here, of which I am an honorary member, and I think in rolling nine-pins there I added to my cold if I did not get it there full-fledged.

I expect at the end of the week to go to Mr. Fisher's, who has got at last in his new house. I suppose I will not get back to Yedo before spring. This will depend on circumstances. I shall stay away if unsafe and particularly if I am compelled to employ force here to bring about a settlement of claims.

On the first Sabbath of the month I was ordained Elder of our Church, still holding the office of Deacon. The prospects of the little Church are encouraging. The attendance is about 30, sometimes more, the members etc. commensuring half that. There is considerable enquiry now in some of the British fleet. At the sailors' prayer meeting last week 6 were present and they remained on at our meeting which occupied the next hour. We have reason to hope as we pray that this may extend. On the *Jamestown* also we have one or two pious sailors.

We have had a brutal murder this week, not by a Japanese, but by an Englishman by way of variety. The murderer is a man by the name of Browning with whom I had a conversation a few days ago. He came to the Consulate where I was sitting in Mr. F[isher]'s audience and commenced a long story which I could with difficulty stop. He was then much excited and appeared to be a very unreasonable and unsafe if not unsound man. He was boarding with a Portuguese, also a violent man. It appears each was apprehensive of an attack by the other, and had expressed such fear. Browning came to the house at dusk and was denied admittance as he had not paid his board. He got over the fence, entered the house, came out with a Japanese sword and cut down the Portuguese, then attacked his servant, also a Portuguese who was unarmed. This servant stated on his death bed that when he saw Frank struck and fall he supposed Browning was using a stick and he himself did not know it was a sword till, on trying to escape from his attackers by climbing over the fence, he found his hand cut off. Both men were horribly mutilated and both have died. Browning had been teaching French to Mrs. Schoyer and son and she says he was in the habit of taking his revolver and pointing out words in the lessons. This and other

equally unpleasant eccentricities led to his discharge and though Mr. S[choyer] had paid \$570 for a month's tuition for his son he claimed \$1,000 damages and it was about this he insisted on talking to me. I now hear he said to Schoyer, "You had better pay me this amount. You are a rich old Jew and you do not know of what I am capable." Unfortunately, by the British law he must be tried at Hong Kong and the Japanese will probably come to the conclusion that we foreigners have the bad habit of covering up crime which we so greatly complain of in their administration of justice.³⁵²

Mr. Fisher wishes me to thank you for your care of Georgie.

Your box has not yet made its appearance. I have reason to believe it is now at Shanghai. If so, Ber will take out his things. I had already told him to buy in Geneva or London as Mr. C[unningham] might advise a good watch and will now write your wishes. I had directed Russell & Co. to pay his passage as far as Messina and have also given him bills on Barings, to use if necessary, for £200. I have also written to Messrs. Barings to make any advance he may wish. As such a *carte blanche* is rather to be guarded, I sent them his photograph and signature. I also asked Mr. C[unningham] to supply him with funds and procure repayment from Messrs. B[arings] or from you if he preferred. He writes me he will make all needful advances and reimburse himself when he arrives in Paris. So I think Ber will have money enough. I wrote to Messrs. B[arings] so as to make provision if he became accidentally parted from Mr. C[unningham]. I suppose he cannot need more than the £200 for his expenses on the continent unless he is more extravagant than his father or mother.

I have told him in Rome to get a few of the rosaries blessed by the Pope for Mary etc., etc. I am told quite a commerce is carried on in these very indispensable articles of Catholic faith. Also some coral ornaments at Naples and mosaics at Rome and Florence. When I come along I propose to buy the balance of the stock on hand.

I am glad I will be at a safe distance when the Japanese silks arrive. The truth is I wish to do something for you and as the boy says "I have gone and did it." Plead not guilty, but must not do it again. Now I am to be a model of abstinence and saving. Am now engaged with the British minister, French minister and both the Admirals in picking up old porcelain. That is the rage—crackle. By the way I will send via California a capital picture of the two Admirals, British and French ministers, Captain Sir Roderick Dew³⁵³ and myself taken for the *London Illustrated News*. Also an excellent one of Bertie, also a painting in watercolor of the action of the *Wyoming*.

But now, my darling, I must close but will send another sheet if I have time after I have finished a good letter to Ber who may feel lonely.

So now let me unbottle my semiweekly supply of remembrances. Love to my precious

³⁵² This event is recorded by John R. Black in *Young Japan: Yokobama and Yedo 1858-79*. He identifies the two men as A. H. Browning and Frank Jose. (*Young Japan*, p. 280)

³⁵³ Roderick Dew of the Royal Navy (1823-1869) was the captain of the *Encounter*.

boy and to his dear Aunt Sue with kisses for all of you, warm for this season. And love and kisses and regards to Charlie and Abby and family and Townsend, etc. and Baby and Cornelia, Alida and all that side of the family tree, and to all your side who think of me and inquire about me and to the brethren which are most together beneath the two steeples,³⁵⁴ my faithful remembrances even including old Growler.

I shall especially remember you all on Christmas and New Year's. The days are gliding swiftly, one more after of this and we may eat a fatted turkey together which you will kill for the prodigal's return. Adieu, God bless and keep you all in the daily prayer of your husband with faithful love.

Robt. H. Pruyne



Kanagawa, December 31 1863

On the last day of the year, my beloved wife, I have an opportunity of sending you a few lines which will reach you probably after those parcels yet to be written and sent via California, the first of which will leave in all probability within a week. I have just finished a letter to Bertie and two to Mr. Cunningham and will devote to you the hour left.

As Mrs. Fisher is preparing for a grand party this evening by way of a house warming I am writing under difficulties which I would have avoided by going to the office, were I not a little lame. I have strained my hip slightly which I accept as an intimation that I am getting old.

The last letters from home are October 8th, the contents of which I will more particularly notice hereafter. At this time I must disabuse your mind as to our luxurious living. We are strange beings, always wanting most those things which we cannot get. An onion is of little account with you. What would Harper³⁵⁵ say to selling them at 6 *itzabu* cash? He could sell at that figure all he has if they were here today. But oranges, oysters, etc. for 100 guests a month cost here less than \$10, yes less than \$5. A good head of cabbage, or celery or cauliflower, are to be had only if two xxx . They are worth their weight in silver. So you see what you value most we are deluged with and vice versa as the boys say. So with mutton which will sell here for \$4 a quarter good. A turkey cheap at \$15. Cheese 6 bits per pound. A ham 15 cents per pound. Common soap 30 to 40 cents per pound, and as a general rule whatever is cheapest home is dearest here.

In servants I abound. I have dismissed some, but as I expect to go to housekeeping in

³⁵⁴ "Two-steeple" was a nickname for the First Reformed Church's North Church, dedicated in 1797, which has two steeples.

³⁵⁵ Robert Harper was a green grocer in Albany.

March I have kept nearly all. My comprador is now in Yedo only occasionally making purchases as gifts which I send to friends to whom I wish to be under no serious obligation. You see I can buy for an *itzabu* 94 eggs there. Here they sell for 33 to an *itzabu*, and so with all game and poultry. I pay him 8 *itzabu* monthly. Then I have my butler Takiso still, 16 *itzabu*. Skaso 12 *itzabu*. Kingsaboro 8 *itzabu*. These all personal servants. Now with me at Mr. Fisher's, my *betto*, 8 *itzabu* and housekeeping, 12 *itzabu*, cook, 16 *itzabu*, washerman 12, assistant 8, tailor 12 *itzabu*, all monthly wages besides *chow chow* which means food, a pretty fair list. You see my assistant washerman irons, so I must keep him and my cook because I could with difficulty supply his place. I enter into these particulars to give you some idea of Japan life. When invited to dinner I take at least one of my boys with me. That is the rule. So no extra servants are necessary for any party giving or a dinner. Each guest has his own servant behind his back. Now each day by way of ornament I have two. If Bertie has acquired any lazy habits as is likely you will soon dissipate them. Here he and everyone must conform to the usages of the place, so everywhere.

So you see, my darling, if you and I were at a table together loaded with every home and foreign delicacy, we would scarcely talk a dish in common. Those which I would reject you would esteem most inviting, while the despised mutton, cabbage, onion, apple, etc., etc., would stand at the top of the pyramid of luxury.

There is nothing new here. Though my demands have gone in, the government is still consulting me and asking my assistance whenever it meets with any difficulties with the other powers. One country occupies a strange position here, always the resort for advice.

I will be able to fill this sheet in a rambling way.

I suppose Ber is now on his way to Canton if not there already. On the 12th of December he went up to Hankow, 700 miles up the Yangtse River. I will send you Mr. C[unningham]'s letters via San Francisco. Mr. Broman³⁵⁶ who went over to Shanghae with him says he was at every meal. He was quite homesick however and wished himself back with me. I suppose he will leave on the French line January 20th, which will bring him to Rome in March. Mr. C[unningham] writes he is pleased with him. Ber told Mr. Broman he liked Mr. and Mrs. C[unningham], but they were very formal and he was not used to that. It will do him good. There is great ceremony in the East. Each day all appear at dinner as if at an extraordinary dinner party at home. White coat, etc., etc., dress coat. I told Ber to buy all that was needful. He may have a fine Day and Martin polish³⁵⁷ by the time he reaches you. Pray begin a grand series of entertainments and have a plate always ready for me. I shall pop in upon you unexpectedly.

I have forwarded to Ber the letters for him last received here and shall send the next batch to Rome.

I was much pleased to receive by the last mail a letter "fully and cheerfully" approving

³⁵⁶ Perhaps B. A. Bromann, who was a clerk for Wm. Dato & Co., Shanghai

³⁵⁷ Day and Martin was a British boot blacking company.

of my sending the *Wyoming* to chastise Nagato, nor has the government yet failed to approve a single particle of my official course which I opine is more than some of our ministers can say.

This is most miserable paper. It stains so, as to render writing slow and painful almost.

I wish I were with you now, ready to wish you and my dear boy and Sue and all a Happy New Year.

Two years have passed. If my life is spared, the next will surely see me on my way home. Our affairs must certainly be soon settled. Perhaps the spring may see the commencement of my homeward bound course. You may be certain the earliest practicable start will be made.

I suppose by this time my letters wishing you a Happy New Year have arrived. I hope to reiterate those wishes tomorrow and I am sure you will be thinking of me and dear Bertie. As the evening sun shall set, your eyes will still be closed in slumber and as the darkness disappears before the rising sun of the New Years with you it will gather its deep drapery around our evening sky. But this world is too solid to look through, and its central fires cannot lighten up any short through route. If balloon traveling shall succeed there will be one unexplored route which will baffle the most ambitious and energetic Yankee.

But I will now close this letter being sent merely to fill a little gap in my correspondence. The *Ida [D.] Rogers* will leave next week and the *Glencoe* and *Henry Bingham* will not loiter much. It will be strange if you do not receive therefore three packages before this laggard arrive.

With deep love for you, my darling, and my precious boy and dear Sue and Abby and Charlie and all, and Happy, Happy New Year. I am, my beloved wife, your very Robinson Crusoe sort of a husband with no man Friday, but solitary amidst millions.

Robt. H. Pruyne

1864

No. 1 Kanagawa, January 6 1864

The *Ida [D.] Rogers* which will carry this letter from the shores of Japan, my beloved wife, leaves rather unexpectedly. It is consigned to a house in San Francisco which has the reputation of keeping letters a long time before delivery. As the *Glencoe* will leave on the 10th I will send the most of any package by that vessel which is not expected however to make as quick a passage as the *Ida [D.] Rogers*.

I have finished my quarterly accounts and my yearly budget, all but signing the copies, and hope no interruption will prevent my writing a letter which will not greatly disappoint if it do not quite meet your expectations.

I send you two letters received from Bertie, as well as two from Mr. Cunningham. Before the *Glencoe* sails I hope to hear of his safe return to Shanghae as well as of his departure for Hong Kong etc. I have no doubt he is homesick still as Mr. Broman reported him to be but this feeling will wear off as he approaches nearer home, indeed as soon as he gets a real start homewards. Now he doubtless wishes himself here again. I send for dear Charlie an envelope with Ceylon postage stamps. And I have asked Mr. Brooks to send him some South American and Sandwich Island and British Columbia stamps.

The Japanese will send another embassy to Europe which will leave by the French line of steamers in July. Whether the same or another embassy will go to the U.S. I cannot now say. I suppose my demands must first be disposed of. The French minister [de Bellecourt] who is going home encourages this mission, as it will give him a year's employment in France. The sole object sought is to have this port closed. It is an impracticable and foolish idea. It would cost at least \$2,500,000 to pay for real estate here, to say nothing of damages by destruction of business. Land rents in some instances here for what it was worth in 1862.

I have just succeeded in getting for our Church a lot of land which would sell today for \$30,000. If business continues as good as it is now the mission will be supported after this year from the rents received for a portion of it. By expending \$15,000 as much

annual rent could now be attained for it. But no such thing is contemplated. A residence for at least one missionary may be built, a Church, and at one corner a store which will cost say \$2,500 and rent for \$400 per month.

Then such improvements may be made from rents as the future will justify. An American merchant told me yesterday he would give me his check for \$1,000 if a good handsome Church in the center of the lot be at once built. We have \$3,000 besides, which will nearly if not quite suffice.

We are now holding prayer meetings, to be continued through the week. A very interesting week is in progress in the fleet now here. Five officers and seamen are now members of our Church. I will give an account of this in a letter to Dr. Clark by the *Glencoe* or [*Henry*] *Bingham* which I know will be acceptable.

January 7

I will try and execute any commission sent me but it is difficult to do so. You must buy as you see articles which please. There are no stores with stocks of goods as at home and the best articles are gathered from the Daimio houses. The older the goods are, the better. What is most to be avoided is to buy articles made for sale to foreigners. Most of them are soon to fall to pieces.

I shall send you some excellent photographs, one magnificent, the French and British ministers, French and British Admiral, Captain Sir Roderick Dew and myself which by the way you may see an engraving of in the *London Illustrated News*, perhaps by the time this reaches you.

As you suppose, the firing on the *Pembroke* was not the act of the government. We are as friendly with the government as ever. We would have been despised if we had not given that blow.

I suppose, as you say you have given all the news about the Church and Charlie all items about business, that some letters must still be on their way. I have as yet no knowledge of when the ship may be expected or of any price except that it is to cost \$300,000. What? Gold or Treasury notes? If I could know something about these things it would greatly expedite affairs here. I have to put everything off now, waiting.

I often smile at your early ideas of business here. My letters to Governor Seward alone would fill a book, nearly 90 last year with a larger number of enclosures, 6 already this year, by this mail. I assure you this office is no sinecure, but I believe as laborious as some half dozen of the other missions combined, probably a dozen. My letters this month fill more than 50 foolscap pages of Mr. Portman's close writing.

I assure you I need no eyeglasses. I can read as fine print as any one, and you will see your mistake made me doubtful as to the corner house, but then you only added a cipher.

When Charlie writes again, pray ask him not to copy his letters in a press. They are

difficult enough to read without that improved blessing.

I hope the effort to endow the college was successful. I think none of you would have suffered much had you given more. But you will improve in that respect. Was the Church debt paid? I hope so. I am glad Dr. Clark pleases the old fogies. Propose me as a member of that ancient and humble fraternity. I intend to grumble with a forty bellows power hereafter. I feel confident to be able to distance every competitor except the old fogie of 20 years' maturity. I cannot beat an old one of that youth.

Having a copy which I have not used of one of my letters to Colonel Neale, which formed part of "the angry correspondence" with the British Minister of which the newspapers were full, I send it that you may see that I kept my temper. Governor Seward highly opposed that correspondence and said there was much in Colonel Neale's letters of which the U.S. might justly complain.

You may read it to any friend but as it is rather irregular to use such papers, keep it in the family. I venture upon it to show you how careful I am. Colonel Neale, after the receipt of that letter, wrote me a private one saying he thought it unnecessary to prolong the correspondence. He was so busy. He read his letter to the British residents. He kept my reply for his own use, having enough to satisfy him. I have just put the Swiss Minister through a disciplinary course. I think with 10 years practice I could do better. Colonel Neale has been only 27 years in the public service.

You see I have miserable pens this evening and my supply is exhausted. My government box has not arrived nor yours either. Yours went via Puget Sound. I suppose it will turn up some day. My chief regret is Ber cannot avail himself of what was sent him, unless indeed they have reached him now at Shanghae.

January 6 1864

I hope, my darling, you had a pleasant New Year's. I remained in all day having fortunately a slight lameness. Mrs. Fisher had about 80 calls in person and cards from half as many more. The French and German residents send cards around, some call in person afterwards, others let the cards suffice.

The changes in Albany have been fearful in number, though I am happy to see many of our old friends are spared. I hope Mr. Ten Eyck has entirely recovered from his sickness. Do not fail to give him my kind remembrances.

Of Mr. Rathbone's death I was not prepared to hear.³⁵⁸ He was so active. He certainly looked as if he could outlast Mr. King 20 years, and yet he has gone before Mr. Ten Eyck, General V[an] R[ensselaer], etc., etc., aged as they are.

I send you a few copies, invitations etc., to show you how industriously some are engaged in furnishing this small community with amusement. Bear in mind we have had

³⁵⁸ Joel Rathbone, an Albany businessman, was 57 years old when he died on September 13 1863.

more than 4,000 seamen here since May with a full complement of officers. We have no Barnums Musicman. But we have young men full of invitation fever. I may find some more to send in next package.

We have had only one murder, a Japanese one-sworded man cut down another Japanese on Monday. Some foreigners arrested, handcuffed him, and delivered him to the officers at the Custom House.

The *Jamestown* has gone after the *Alabama*, which may have gone to Amoy for repairs.³⁵⁹ I did not like to part with the ship now but thought it was my duty. So I send it off as I wished no vessel of war of the U.S. to be in any part in Japan while our demands were pending. I wished them to yield because it was right, not because of my demonstration of force. A small force would have done no good, its absence may be better. We shall see.

I send a sheet of business matters in another package with a lot of miscellaneous matter which I hope will not escape your notice.

I hope Mary Mullen's husband was not subjected to the payment of the \$300 exemption.³⁶⁰ If he were, give Mary \$100 for me. She has been faithful and we must help her.

I do not remember what silks you wished for Aunt Sue, etc. I suppose you will find some in the lot I have sent. You speak at times of my sending cabinets or boxes like some kind I have sent. But I do not remember what I have sent. I sent so many things that everything is mixed up in my mind with the exception of a few articles unusually good. Then I have many things boxed up here. I think when I get back I can supply all as you will not be able to find room for all I am likely to have. I have now a dozen larger boxes.

It is now ½ past 11 o'clock. I think I will go to bed and try and get off another sheet in the morning.

I hope my New Year's salutations reached you in good season and not a day after the fair. My idea was they would arrive within a few days of January 1st, perhaps as early as Christmas. It would have been grand to have had them knocking at your door New Year's Day.

A thrice Happy New Year again, my darling wife and boy. Good night, Good night.

8 a.m. January 7

I have a few moments left to me before the ship sails, as it has been detained to fill its cabin with teas.

³⁵⁹ The *Alabama* was indeed in search of repairs, but they were sought in Europe, not Amoy.

³⁶⁰ \$300 was the government established commutation fee for able-bodied men who did not serve in the military during the civil war.

I have advised you in former letters that I have made demands on Japan for indemnities of the burning of the Legation and for injuries to citizens at this place amounting in all to \$32,000. Besides this there is \$10,000 for the *Pembroke*. You will see without any remarks of mine how utterly impossible it would be to leave with this business unsettled. In the summer it is awful to pass up the Red Sea. Then in August, September and October we have the typhoon months. Except to a case hardened traveler, it appears difficult and to be avoided to leave here except between November 1 and March at the latest. If I knew that the ship could not reach here by December 1, I should be strongly inclined to press matters for a start before March. I hope some stray letter may lead me to see what I can expect.

I should like to have Charlie get something in a New York paper descriptive of the gunboat and its progress. I am afraid the Japanese government is beginning to think it will never come. Send a copy each way via Marseilles and California.

Your letters to Ber to London you had better address to care of Mr. Wilson, Secretary of Legation to Rome, care of the Minister and also to Paris. I hope he will have a safe and pleasant journey and wish most painfully I were with him. I am sure he will be greatly improved traveling with Mr. Cunningham, who has been several times over the route.

After I have had breakfast I will take this letter to Walsh, Hall & Co. office and if they do not dispatch the ship at 10 o'clock as was proposed I may add a few lines more.

The French Minister [de Bellecourt] goes home probably next month as soon as his successor [Léon Roches] arrives, who it is said is to come with two daughters 16 and 17 years of age. He will be decidedly the most popular minister here if that be so.

The return of Mr. Harris here would be dreadfully unpopular. I have read your statement as to his conversation on that subject at Saratoga. His appearance would make an extraordinary sensation. I think he does not correctly estimate his position either here or with our government. And yet he was a very able minister. One of these days, you may understand more what this means.

At this season of the year I think of all of my old friends and acquaintances and would wish all embraced in my remembrances. Don't forget Baby. As to Sue and Charlie they must wait for another mail for a letter specially to themselves. I will try and acquit myself of every obligation in the epistolary line.

To all at the Church I send salutations. I hope the Sabbath School continues to prosper, as also the Church itself.

The papers in Mrs. Dudley's will case have not as yet made their [appearance]. If they litigate so long I may be home ready to act when the grand pacification takes place.

I shall now go to breakfast and close the letter for good, leaving it unsealed however to put in anything I can find time to say.

I am glad your dogs are so good. I wish they were smaller. Should opportunity

present I may send a pair of the smaller kind.

And now, my precious wife, with my deepest and most abiding love for you and my sweet boy and dear Sue, particularly if she keeps out of the army chest. And with kind regards to Charlie and Abby and Townsend and the family of Townsend in general, which are like the stars in number, and with love also to Cornelia, Alida and that branch of the family. Mary etc., etc. I am, as ever, wholly yours,
Robt. H. Pruyn

The call for breakfast actually came as I gave the curl to the final word.

No. 3 January 7 Sheet 2

I have just finished a letter to Mr. Brooks, one to the Collector at San Francisco and three to the Japanese ministers. I have a half hour before this mail closes which I will improve.

The favorable state of things of which I wrote Dr. Clark by the *Ida [D.] Rogers* still continues. Three or four sailors will probably join us next month and a deep feeling is spreading through the fleet. We pray it may reach hundreds more. Perhaps this is the very emergency for which it was founded. This work may be the very one for which it was prepared.

The *Glencoe* is not a first class ship. We are saving our merchandise for the [*Henry*] *Bingham* which is a large clipper ship. But like the *John Jay* it may disappoint us all.

I expect to send some fine photographs by that ship, the best of myself I have seen anywhere.

You will understand, if you think best you must delay scholarship till we meet. If you have the least doubt of our ability, wait by all means. If disposed to act, use all my funds. You need use none of your own till more available. What is mine is yours. Make no distinction.

I have this day informed the government I shall go to Yedo Tuesday and wish to see the Gorogio if leave be not given of Church lot Monday. I think they will do a great deal to avoid seeing me there.

I see the ridiculous charge is going the round of some papers of my instigating the Japanese against the British and French. The English papers say the Swiss minister has so written. I propose tomorrow to call that gentleman to an account. I think he will feel a little cheap, as there is not a shadow of a justification of such a charge. I suppose he has been troubled as was Ber to find something to say.

I will try by next ship to write to Mr. J[acob] H. T[en] E[yck]. I hope he is better.

Your news as to additions to Church was very good but why so few? These times should make everyone think seriously. If here five join each month as may now be hoped, much more should be looked for with so great a duration. Sundays and

Thursdays are the days for the sailors ashore. Last night about 15 were at Mr. Brown's. They had to remain all night in consequence of the storm. They were much pleased to do so. The prospect is hopeful.

But I must now close, my darling wife, to commence again tomorrow via Marseilles. With love and kisses to my precious boy and to Sue and an abundance for yourself, I am ever yours,
Robt. H. Pruyn



No. 2 January 1864
Kanagawa, January 8 1864

Much to my surprise the *Ida [D.] Rogers* is not yet off, my beloved wife. The sudden determination to fill the cabin with teas and a Japanese holiday which led to the suspension of business at the Custom House has caused its detention but it is said it will sail this afternoon. Should the wind fail or prove unfavorable it may be delayed further till tomorrow morning. The notice now is the mail will close at 4 o'clock.

I hope therefore to add a letter to dear Charlie and to Dr. Clark.

I have an interview at 3 o'clock with the land officers about the Church lot and can write till then deducting interruptions which are sure to come in some form even here.

Another long dispatch has been finished for the government. Should I be spared to take you to Washington, I must show you my bulky correspondence. If judged by weight as the old Dutch government balanced accounts I am entitled to a fair allowance of reputation.

The mail is expected today or tomorrow. The overflow of the River Nile which has injured the railroad to Suez, which is built for some miles along its banks, occasions delay now in its receipt. We speak of these interruptions as you would speak of a break on the Central Rail Road.

Having been interrupted by the entrance of Mr. Portman with an additional budget, I hurried through letters for my dear boy and Sue and Dr. Clark which are as much for you as for them and now must go to my land officer meeting.

My object in pursuing these few lines, my darling, was chiefly to give you the latest possible dates from Japan, having nothing special to say and scarce having opportunity to recollect what has been already written.

And now once more adieu. May God pour his richest blessings on you, my dear precious wife.

Robt. H. Pruyn



Kanagawa, January 15 1864

I am in a very bad humor today, my beloved, for writing or anything else. We had a dreadful blow last night. I was restless, had a headache, and when I awoke this morning found one of my windows wide open. And now I have received a letter from the Minister trying get rid of giving the Church lot because my colleagues here remonstrated. I have their written promise, the Custom House seal, possession of the lot and material on the ground for a residence for Mr. Ballagh. I have replied that I consider their whole course on this land question an insult to myself and my government, that I shall not give up the lot but will go on with the building which they will delay at their peril, and then demanded a lease in three days. It is a terrible government to get along with. So full of duplicity and deceit, so faithless to promises, nothing paid and scarce anything ever settled. I do not hesitate to talk plain to them.

I received letters by last mail to middle of October which I shall notice hereafter. They are at the house and I am writing at the office. The governors of this place are keeping out of my way and I will remain to send for them if they make their appearance at the Custom House. They were away yesterday when they promised the deed should be signed and I suppose purposely absent themselves today. Greater patience is demanded here than any one human being possesses.

Your information obtained from Mr. Harris that the Legation was five times on fire while he was here possesses the charm of novelty in this corner of the world. The fact is novel and the way it reaches this point 20 miles from Yedo via the U.S. and Marseilles is charming. I have no doubt, if you chance to meet him, intelligence equally interesting and true may be communicated from time to time. That fire has been smoldering a very long while.

This letter will be taken by the *Glencoe* which sails tomorrow morning. The next day another will commence its travels via Marseilles.

Your box reached here on Monday. The clothes for myself are precisely what I wished. I am obliged to resort so often to the ceremony of dress that I required a substitute for full uniform. Bertie fortunately had an opportunity to take out what was designed for him at Shanghae. So I inferred when I opened the box, as the tin box was open though not a line from him was found in it. I therefore expected to receive a letter by the mail due next day as letters are rarely sent by sailing vessels now. The box arrived before the mail in consequence of an unusually short trip. But the mail brought no letter and I was first worried at his apparent carelessness. But no letters were received by

Walsh, Hall & Co., who are agents of Russell & Co. here, from R[ussell] & Co. and I am sure therefore that by some accident their letter failed to reach the mail in due time. I do not know therefore whether Mr. Cunningham will be further delayed or not. The British Corvette *Argus* which left here a few days ago will reach Shanghae before the French line ship leaves and by her I sent Bertie the letters enclosed to me which are designed for him.

I cannot imagine what nonsense the boy has been writing to his Aunt Sue. I suppose he has been often desperately puzzled what to say. As to Mrs. Rodgers I have blamed myself for the little attention I paid her. Mr. R[odgers] was sick half the time he was here. Still Bertie made up for it in part having seen her ten times where I saw her once. Indeed the night before she left he made me dreadfully uneasy. We had left to pay a parting visit and I had charged him to be back by 9 o'clock. Engaged in writing and reading time slipped away unusually fast and 11 o'clock arrived before I was aware of it and Bertie was still away. I started for him and without the least idea of finding Dr. Hepburn's house open at that late hour went there to learn when he had left. My mind was relieved on approaching the house to find it all open and there his majesty sat near midnight trying to persuade Mr. and Mrs. R[ogers] to stay over another mail. When I burst in upon them all were surprised, saying they had no idea it was so late. I do not wish a half hour of so great anxiety again.

As to what he may have said of Mr. B[rown] it is all the same. If Mr. B[rown] does not please the young it is because the young do not wish to be pleased with anyone. I say again this Eastern world is the last place to send young men. Every kind of indulgence in its most unlimited extent is the rule. I know of no exception nowhere except young Howard Brown³⁶¹ and Ayton Mann. If I committed to paper what I know and what I suspect, the paper should blush.

I expect to send you in a few days by the *Henry Bingham* a box of grape vines and trees and a box of lily bulbs and a box of curios. It is best these shall go forward subject to charges but I will ask Mr. Brooks to write you what the charges will be and to pay them himself if there shall be any advantage in doing so.

Sir Rutherford Alcock is expected here soon, the *Argus* having gone to Shanghae to await his arrival by the next mail when Colonel Neale will leave. He remarked to me this week that it was a dangerous country to be in. There was so much chance after having acquired honor of losing it. He is glad to get away. M. de Bellecourt will leave as soon as his successor arrives, also daily expected.

Oh how I wish our affairs were settled! I have as yet nothing from the government to show whether they intend paying or not. Should I get things satisfactorily settled I have Colonel Neale. I shall try and go with him and M. de Bellecourt. But I am afraid

³⁶¹ W. Howard Brown (b. 1852) was the son of Reverend Samuel Brown.

the negotiation in spite of all I can do will be so prolonged as to carry me into a period too late in the spring if not actually into the summer. I do not feel as if it would be right to leave here so late as to leave me in a steamer on the Red Sea in the hot months and I dread a typhoon. Then again I should be greatly disappointed if obliged to go by way of San Francisco. I do not want to see that city again and I do wish to see Egypt, etc., etc.

I count the weeks and I count the days and assure not one passes, not a sun rises and a day begins, that I do not associate it in thought and wish with the time of my departure. It will be a welcome day if it dawns on me. Whatever of reputation it is possible to acquire I have. My duty now is now the sole measure of my stay.



No. 4 January Kanagawa, January 16 1864

Yesterday, my beloved wife, I sent you a few lines by the *Glencoe* which left for San Francisco at daylight this morning. The mail through Europe closes this afternoon and though expecting that letters of a later date, which I hope to send eastward, will reach you earlier than this I cannot of course allow this opportunity to pass unimproved.

As I have already spoken of a slight lameness and yesterday wrote of a severe headache and threatened cold, it may be acceptable if I say that my exposure proved innocent of injury. My lameness has disappeared and I am in good health and condition except that my old complaint remains, but not stationary I fear. I was weighed two days ago and much to my surprise fully balanced one hundred and fifty four pounds, which is more than I have ever weighed before unless at San Francisco where I reached nearly, if not greater, that weight. I shall accept it as evidence of good health though I have heretofore insisted that it was more likely to prove the contrary. I think it is owing to my taking exercise more regularly now. The British officers here have formed a United Service Club of which the Ministers are honorary members and as they have nine-pin alleys, I resort thither several afternoons each week. I am pleased to learn you find pleasure in looking at the Japanese views, which pleasure will without doubt be augmented on Bertie's arrival as he will be able to enable you better to understand them. The views which I sent in November will be more satisfactory still. I wish more stereoscopic views could be procured, but the photographers now here find their advantage on devoting their whole time to portraits, as there are so many officers here.

The New Year's cake will be very acceptable. I am now satisfied that the peculiar taste of those which arrived last year was owing to the butter being rancid and not to the box in which they were packed.

I think the government would find little difficulty in filling my place if needful. There would be more applicants than for the post of Brigadier. If the Japanese are below par they will probably soon come up again. It is rather strange, however, as nothing appears below par there at the present time. I almost begin to hope our Bellefontaine and Indiana Railroad stock may partake of the benefits of the general resurrection.

You need have no fears I shall be so spoiled here as not to enjoy home again, if graciously spared to reach it. There is less necessity now than heretofore of carrying revolvers. It is rather strange to carry them as we have done. In bed and at Church, on foot and in household, on boat and in the streets and in the country, even at the Communion the ever present revolver has been found. Even some of the ladies carry these pocket toys. But we are now more peaceful.

I regret to hear of Mr. Miller's sad state of health.³⁶² I was hoping for its improvement and that Bertie might be able to take lessons with him. I thought such an arrangement might expedite his studies. Give him a horse or the free use of one and I think he will be willing to forego other pleasures and judging by what he did here may apply himself seriously and regularly to study.

If you expect me to fill any orders you feel disposed to give for Europe send them along soon. It will be too late after you hear of my arrival there. And inasmuch as I will be sure to get some things, it is for your interest that they shall be such as will prove acceptable.

My vases were fortunately saved from the fire. Slightly damaged, they have been retouched and I suppose are in perfect order. They await shipment.

You understand I suppose that via Europe you can only receive letters twice a month. Should the arrivals there time well with the departure of the Atlantic mail, you would have them quite regularly at intervals of two weeks.

Your letter of August 18 from Saratoga only reached me last mail. I suppose it was so strongly tinctured with the pleasure loving life of that resort as to feel inclined to loiter by the way and visit every place of interest.

In your letter of October 13 you refer to letters of Dr. Armsby which I suppose have gone via Washington. I should be very glad, if Kendrick make any exposé, to receive a copy. I cannot be too thankful, when I see how much I was in the habit of going in that bank to see Uncle J[acob] H. as well as himself, that I have no connection with his proceedings. Yet I presume his exposé will only affect those already used up, particularly Henry B[leecker] who doubtless made K[endrick] do what he chose when he had him in his power.

The ink is so thick as to make my writing difficult, though I hope it will be readable.

³⁶² Perhaps Willim C. Miller (d. December 1863), who was an insurance agent in Albany. In a later letter Mr. Miller's death is noted.

I am pleased at what you say in relation to the welfare of the Church. The large attendance Wednesday evenings must be highly gratifying to the Doctor and must be advantageous to the Church, by invigorating the faith and efforts of every member. It is so much easier to live in a live Church. I do hope however the debt is already paid. If the wealth of a Church be a reason why a debt will not prove burdensome or difficult to imagine, it is a far better reason why it should not be suffered to exist at all. If no other motive prevail, a becoming pride should dictate that our new pastor should not be subject to its inconvenience. It would always be a big fear to frighten away every proposed effort to do something. Some croaker at best would be heard to say "First extinguish the debt."

I have a horror of debt, so must Ber have. When his lordship gets home give him a fixed sum and let him save what he can and chooses to save.

I shall not trouble you with any suggestions again as to investments. Those you have made in government stock was [*sic*] not only judicious but patriotic also. You must have, independent of anything I may have at the Works, nearly if not quite 2,500 of income from my stocks etc., and rents. You will have the fund at San Francisco to meet any sudden emergency and should it be needful or profitable do not fail to send for it. Please see S[tephen] Groesbeck³⁶³ for me and say I did not wish my Insurance Stock sold and wish to replace it the first good opportunity. Let Charlie also watch and buy especially if stocks decline. If you wish any advice at any time on these matters do not be hesitant to call on Mr. Olcott, who will not be at all incommoded but will be glad to have you ask his advice. I can send you by any return mail additional funds if required. My savings now are large.

From the lily bulbs I shall send give some to Mr. Olcott for the cemetery and for himself, also to Mr. W[illiam] H. DeWitt. They will grow best in ordinary dry soil, and will be beautiful scattered throughout the cemetery. A few may be sent to the Central Park of New York. There are some of a more ordinary kind among the lot. Dingwall will be able to tell which are the best. The white ones surpass any lily you ever saw. I hope you will receive them in good order. The shrubs had better be loaned to Dingwall for care and to propagate. As Mr. Hogg has put up these I hope you will not be disappointed in them. You had better save a large number of lily bulbs for future distribution after you shall have seen what they are. Let Harriet Weed have a few, as also of the grape vines.

I am pleased to hear of J. Austin's marriage but he must not take his wife away from the Church. It will give him a good excuse and opportunity to come and join it himself. I have no recollection of the appearance of B. Nott's daughters. I know some of the tribe are quite large. But the old flame will have leisure to repent. She has too much

³⁶³ Stephen Groesbeck (d. 1873) was a secretary at the Albany Insurance Company.

vanity however to commence the process yet awhile.

Mr. Doremus has not written me again. I thought my letter to him was a good specimen of diplomacy, which if seen by the one for whom it was more particularly intended must have been more profitable than pleasant. And yet there was not a sentence or word to which great exception could be taken. I suppose you were as delighted as well as surprised at its most admirable good temper and cool civility. I may have been mistaken, but it was written on the full conviction that someone had stood behind the letter of Mr. D[oremus] and would stand before mine when it came to hand. If mistaken in this, no harm has been done.

The *Journal* published at Boston says the effort to endow Rutgers has proved successful, which I hope is correct. The selection of Dr. Campbell³⁶⁴ for the presidency was an admirable one. I suppose he will continue asking for something. That is well. People like that best which they pay for. Measured by this standard they will not be allowed by him to dislike the college.

I see J.V.L.P. is acquiring a taste for political life.³⁶⁵ All right, one of the family will be enough. I can retire. I suppose he has been elected as our city and country is very partisan. But I hope the state has trampled on copperheadism and copperheads.

The result in Ohio and Pennsylvania was equal to a victory of our armies and may prove more effectual in convincing the South of the unalterable determination of our people and of the other hopelessness of the success of secession. How any man with anything in his pocket, in his head or his heart can refuse or hesitate to sustain the government I cannot see.

I have great confidence in General Grant and hope soon to hear of further successes in Tennessee and Georgia.

But I will not write politics and of war. You hear enough of these from home sources. Your scraps in the [*Littell's*] *Living Age* are always welcome. I wish no army news. I receive those items earlier from other sources. I wish home and domestic items. Everything which shows the charms and the changes of home.

I think hereafter you had best send all your own letters direct via Marseilles or at least those via Southampton which you formerly sent via Washington.

Whether I will leave here, if life and health be spared, in December or January next will depend upon what I hear about that ship. It is exceedingly desirable it should arrive before I leave. The anxiety of the government, though nothing is said to me, I am sure exists, and if I left the Japanese might think the ship would never come. Then again it would be desirable in reference to other commissions. I do hope I will not be left longer

³⁶⁴ William Henry Campbell (1808-1890) served as the 8th president of Rutgers 1862-1882.

³⁶⁵ John V. L. Pruyn was elected as a Democrat to the 38th United States Congress and held that office December 1863 – March 1865.

in the dark.

As to the bringing out, I hope Captain Sandford will do it. Captain Comstock³⁶⁶ will be needful for one at least of the other ships, which I will write about as soon as I receive the long promised letter from Charlie.

My dear boy will receive, I hope, via California a good long letter from me, which I must commence at once. So next week I will if possible write a little each day though it is more difficult to write here than at Yedo, as time, if not more under control, could be more certainly depended on when set apart. Now I am liable at any moment to be interrupted by foreigners and Japanese, there only by the latter.

I am glad to read of the Allegheny & Susquehanna Railroad opening. I hope it will improve the value of our Works, as it must do. I say once more I shall be willing to purchase Charlie's share of the ground and buildings at as high a price as any will give, so he need be in no hurry to sacrifice them.

Please remember me to friends. I hope Augustus will be spared and will succeed in his efforts. I hope Edward will show his manhood by going in the army and staying there. I hear and see nothing of Francis. What is his regiment and what [is] the number of Augustus' department?

I hope the war will be finished before Bertie is liable to duty. It would perhaps be well to speak in time and get him a place in Rathbone's staff unless he shall be content to pay his annual fee for exemption which will be better.

If he have a horse, he will want no boat remember.

With love and kisses for you and my precious boy and kind remembrances to relations and friends I am, my precious loving wife, yours ever.

Robt. H. Pruyn

Mr. Fisher is waiting to send letters to the mail and I must keep him no longer.



No. 5 Kanagawa, Japan January 24 1864

The mail is hourly expected, my beloved wife, and I hope it may arrive before I close this letter as then you may expect an answer to your letter written two months ago in nearly four months from the day it was written. I had not intended to commence my letter till early in the morning (Monday) but I have just received a message that two governors of foreign affairs having arrived from Yedo desire an interview at 12

³⁶⁶ Joseph J. Comstock (1811-1868) was an experienced sea captain from Rhode Island.

tomorrow and I fear that if I delay you will be disappointed in the letter I shall be able to write.

I enclose you a letter of Bertie's, probably the last I shall receive, except from Hong Kong, which will reach you in advance of letters received from him direct. As he will be traveling as fast as the mail, your first letters will be mailed by him when he leaves the steamer at Sicily. I have asked him to write to me as he touches at each port by the way. I also enclose a letter of Mr. Cunningham which will serve as a guide for your direction of letters. You may direct only till early in April, say before the 15th, after that to London.

I am much pleased he has had such a good opportunity to see so much of China. He would have ruined it had he delayed his departure and awaited my movements. I of course do not expect to delay a month in such a comparatively interesting country. Richer mines of exploration are open in Egypt and Europe, even should no temptation turn my feet to Jerusalem. As his residence in China for a month became a necessity he could not have better employed his time. His sail up the great river Yangtse terminated at Hankow, a great city of about 800,000 inhabitants 800 miles above its mouth, passing by Nankin and the great cities on its banks. Then again the cities of the coast, Ningpo, Foochow, Amoy and Canton, though better known, are well worth visiting. They have been often described, the other cities seldom, because more rarely visited. If Ber is spared to reach home, no one of his age in the U.S. will have been so great a traveler. I will leave him to spin his own yarns.

I sent you by this ship a box of grape vines etc., and a box of lily bulbs. It may be well to send some of the latter to the Mayor of New York for the central park. I will also send a small box to Mr. Brooks of carvings and photographs etc., which he will send you. The group [photograph] I send you will describe as follows: The figure seated at the left as you look at it, Duchesne de Bellecourt, Envoy Extraordinary of H[is] I[mperial] Majesty. The centre rear Admiral Jaurez. The next, Lieutenant Colonel Edward St. John Neale, C[ompanion of the] B[ath] H. B. Ms. *charge d'affaires*. The figure standing at the left Captain Roderick Dew, C[ompanion of the] B[ath]. The next Vice Admiral Augustus Kuper C[ompanion of the] B[ath]. The next you will recognize without my giving you a name. I send several copies as I esteem it the best photograph ever taken of myself. The group is represented looking at the papers which contained a plan of the fort at Hakodate. But the paper was so held as to cause the glare of light across the shining paper to prevent the impression being transferred to the plate. But it is highly suggestive as it is. We are all represented looking at a blank which is too often our real occupation in Japan.

Colonel Neale may be understood as saying, as he points to Captain Brine's very

invisible plan, "You see there is nothing to be seen."³⁶⁷

I also send in the box some coins etc., and another photograph of myself which will enable you to see that I have not grown so as to render the coat you sent a bad fit. Yet I now weigh 154 pounds. My weight has been very uniformly one ranging from 143 to 147 and perhaps very rarely 148. I do not know but over in California I exceeded 150. But you know I never regarded fat as synonymous with health, or a safe barometer to indicate its degree. I also intend to put in the box a watercolor drawing of the action of the *Wyoming*. I dare not tell you how much it cost. The amount is debited to patriotism. Perhaps *Harper's Magazine* would like to engrave it. But I will say no more about the contents of the box except keep the articles except vines, plants and bulbs and distribute those last so as to please friends at the same time having due regard to their multiplying specimens. The likes would be beautiful in the cemetery. They must not be put in the water. But Mr. Dingwall will understand. The plants he can care for. I hope the grape vines will fare better than the last ones sent.

I have received a letter promising to send commissioners to make a treaty with me reducing duties and think that now I shall not be disappointed. The government appears to be drifting in the direction of a liberal foreign policy now. The wind may hold in this quarter for a few months, perhaps longer as an embassy will leave February 5 for Europe. It will probably go to the U.S. before it returns, though I suppose our government will forgive Japan if it will spare it this infliction. I have advised them not to send unless our relations are improved and that I am charged with the settlement of the demands. And I still hope I may be able amicably to settle every difficulty. But I will spare you political matters, though I assure you they worry me much. The last year has been of extraordinary events and the mind of myself at least been fully occupied and on the constant stretch. I hope a little of rest and peace may now be in store for me during the rest of my official stay here. Then with good news from home, including the restoration of our Union and the consequent close of the war, I shall willingly say adieu to the East and most gladly turn my eyes to the setting sun, that it may rise on our union, my darling wife, after a separation so unexpectedly long.

January 25 1864

I have completed this morning the packing of a box, which after all does not hold half the articles lying in my room to send you.

Enclosed in the box are some ivory carvings, some inlaid paper weights, two tea caddies, one box recently presented me by the government of this place, letter box, with their letter enclosed in same and an original letter from the Ministers on our New Year's with Mr. Portman's translation. A very rare Japanese gold coin out of circulation now

³⁶⁷See <https://perma.cc/AF8S-VXW7>

for which I paid 76 *itzabus* also enclosed and some exceedingly rare copper coins with explanations by Mr. Ballagh. There are a large number little paper flowers.³⁶⁸ Remove or rather unfasten the vines, or the paper around them and put in hot water and they come out flowers or insects as the case may be. I will send a large quantity by other opportunity. I send these as sample. There are also a large number of charms. The ivory ones open by a slide or by unsecuring and in them you will find tops or dice. There are also some of their castings which I have had made into pins. You will also find a few lacquer plates for fruit. I could get no more in. In one of the tea caddies is a little ivory boy which is made so as to have a silk cord pass through. You can wear this as a charm and when tired of it let little Charlie have it. It has no “closes” on.

I have this moment received a message the governors have important business with me at 12 o'clock. I must see them and you will be cheated out of at least two hours of my time this day. Within one week I have wasted at least 24 hours on this war.

2 of No. 5 January 25 1864

I shall telegraph to Charles to get ready one of the other ships for contract and hope to write by first overland mail fully in regard to it. At all events to guard against further delay let everything be got ready for commencement. I write this now as I may be prevented from writing to him today as I intend, if my time is not thoroughly wasted by the long sitting officials.

The interest in the Church continues and prospects are very hopeful. More than twenty British sailors attended prayer meeting yesterday afternoon. The troop ship *Vulcan*, just arrived, has a temperance society already organized and one colored man who leads in prayer and exhorts very creditably. The band on this ship of engineers will leaven more thoroughly the fleet. It is a subject of regret we cannot have all on shore at the same time, but the crews are divided into watches and those who come Sabbath cannot be present at the Thursday meetings. The consequence is a division of the band into two parts and those from one ship do not have frequent opportunities to see the other crews. But we hope a work has been commenced which is of God and He will carry it on. Messrs. Brown and Ballagh feel delighted and encouraged.

I am still slightly troubled about the Church lot. All the foreign ministers are opposed to my having it. But I do not see how they can help themselves. The government has reserved its buildings except two, which it was agreed we should pay for and which Mr. Ballagh now occupies. I have a letter from Yedo recognizing the grant, a map and seal of the governor of Kanagawa and any quantity of verbal grants and possessions is 10/10 of the law here. The government would be pleased to take the back track.

For four weary hours I have been engaged with two governors about a new treaty.

³⁶⁸ These herbaria are known as *suichuka* 水中花 in Japanese.

It is a dark and dreary day but as yet it is understood the mail will close this afternoon and the ship sail at daylight. What I write will be very fragmentary, other letters to Mr. Brooks, the Collector, the [State] Department, and the Agricultural Department filling the intervals.

I am just reminded by seeing one I gave to Mrs. Fisher that I have enclosed in the box two dusters said to be made of the hair of some animal found in the mountains. I had supposed it was horse hair.

The mail has arrived and as the letters may reach me in an hour I shall close this postage and send you another letter, as the present one is rather bulky and you may please yourself by the fancy that you are in the receipt of two letters by independent mails.

Tomorrow at 10 o'clock I have the promise of another visit from my Japanese friends and that a treaty shall be signed the next day reducing very materially the duties. The British and French ministers will then try their hands. I suppose you have noticed the foolish story, attributed to the Swiss minister, that he has written his government that the Americans and Russians are intriguing against the other powers. He attends our Church and after last Tuesday's service he asked if I had seen it and disavowed it altogether. He has written me a letter to this effect a copy of which I shall send home.

The mail has not arrived. It broke down below Shanghae somewhere and though the steamer is in from Shanghae, there are no letters from beyond that port. This is a very great disappointment to me. Apart from the satisfaction of hearing from you would have been that of the prospect of so prompt a reply to your letters.

The steamer brought me the Albany papers you forwarded me of the date of August, the Washington papers of the same date and the London papers of September. The history of this mail I happen to know and it is somewhat irregular. The mail was forwarded from Shanghae in the schooner *G. C. Love*. A swordfish struck its nose, I suppose you may call it, into this schooner just south of these islands. She was so badly damaged as to be unable to proceed on her voyage. Why it occupied so long to get the mail back and started again I cannot say. But here it is at last. I suppose the fish, if yet alive, is not considered a beauty by his relations and if a damsel may have lost her swain, if fish lovers are as fickle as their biped corresponding friends. This fish's nose must be decidedly out of joint.

By the way please say to Charlie I have been looking in vain for any information about the lathe and horsepower ordered when I first arrived. The party leaves here by next mail. He has wished to pay me but I did not know what to receive. He says he will arrange with someone to take it and pay for it. Why could I not have had a bill of it? When things are managed at arms' length a few lines will save much trouble and perhaps loss. So about the ships, I cannot even tell the government what the gunboat will cost. Charlie has not sent one line to show that or anything else about it, its length or width

or depth or anything except that it is 900 tons. I do not wish to complain but see what a mortifying position it places me.

I send by telegraph directions to get ready for contract one of the sloops. I do this to expedite its billing as much as possible. Before he can have plans and proposals my letter will reach him. I wish everything done so that the contract can be signed as soon as my letter reaches him. I am inclined to think and hope I may send for both to be immediately begun. I am promised an early answer. I have not informed the government they are not under way, but simply that I stopped them when their troubles began.

This is about the most unsatisfactory letter I have ever written you. I have been so much interrupted and so much annoyed when interrupted. Two governors have been persecuting me this day with the now stale remark "You have always been so friendly, we are now very much embarrassed. Won't you agree we may do so and so" and the equally stale remark "we will be punished if we cannot get your assent to this." I am tired of this friendship on one side. The consequence is you must stand aside. They agreed not to sign any treaty till 30 days after they had signed mine. I have waived this so far as Switzerland is concerned. Their embassy for Europe will leave about February 5. They wish now to sign the treaty with Great Britain and France before the embassy leaves. This would only leave a week beyond mine if mine is signed when they pronounce. I have agreed to waive this also on certain conditions.

I will send the balance of what I can write in another enclosure. With my love to my dear darling boy and to you, my precious wife, and dear Sue. Your loving and longing husband,

Robt. H. Pruyn



No. 6 January Kanagawa, January 26 1864

The mail, instead of closing this afternoon, it is now announced, will be kept open till 10 o'clock tomorrow morning. And as it is raining this evening it is possible the ship may not get away tomorrow, though it is said she has her cargo on board. As she is a ship of a thousand tons, of light load and a clipper, a quick voyage is expected, in which I hope they may not be disappointed.

I think I told you my coat fitting was in all respects what I wanted. I think you had better send me a good trunk and a leather bag like that I had and which Bertie has taken. The only trunk I have left is my yellow one. If the price has greatly advanced it is not worthwhile to do so. I can get along without and write Barings Bros. & Co. to send me one to Naples. Please get my measure from Carpenter & Kirk. It is better than

Lodge's.³⁶⁹ Should you think it best to send me a trunk, please send me a full dress suit black, with a silk vest black. If the trunk is not sent I can get suit also in London. And I do not know but what if you sent the measure to Barings Bros. & Co. they might send trunk, bag and suit much cheaper. I hardly can think and perhaps you had better leave it alone. I am afraid the price of all would come so high and then it may be so long in coming. Besides, the English traveling trunks are so much better and if you send my measure I can have both, and all ready for me in Rome which on the whole is the better plan. I have a blue dress coat made in Hong Kong, rather loose fit however.

All this is wasted. Can't afford to begin again. I suppose from the fact of your never mentioning anything about it that they have left my name off at the Commercial [Bank] as well as the Albany Insurance Co. Well I am not about to grumble. So I will say no more. The old papers which arrived made me think of it, also the Susquehanna Railroad proceedings. If they have, you need not sell out at the Commercial unless danger is apprehended. But you may ask J.V.L.P. about the Central stock and if he advises that there is to be a movement there, growing out of the payment of its debt, there is the money with Brooks you can call for and invest.

But it is now 10 o'clock and ½ after I see. I will go to bed and, if life and health be spared, will write a few lines tomorrow. I may feel better. I do not like to write to you when I feel so used up as I have all day. So goodnight, my beloved. I cannot say pleasant dreams. You are a little lazy I suppose now that I am away and as it is 9½ a.m. with you. I hope you have finished your breakfast.

January 26 8 o'clock

It is a dark morning and I did not get up till 7 o'clock. I have finished two business letters and we will now have a chat.

It is snowing quite briskly, but the ground is not and will not be covered. That rarely happens. Until last evening we have had no rain since December 9. The weather has of course been magnificent. I never have tumultuous thoughts about giving up luxuries here, but I should like to carry the climate with me. It is sufficiently bracing not to have you enervated. The camellia, the plum and apricot are now in bloom. And it is difficult to reconcile yourself to the thought that it is yet winter. But after all, our winters bring their compensation. Little Charlie would not like it here. He wishes to skate. Others would miss the merry sleigh bells. Boys cannot snow ball. Although in some parts of the country I should judge from some paintings I have seen that they could indulge in that sport as I have seen large snow balls rolled by children. I have sent you one such painting but whether it has gone or is boxed here I cannot remember.

³⁶⁹ Carpenter & Kirk and Benjamin Lodge were both tailors in Albany. A few years later in 1867, B. Lodge was established as the first department store in the city, and remains in business today.

I try to get paintings illustrative of everyday life. In those now sent you see the barber shop, worshipping at graves of ancestors, burning the dead body and killing the living, practicing with wooden spears, face covered with masks, fires, etc., etc. The paintings of insects etc., are in duplicate. I am having others made and may give one of the sets to our State and the College.

I send you two sheets in another envelope with a letter of Ber's etc., etc. I suppose he is now on his way west as the steamer leaves Hong Kong on the 25th of each month. And you should hear from him as early as the last of March, possibly as soon as you receive this, if he mail a letter as he leaves the steamer at Sicily. But I presume you need not indulge great expectations. He will be so occupied with sight-seeing, and Ber is by no means a good correspondent as you have seen. Perhaps he would have been a more liberal one had he not known I wrote you as much as you could well dispose of, more than could prove really interesting.

Mr. Ballagh has asked if he could have some things sent out with the gunboat and I have told him Mr. Peltz can arrange all that.

I do hope that will be urged in fact. Captain Comstock I suppose will stay and supervise the sloop. Let Charlie say to Weed I should like Captain Sandford to bring the first one.

I am expecting every moment a call for breakfast and immediately after the mail is to close. I only kept this open to give you one day's later intelligence. Should the vessel be detained by the storm I will have an opportunity to send a few more lines or another envelope, making 3 in all. On the 1st the mail leaves for Europe.

And now, my darling, once more goodbye. Love to my little one, now I suppose grown beyond my ideas, also to dear Sue. Kind remembrances to all, Betsy, Charlie, Abby and family.

I have been disappointed in not being able to write as I had intended to Uncle Jacob H. and others. I have not the leisure at Mr. Fisher's I would have if alone, nor as much here as at Yedo. But wherever I am, believe me yours, my precious wife.

May God spare our lives soon to meet and then we will settle down the most quiet couple in Albany.

Affectionately,
Robt. H. Pruyn



No. 6 Kanagawa, January 30 1864

I believe, my beloved wife, we had the idea when I came to Japan it was expected

my mind would be so relieved by freedom from business cares as to be of great service to my bodily and mental health. Dr. Vanderpoel sagely remarked I needed relaxation. I have found it with a vengeance, having jumped out of a pretty warm frying pan into an excessively hot fire. Wearied and worn, I sit down to write you a few lines. I enclose you a finished copy of a new treaty which will explain itself. If not already published by the New York papers when you receive this it may be handed to Dawson I think without impropriety, as it goes at once into effect. It is of course public property.³⁷⁰ I may say I would willingly have left out spirituous liquors but this would have given great offense to France, which country is anxious for that modification. My refusal to accept such reduction could have posed an attack to the French Minister here after getting it. And I would have been involved in an angry correspondence with the French Minister. As it is I am involved in one with the Prussian Minister. He accuses me falsely of being hostile to Prussia and having embarrassed his mission. I have denied this and asked for specifications and proof. I shall annihilate him. The truth is while everything creditable is claimed by each minister for himself, when puzzled and thwarted they make American influence a scapegoat and send it forth into the wilderness of conjecture.

Mr. Forbes³⁷¹ is here now. He owns the place of Mr. Van Rensselaer at Bath and is head of the house of Russell & Co. He has an elegant steamer for sale and there is a good prospect of success.

You will see that our country notwithstanding our war still takes the lead in this country, and you will also see that I cannot be persistently obnoxious to the government as I am not to the people of this country either.

I was busily engaged till the evening with Japanese officials and this morning have prepared dispatches to colleagues and to the government. I must write to Bertie at Rome and Naples and I am therefore obliged to ask you to accept a trifling contribution this time to your light reading.

I have now finished my two letters to Bertie and hope you will hear favorable news from him by this same mail or perhaps even earlier as he will have written by the French line which will precede this 10 days.

This will be the shortest letter you have ever received. I have to sign and compare the dispatches already prepared and which Mr. Portman is now engaged in copying and the...[top half of the next page missing]...serves to fill the vacuum between that mail and the next overland one by which I hope to do better.

I must now close, my darling wife, and go to Mr. Portman's. I have been there once and fearing he may be expecting me, I must go again or the mail may be missed.

³⁷⁰ A copy of this treaty is at <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1864p3/d472>

³⁷¹ Paul S. Forbes was a partner in Russell & Co., Hong Kong. He bought the Van Rensselaer mansion, known as Forbes Manor, in 1850.

Make for me all needful excuses, and believe me ever yours with love to you my dear precious wife, my darling Charlie, dear Sue and all.

Ever Devotedly Yours,

Robt. H. Pruyn

Charles must wait till next mail about ships. Let him get ready as I telegraphed.



No. 7 Kanagawa, February 16 1864

There is but a faint prospect, my beloved wife, of these lines reaching Shanghae in time for the mail. The festivities connected with the Japanese New Year have just closed and business has been all but suspended. For fifteen days these have been kept up.³⁷² The Customs House except at intervals has been closed and all from the highest to the lowest have been busily engaged in visiting, drinking *saki*, and I suppose eating abominable things.

I enclose a letter received from Bertie by last mail with some Chinese inscriptions etc., etc., also a postage stamp on a letter I received from Bombay and the Swiss seal. I had cautioned Bertie very earnestly about the danger of being left. As I have not heard from him I infer he reached Mr. C[unningham] on time for the steamer and this early punctual lesson may do more good than my cautions which he seemed to think were as strange as they were unnecessary. I told him being separated from his company at such out of the way places as Singapore, Ceylon and Suez was far different from missing a train at New York, Albany etc., etc., etc.

The mail of November 28 from Marseilles having failed, we received last week that one and the first one in December and your letters of October 28 and November 7 reached me, though we have New York papers of the 27th instant.

I am glad to see you have a Church social gathering. Our Church wants a little mixing up. If the blue spirits and grey and black and white can mingle, well. If not, let the effort be made. I suppose some cannot possibly harmonize in this world.

I should advise that hereafter you send no letters via Washington but duplicates or some of no great moment which may be handed you by others.

I note what you say of your income but do not understand whether my dividends etc., etc., are or are not included. I should be pleased to have a memorandum of just what I have and have invested. As so much time has elapsed you need send none of

³⁷² The first day of the first month in the lunar calendar corresponded to February 8 in the Gregorian calendar.

yours, and it seems fate I shall receive nothing about this till I return.

Most that you hear of Japan is downright nonsense. What Miss Grant said about Mr. Walsh's return sheer humbug. He never thought of it. What you have heard of my movements has been at least true, when received from me. Such nonsense as my taking refuge on the *Wyoming* etc., etc., is to be attributed to other sources.

I shall send some more tea this next week and a bill of lading. I omitted this before as the teas were sent direct to A. A. Low & Co. by their agents here and I supposed all would be right. This time I will send both Chinese and Japanese tea.

Your letter speaks of Bertie's affliction of the eyes. So long a time had elapsed I could not imagine what you meant until reminded of it by Mrs. Fisher. They were well before the letter got as far as Hong Kong. I now suppose Ber has reached the Red Sea and is gazing on its waters and found nothing red in them. Charlie can ask whether he saw anything at Pharaohs Chariot Wheels.

I have already sent you a few of the flowers and insects which open in warm water via California, all I could get in the box. I have some thousands which will be boxed up and go by other opportunities, as also some very beautiful silk horse balls,³⁷³ perfectly unique and elegant. If I can get some candles I will do so, as also some more of the shirt studs. It was a long time before I could get flowers to send but I have some 50,000 now ready in different boxes.

It is pleasant to have you make even allusions to old friends and to hear how they look and what they are doing. I can readily believe these times must bear heavily upon many with fixed incomes which in ordinary times are only sufficient for comfortable support and suppose our friend C[ornelius] T[en] B[roeck] must have been sadly afflicted by his losses on Bank of Albany Stock, etc., etc.

It is a cold dismal day, snowing briskly and Japanese built houses do not keep out the cold as do ours at home. My fingers are cold though there is good coal fire in the grate. I am sitting in Mr. Fisher's dining room at the same table with Mr. Fisher and Miss M[ann] all busily writing.

I sent a couple of surplus boxes of arrows supposing Charlie would use up the arrows sooner than the bows. I will send a few more of each. I suppose you can supply Aunt Sue from the silks sent. Not a yard can now be purchased. Soon the prohibition on xxx if not actually created by the government may be removed. It is easier for me to buy as opportunity offers than execute an order as stores here are not as at home.

I am so glad the dogs please my little boy and are such general favorites. They are larger than some they have here but I felt sure they would live to reach you and they were affectionate and therefore I sent them. I wish now Jumps had gone instead of the other.

³⁷³ These appear to be *temari* 手毬

I presume the statement submitted by Charlie to Cousin Bob is on its way yet. The only one thus far received is showing condition of the Works in January '63 and the continuation of my xxx, but it does not show my investments. I suppose I can make out most of this, but I do not know whether the corner house is in your name or mine, though I infer from the rents not being received in my account the title etc. is yours.

The Japanese never asked French intervention. Do not believe anything you see in the papers.

You will not be disappointed in your Manila articles. The place is not destroyed. I have delayed the order till the seas are clear of the pirates.

I was at Yedo a few days ago and took a long and pleasant ride. Mr. Forbes, who bought and owns W[illiam] P[aterson] Van Rensselaer's place, was with me and a dozen gentlemen and officers, English and American. I have supplied myself with furniture which is now at Yedo. If I go there do not fear. I will be safer than here.

My darling wife, do you think this dreadful absence does not distress me? I cannot describe the sinking of the heart I feel as I hear the fierce winds blow nightly, the only comfort they have power to bear homewards. As to my not alluding to my return, what can I say? You have already anticipated what my decision was, naturally and indeed inevitably. The government has tasked me and I must not take advantage of their confidence.

I am afraid you will find some difficulty in reading my letter this time.

Mr. Portman has now come in with the dispatches and I must close this sooner than I anticipated.

With my best remembrances to all enquiring friends and with deep and abiding love for my precious boy and dear Sue and you, my darling wife, as ever wholly yours,
Robt. H. Pruyn

The Swiss minister goes home via California. He expects to be in Albany on his way to Niagara. I have given him letters to J.V.L.P. and Charlie. Let Charlie suggest to J.V.L.P. to furnish him with tickets on the Central Road.

He is a clever, gallantly prim man. We have had a brush but all is well that ends well.



7

Kanagawa, March 1 1864

A few days since, my beloved wife, I had the pleasure of receiving your welcome letters of November 30, December 8, and December 15 and was delighted to see you continue in good health and spirits. I am sustained by the hope that at least very shortly

after I can hope for an answer to this letter my face may be turned homewards. You cannot know and I cannot describe how irksome a residence soon becomes here. Even admitting it has all the attractions you incorrectly imagine, the sense of weariness becomes almost intolerable. Could you feel satisfied to reside 10 months in the whirl of Congress Hall at Saratoga? Would you like to be shut up in an enclosure even though you had before you for a year the sublime majesty of Niagara? The novelty which at first charmed now nauseates. And a dull leaden uniformity, a kind of houseboat life, alternations of labor, eating and sleeping followed by an invariable tramp, tramp, tramp, constitute each days history.

Mr. Allmand has not yet made his appearance nor has the box to which you refer. In due time both will turn up. But Mrs. Allmand will not be very welcome as it is understood she has left her infant at the city of Norfolk with her husband's sisters.

When I have once written you I rarely calculate, except when letters go via California, when they will reach you, as we very seldom get intelligence of the progress of the steamers. But we know that the letters which left here in the last mail did not reach Shanghae in time for the steamer and I suppose you will receive them at the same time this reaches you.

I will send Bertie's letters to Rome by this mail, which will be the last I will address to him at Rome. As he must be now in Egypt I suppose you will have heard from him at least a month before this reaches you.

I am very well satisfied with Bertie's return. I feel his absence much. I miss the very anxiety I had for him while here. That seemed to occupy my mind and you know employment of any kind is useful in making time pass rapidly. I hope he will have a pleasant visit to Europe, which you will lengthen or shorten as you and he agree. My orders to Messrs. Barings will enable him to stay as long as you think best. He has no limit. If a £1,000 is needed he has it to draw on or more. So you see I can eat his share of the cakes when they arrive with a good conscience.

I intended to send a dog in the place of Jumps by the *Benefactor* which sailed this day but I could not get one in time. I am pleased to hear you have at length had tea from Japan. Remember what I said about heating it in a metal vessel before used, which increases its strength and improves its flavor. It is thus refired, and then use no milk. It is the natural tea, no coloring. The Japanese have no black tea.

I shall send in a few days 3 boxes more now ready and will send invoice. I will write to Hong Kong and have Chinese preserves sent you.

I wish you would send R. S. Chilton of the State Department a suitable silk dress for his wife. He is about 35 years of age.

I have written last evening and this morning four dispatches and had yesterday a five hours' interview with two governors about our claims, and you will therefore, as the mail closes at 4 and it is now nearly 2 o'clock, be cut somewhat short of your allowance.

Your letters were unusually interesting. They contained so much local news. I was glad also to receive the late papers via Marseilles. I have had no newspapers via Washington for a month and shall be much delighted if you continue to send a few papers by way of Marseilles each mail.

I am glad to hear the success which attends the ministry of Dr. Clark as well as of Dr. Rogers. I hope our Church will not fail to add such reasonable amount to the salary of our pastor as is needful by reason of increased price of articles.

I am pleased to hear what you say of our Church serving society and hope you will not withdraw your countenance. You may do others good and encourage others by so doing.

I have received one letter from Dr. Clark and have written to him twice, as you know.

The fate of Fred Lansing is a sad one. I hope he may have been spared though what you say inspires little hope of a favorable result.³⁷⁴

I am not surprised you were not much elated by Alcock's book. He is now daily expected with his wife, the widow of a former chaplain at Shanghai. Perhaps he may look through glasses now which will give a more cheerful view of Japan and we may be favored with new experiences. You need not fear any foolish exposure at Yedo. When I go there it will be because judged safe. I cannot go now for want of quarters.

Your account of Thanksgiving makes me feel little inclined to write in thanks. It promotes wishing instead of giving.

As I am to retire from public life I shall not object to your entering in it if you feel you have a calling that way.

I shall [send] no curios by an American ship till the pirates are out of the way. Insurance cannot replace them, so you will have to wait for the cabinet. I have nearly 20 boxes safe in a godown here, fireproof.

Mr. Mann's was the only case of cholera we had. I think you need have no apprehension of the spread of that pestilence here, though many cases have occurred in Yedo, but I think mostly partaking of the mild type of *cholera morbus*, which all the people should rightfully have. They eat unripe fruit and stale vegetables so freely.

The Japanese do not make gold rings. The shirts I will see to. The sleeve buttons are Chinese. Nor do they make those small lacquered tables. I will get those in China.

I hope you sent to the bazaar the large tortoise shell box as you will have another one as much handsomer as you can imagine. Be liberal with all these charities and give

³⁷⁴ In an undated letter, JALP wrote to RHP that "we have just heard from our cousin Robert of the serious wounding of Cousin Jane Ann's son Fred...he was carried off the field as dead but his brother Ed telegraphs he has some hope of his recovery. His wound is severe and wide and he is fearfully bruised. He was wounded on Sunday and was uncared for until Tuesday. He is a brave young man." (B2F6)

freely to the Church. Do not fear that in following your own inclinations you will run counter to mine.

I have noticed nearly all the topics in your letters which require to be spoken of.

What you say of Dr. V[anderpoel], C[ornelius] T[en] B[roeck], [Van] Santvoord and the others is all pleasant to hear when it speaks favorably of them.

I shall write to Dr. V[anderpoel] in a very few days—intended to do so this mail but had business very unexpectedly thrust on me which was to have waited some days.

I suppose you would think it strange if I said anything against our cousin the paymaster at Hilton Head. Perhaps he thinks the Japanese are very murderous and he may think less of Sue than you imagine. But I shall say nothing against his pretensions in that quarter. I have always predicted she would make a goose of herself and am prepared to see her full-fledged, prim feathers and all. So for the sake of future harmony I will bid my pen, which is inclined to run on with considerable freedom, stop its flight and leave her to her fate.

I am afraid you will not get many pressed flowers from Ber. It is well to say there are few here that admit of pressing. I had some at Yedo in books but the fire was too much for them. They have ended in smoke. I urged Ber to remember your wishes on his way home.

I have written to General King³⁷⁵ at Rome and feel sure he will do all in his power to make Ber's visit a pleasant one, much more than Mr. Blatchford³⁷⁶ could have done.

I regret very much my time has been so unexpectedly occupied today with my dispatches which were assigned to yesterday but were obliged to give way to a Japanese visitation.

I am at Portman's house sitting in his office and writing till he has copied the dispatches and is prepared to start to the port office. And this very instant he notifies me of the time and begins to seal up the dispatches.

It is a consolation to know my deferred letters of February will serve to add to your reading when this reaches you, although you will have meanwhile wondered and grieved at their delay.

My darling boy will have to wait two weeks for his letter. I will try and make it a good long one, and will for the purpose of ensuring this try and begin it at once.

Remember me, my darling wife, to all friends and relations who do not forget me,

³⁷⁵ Rufus King (1814-1876), not to be confused with Rufus H. King, was the U. S. Minister to the Papal States 1864-1867. Earlier in his career he was a journalist in Albany and worked with Thurlow Weed. During the Civil War he served as Brigadier General in the Union Army, but resigned from active military duty in 1863 because of medical difficulties (epilepsy).

³⁷⁶ Richard M. Blatchford (1798-1875) served as U.S. Minister to the Papal States 1862-1863. He graduated from Union College in Schenectady, and practiced law in New York.

not forgetting Mr. J[acob] H. T[en] E[yck]. I hope we may be spared to meet again.

Kiss my precious boy for me. I never forget him and am always glad to receive his letters. He is improving and I hope he will now improve more rapidly, not taking my letter today as his pattern. It is cold and my hand is not as free as usual.

Goodbye, my darling wife. I will hasten to you as soon as it will be right to leave. Do not fear or doubt this.

Faithfully yours,
Robt. H. Pruyn



No. 8 Kanagawa, March 15 1864

My Dearest,

In a few days another mail will leave for Europe, but as it has recently failed twice to connect with the steamer at Shanghae and as an opportunity is afforded today to send a letter to that city I propose to send a few lines today in order to guard against the departure of another mail without carrying you a few lines.

I now have letters from you and Sue to the 22nd December and the steamers are now running with such regularity that we will be quite sure to hear from each other every two weeks and the letters should not occupy more than seventy days in transit. Less time will be occupied as a general rule with letters coming east because you can time your letters more closely to reach the steamer at Marseilles, whereas mine reaching you without reference to the mail steamers from Liverpool may lay over a mail at that city.

I have a letter from Ber from Singapore of February 2, which informed me the steamer had made over 300 miles per day and was expected to reach Suez so that passengers might arrive at Marseilles February 27. I expect that long before this reaches you, you will have had the pleasure of hearing from him. If God has mercifully spared his life I suppose he is now "doing Italy" as the cockneys say. I am glad to hear from him that he is much pleased with Mr. and Mrs. C[unningham]. And I am particularly pleased that King is Minster at Rome as I feel sure it will give Ber great advantages in that city.

I have also received lately your letters of September and October via San Francisco and suppose your box will shortly make its appearance. Mr. Allmand is now daily expected and it is hoped he may arrive here direct.

Sir Rutherford and Lady Alcock have arrived. They are very pleasant and sociable, evidently desirous of being very popular and agreeable. So you must take courage notwithstanding his book. You may remember the old saying, "the Devil is not so black

as he is painted.” Now that Sir Rutherford is married and has a wife with him he may see things through rose colored glasses and if he wrote another book it would not be one of lamentations.

Colonel Neale has gone away and M. de Bellecourt expects to leave this month. It is said that Mr. Alcock (I beg his pardon) Sir R[utherford] A[lcock] expects to reside here for some years. He is entitled to retire on a pension after 25 years’ service and he wants at least 4 years to complete his term.³⁷⁷ I shall be very willing to leave him at the end of this year in his glory.

Here I may as well bring in what I have to say on that now familiar topic.

I shall be much disappointed if the gunboat do not reach here as early as November at the latest, if completed in July. So as to leave early in that month, it should reach here in October. But it must be hurried when it leaves. If I understand it is promised in June. I wish to leave here in the steamer of December 1. I should regret being obliged to wait longer. Remember it will scarcely answer to leave here later than February and now that I am counting the months and almost thinking of the weeks it would be a very violent blow which knocked one into another year.

I think you had better send me in the gunboat one of Lloyd’s best trunks with a spinning lock or fastening and a valise, black like that I had which Ber now has with him. And I think on the whole you had better let Carpenter & Kirk make me a full silk suit. Should there be an outrageous increase in the price of such articles at home you may omit sending as I can supply myself on my way home and on the whole do not send as I can easily supply myself on my way either at Hong Kong or when I reach Rome.

While at Yedo we did not have much of the heavy winds which howl so frequently over the waters of the bay. We were so far in the city and so many hills intervened that around our house all was quiet. It was only by the movement of the tree tops that we could judge of the state of the outer world. But now when only a few houses lie between us and the bay we have the full sweep of the wind. And scarce a day passes at this season that it does not make itself heard. And at night such blast sounds like a wail for home, speaking of its mighty distance and even magnifying that already immeasurable distance.

The British brig *Osborne* left this morning for New York carrying you some good Japanese tea and one box of best Chinese black tea presented to me by Mr. Forster of Foochow who visited me at Yedo. This last tea I have had on hand nearly a year but I suppose you will find it good as ever. The freight is paid. All you will have to pay is the duty. The Japanese tea is in three packages of equal weight and of the same quality. One of these packages belongs to Mr. Fisher and are for his father. You will please let our

³⁷⁷ Alcock did not stay in Japan for long. He left in 1865 for China, where he represented the British government in Peking until his retirement in 1869.

Mr. Fisher have one marked Abner A. Fisher,³⁷⁸ Ottawa Illinois, and receive from the Express Co. the charges on it for duty etc. and send it forward subject to such charge so as to reimburse the company for the advance. The Japanese tea is put up in small packages so that you may distribute it as you please. Let me remind you that you will improve and bring out the flavor of all tea and particularly Japanese by holding, until thoroughly warmed, each drawing over a fire. In order that it may not be unduly heated, put it in a box with a bottom of thin paper. Then it cannot be too much heated without setting the paper on fire. Besides I repeat Japanese tea is best without milk. They have no black tea and unless it is doctored by foreigners no colored tea. All is natural color.

I would have been pleased had you given the tortoise shell box for the soldiers' fair. I do not remember it but I am sure there is one far more beautiful somewhere packed up for you. You need never hesitate in such a cause. While there are some things I should not wish to be given away, there are many things which can be easily spared. I hope the silks arrived on time and that you sent some of them.

By the way I have never had any acknowledgement of the receipt for Mr. Dawson of the last bill sent forward for the volunteers. The bill was sent to Charles by Russell & Co. and was for the sum of £20.

I have delayed the Manila articles till ships have a clear road home.

Is not your glove measure $6\frac{3}{4}$, Sue's $6\frac{1}{2}$? Send me in my trunk an old gaiter of yourself and Sue and I will get you some good English gaiters and walking shoes.

You speak of snow in your last letters and strange to say it has snowed here quite briskly both today and yesterday. I should judge as much snow has fallen these two days as during the whole of the residue of our stay in Japan. But it does not lie on the ground except in very sheltered spots but disappears as fast as it comes. But it looks and feels fully wintry.

I have just received a very cordial note from Sir Rutherford asking me to breakfast with him tomorrow so that we may have a quiet talk about Japanese affairs. I enclose his note.

You have probably seen you did not send me Mary's photographs as you proposed. It is just as well.

I was to hear of the present designed by the Church for Mrs. Clark. The Trustees should add to his salary. I am willing to aid if necessary to the extent of \$25 or \$50, as much Jacob H. thinks best. Say so to him and please give it if wished.

I have already told you frequently you must not believe any of the letters from Japan. You sent me a scrap from a paper of about ten lines about Joseph Heco³⁷⁹ being

³⁷⁸ Other sources have his name as Abner S. Fisher.

³⁷⁹ This is the only direct mention that RHP makes of him in his letters, despite the fact that Heco interpreted for him on multiple occasions.

condemned to death and the Japanese pilot of the *Wyoming* killed etc., etc. Now there were in those ten lines, ten distinct lines and not one single grain of truth.

I do not expose myself and fear nothing and yet everywhere, in Albany, New York, London, here, we may be subject to accident. But we know that there is no such thing as an accident, so called. Every event is under the control of the omnipotent and all wise.

I learn that the mail steamer will leave Friday instead of Saturday so it will be quite sure to connect with the steamer at Shanghae which is fortunate as the steamer which leaves tomorrow takes no through letters, only those for China. I think it safer therefore to mail my letters here than run the risk of having them overlooked at Russell & Co. at Shanghae.

My handwriting you have seen has been somewhat cramped today. The British have an army and navy club here of which I am honorary member and almost every afternoon when I don't ride I have a few games of the intellectual bowls, what we call nine-pins at home, and my hand is a little lame today. But it is gradually improving now and I am in hopes I shall be able to send you a fair installment sufficiently legible.

We have some prospect of a ship to San Francisco by which I may be able to send some little articles in about 3 weeks.

Mr. Walsh's death must have [been] very unexpected.³⁸⁰ Yet I always found he would prove a subject for apoplexy and yet according to all human appearances he had the promise for a long life.

I enclose a page or so about Church affairs here which may prove of interest.

I really cannot remember whether I told you what satisfaction the dress for Jennie Fisher gave. It fitted well and was much admired. Had it gone much nearer the North Pole its way over, it might have proved too small, as the child is growing mightily.

Time is now regularly divided into two parts, in which writing for the mail is assigned to one week and receiving and reading what comes by mail fills the succeeding week. The last mail reached here the 10th. The return mail leaves early in the morning of the 18th closing the afternoon of the 17th and it will pass on its way the next mail due which is to arrive here the 23rd. These steamers as I have told you run now with great regularity. The prevailing monsoon makes a difference in the time but this difference is susceptible of pretty close calculation and the mail arrives generally within 24 hours before or after the time fixed. Such is one of the many triumphs of steam.

I wish on the arrival of this you would ask Charles to direct the *Tribune* to mail for me regularly via Marseilles postage paid its semiweekly edition. Mr. Fisher takes the *Times* and Dr. Simmons the *English Post*. Let this be done for six months only. If the proprietors cannot attend to this, cannot Fisher send me via Marseilles so as to connect

³⁸⁰ William Walsh, a prominent member of the Albany aristocracy, died December 1 1863.

with the mail from Marseilles the 10th and 26th of each month a copy of the daily *Tribune* and *Herald* got up for the European steamer. I have only once, since I have been here, had a late paper, and that was a few days ago, one you sent via Marseilles. My Washington papers and letters are great laggards, coming in from one to two mails after due.

As to my movements for the future I cannot speak with any certainty at present. The government is very averse to my return to Yedo. I shall be guided by circumstances and exercise a sound discretion, having a due regard to personal comfort and not forgetting safety. The danger at Yedo has always been overestimated. I have no doubt I was always safer there than at this place.

I think Mr. Alcock does not intend to reside there at present. I shall know more of his views tomorrow unless, which I do not anticipate, he intends to be shy. I should hope from his note he will prove frank but he shall find me little disposed to be communicative as he shall be. He asked me a plump question the other day as to my intention and actions. I replied diplomatically I should consult and act with my colleagues. He appears to be very open and fair. We shall see what he really is. He and Mr. Harris were great friends and then as bitter enemies. I shall do my full share to keep in his good graces if I once succeed in getting there. His wife is very plain, unaffected, and agreeable. She may prevent some of those porcupine quills which annoyed Mr. Harris. He is a great writer. Portman anticipates a busy time saying he writes such frightful letters in length.

When I have finished this sheet I shall lay aside writing for the day as my hand admonishes me it has been sufficiently tried with your letter and Charlie's. I have to write by this mail to Mr. Forbes, Russell & Co., Barings Brothers & Co. and Bertie. Tomorrow I shall have little time. We have our prayer meeting each Wednesday evening and I suppose the best part of the day will be devoted to my interview with Sir R[utherford] Alcock. I have crowded a good letter into my first sheet even, so I do not despair of satisfying you this mail.

I felt when I arrived in Japan I could write a book about it. But I am now so familiarized to all I see as to feel little inclination to notice particularly anything, not enough at least to write about it and I suppose this disinclination will increase with greater familiarity.

The news from home encourages me much. I hope I am not too sanguine. But it appears to me apart from the success of our armies I see indications that the South is preparing to yield and must yield. It is rather trying to wait two weeks for news, which we hope to find more decisive from what has already reached us. But then we have one advantage over you, we are not so often vexed by telegrams which prove untrue. We often get them, it is true, but the antidote most always reaches us simultaneously with the poison.



I will make this a business sheet. I thank you most cordially, my dear wife, for the information you have taken such pains to collect and send me of home affairs. While I have no doubt that Charlie will manage all for the best, especially aided by the ripe experience and business qualifications of yourself and Sue, it is nevertheless pleasant to know something of what is going on.

Charlie has sent me a statement which gives me very full information as to all my own business. As he has not credited me for proceeds of lot sold Andrews and Gladding, nor charged me with interest paid, nor rent received for that house, I presume it is properly in some other account.

I was sorry I was not at home when the property corner of Broadway and Steuben Street was sold. Should it by accident be again on the market I should like for your sake and mine to be the owner of that property and occasionally stand where the north window stood.

You need not cut out from the New York papers any news, though I hope the war will be ended by the time this reaches you. We have a good supply of papers. Give me more home news including the names of officers of Banks. I do not know who has charge now of the Albany Banks, or of the Albany and Susquehanna Railroad, or of our charitable institutions except the [Albany City] Tract [and Missionary] Society. The best paper I have received has been Munsell's *Army Letter*,³⁸¹ of which you have sent one number. That contained just what I wanted to know of what was then happening.

If Charlie has not purchased pistols to be sent me he need not do so, except he may send a half dozen of Allen & Wheelock of Worcester small pistols, silver plated, with an extra cylinder for each and extra ammunition. I wish them for return presents to the Gorogio. You may say 10, five of the second size and five of the smallest.

I wish Sisson and the New York Life and Fire Co. paid. I had a bill at Carpenter & Kirk's which I fear has been overlooked because not sent in by them, also Young & Server.³⁸²

I repeat whatever I have of surplus is at Charlie's service to use as he chooses. If he has any outstanding mortgage he can discharge it and give you his note or if he will not do that, he can have the mortgage assigned to me. Or if the result would be to double

³⁸¹ The *Albany Army Letter* was a biweekly military newsletter published by Joel Munsell in 1863. Its print run ended after three issues.

³⁸² Young & Server was a shoemaker in Albany.

our taxes by so doing he can transfer to me his interest [in] the Sutliff property³⁸³ or in the Edson store.³⁸⁴ Anything which you and he arrange will be satisfactory.

Should the Works be sold it may be that a more satisfactory arrangement can be made if we keep the real estate and lease that. I see no reason unless it means Charlie too much to be in too great a hurry. I might aid in a sale or other disposition of it. But let Charlie advise with you and do what you think best. I shall not need them and think you are right in believing I can make a better disposition of my time, certainly more agreeable and perhaps full as profitable.

I am pleased to hear what you did when the houses on Lumber St. were sold. It was just like you and is all right of course.

I shall send by the way of San Francisco a large number of grape vines for the government and also some for myself, which you may dispose of, keeping a sufficient supply for ourselves.

The rifling machine was desired to be of sufficient power and with tools for rifling cannon, more for that than for rifles. It may be that my order was not sufficiently precise. But I now say this as from Charlie's description of the engine I am fearful the machine will not be up to the requirements.

You need not fear I will further myself with any new undertakings to the extent of interfering at all with domestic comfort. The most I would consent to undertake but would be to the extent of giving me reasonable occupation in the absence of any other business. Though it is not needful to dwell on this as matters are so unpromising here as probably to defer much that otherwise would be done.

George's wife did not write to me here. I alluded to a letter before I left home. I presume John Schermerhorn³⁸⁵ disliked it. I shall be very willing to give both those parties all I ever received for my services in that matter, though everyone knows that not a member of their family was disposed to do anything, all regarding the claim as utterly unfounded and without sufficient merit even to deserve their attention much less sympathy. They can wait as it is all a free gift on my part. If she be really destitute, poor woman, and others do not step forward, send her if you choose a hundred dollars. She may be in just need of it.



No. 8 March 16 1864

³⁸³ Ezra Sutliff ran a grocery store at 29 Lancaster St., Albany.

³⁸⁴ Edson & Co. was a distillery in Albany.

³⁸⁵ John Schermerhorn appears in the 1863 Albany Directory as living at 351 State Street.

Civilization, you will observe my dearest, is making rapid progress in its eastward march. Here is a country which is still regarded as debatable ground, the question whether liberality or exclusiveness shall win the victory is even now under debate and none can say what will be the issue and yet here at Yokohama is a large tent with a huge central pole and in that tent and around that pole horses and riders of Risley's, I beg his pardon, Professor Risely's, Circus are at the end of the present week to exhibit to admiring spectators.³⁸⁶ A very extensively traveled monkey is to exhibit marvelous feats of horsemanship. A Madame somebody ending in *ninny* or *ini*, of course radiantly beautiful, is to do something exceedingly graceful. American diplomacy first opened this country partially to foreigners and now that this attempt has been made to thrust us out when once in and slam the door in our faces, why should not an American Circus come to the rescue? Who can tell whether it may not show such surpassing feats of grand and lofty tumbling as to put the Japanese to shame.

I breakfasted with Sir Rutherford today and afterwards had a four hours' conference with him. We find ourselves in very fair accord and I think we will walk well together. There need be no conflict as the interests of our respective governments harmonize and yet he and Mr. Harris quarreled like old women.

Our friend Nagato who fired on the *Pembroke* and who received the compliments of the *Wyoming* has been playing some more pranks. This time the victim is very fortunately a Japanese Prince and no less a personage than the mighty [Daimyō of] Satsuma with whom the British had a miniature war and whose city of Kagosima of 180,000 inhabitants they destroyed. One of his steamers coming through the inland sea was sunk by Nagato's batteries and I understand he claims it was a mistake, that he supposed it belonged to some foreign power. This people you will see have their hands full. They got a mighty elephant when foreigners were allowed to come in.

I am promised a copy of a letter written by [the Daimyō of] Satsuma to the Tycoon complaining of this outrage and will send you a copy as soon as I get it. Meanwhile I send you the copy of a very remarkable letter addressed by one of the most liberal Daimios, one of the most peaceful of the princes fully equal to Nagato and nearly up to Satsuma and of the imperial family. He firmly advocates the introduction of Christianity. This prince is the only one who last year at the great council of Daimios spoke in favor of foreigners. I have good reason to believe the letter is genuine. It was translated by Mr. Brown and his teacher. I procured from nearly the same source the letter from the

³⁸⁶ Richard Risley Carlisle (1814-1874) was an American acrobat who went by the stage name of Professor Risley. He moved to Japan in 1864 and set up his "circus" there. In 1867 he returned to the United States with a troupe of Japanese acrobats who performed under the name "The Imperial Japanese Troupe."

Mikado to the Tycoon of which I think I told you last year, which the government admitted to be genuine, while expressing its astonishment I had procured it, saying it was of so sacred a character that it had been handed by the Mikado to the Tycoon while only one other person was present.

Liberal ideas will soon make headway if this be a genuine paper and it be time as he says that other princes share his views. We may be making vastly greater progress than we imagine.

I think I sent you a copy of my convention, but enclose another one for greater certainty. I will send you by first ship via California a very spicy letter which it called forth from me in reply to one from the British Minister and then so as to give you a specimen of the futiler voice as well as the *suavite* in mood, I shall also give you a copy of one to the Prussian envoy which he coolly pocketed as few men would have had the cowardice to do. This is scarcely regular but you will understand it as strictly for yourself until the government make both public if it see fit. The President, I am satisfied, will heartily approve both.

I have a fine lot of horse balls made of cotton or silk and beautifully wound with silk, the finest that could be made. These are made by the females in Daimio houses at this season and are superb. I shall send as soon as opportunity offers.

I am afraid I am economizing room too much and that you will experience difficulty in reading my letter. But I shall stop for the evening. It is 11 o'clock. It has been our evening for the weekly prayer meeting. The day has been occupied with the British Minister and a walk with Mrs. Fisher etc. and the evening with our meeting and a social talk at its close and I must acknowledge I am thoroughly tired. So good night, my beloved. Above you I hope a warm and bright sun shines at this moment on a happy morning with you and my darling boy and dear Sue all well and I hope looking at this moment to the east from which it has arisen only a few hours ago with loving and warm messages from me in his more eastern home. Again good night.

March 17

We have another bright and beautiful day, yesterday having been likewise a day such as is rarely seen. This afternoon the mail closes and can scarcely fail to reach the steamer at Shanghae.

I forgot to say to you that on Tuesday evening the British officers gave another of their private theatricals, so you see the community has a fair supply of amusements.

The printed letter of Matsudaira which I sent you can use. Let Dr. Clark see it and there can be no objection to Dawson publishing it. I suppose however Mr. Brown has sent forward a copy.

When walking with Mrs. Fisher yesterday I bought a few plants for her. I wish you could have the magnificent camellias we can get here for a few *itzabus*. The camellia you

know is single in its wild state and you rarely see as fine specimens as we see cultivated at home, the by far greater majority of plants or trees rather being of the simple kind. Plants and trees of all kinds are so extensively raised as to be sold exceedingly cheap, even at the greatly advanced prices doubtless charged foreigners.

I am preparing a package for Mr. Bonney, sending the watch guard you sent me so that the famous Chinese painter Lamqua can know the color of your hair.³⁸⁷ I hope he will succeed in doing you justice. Meanwhile get a good photograph of yourself at home. And when you go to New York get a large one of yourself and Charlie.

I hope you will take another run into the country. Why not Sharon? Watertown would probably be well, but go somewhere and of this do not fail. You will get letters early enough at either place.

You have written nothing of the progress of Francis in the army. I forget the number of his regiment and have entirely lost track of him.

As to [my brother] Edward's house, pay his rent for another year. A young man who cannot make profits in such times as you now have had, never can or will. I am thoroughly disappointed and disgusted with him. Why did he not stay in the army and show himself a man of some kind? He should have been there in some capacity. And if the war continues, attach the condition that he must show some disposition to help himself. If I am spared to go home and reach there, he shall go west and begin life anew. He deserves little but I pity his family. If he have not already gone in the army again let him do so at once. He is at least fit for a private.

Now I will go to breakfast. I have much to do today.

The death of such men as Messrs. Miller, Aikin,³⁸⁸ and Steele³⁸⁹ whom I saw almost daily in our bank makes quite a void in our city. It is only when we or some of our friends are absent that we notice these sad changes, which after all occur almost every two or three years of our lives. All of these certainly might reasonably have expected to have lived to a much greater age.

It would have been impossible for Mr. [William] Walsh to have made any disposition of his property which would have given all his relatives satisfaction. Yet we bearing

³⁸⁷ RHP commissioned a miniature of his wife, but it could not have been done by Lam Qua (Lam Qua, Chinese: 林官; Cantonese Yale: Lam Kwan; or Kwan Kiu Cheong 關喬昌), who died in 1860. It is likely that Lam Qua had disciples who continued to paint in his style after his death, and in keeping with Chinese artistic tradition signed Lam Qua's name to their paintings. This miniature is also mentioned in RHP's letter to Jennie of 1864-6-27 (b) (B2F20). When Jennie receives it, she is lukewarm. See her letters to RHP dated 1864-8-30 1864-9-4 and 1864-9-12 (B2F5)

³⁸⁸ Ebenezer Aikin, a flour and grain merchant, died January 2 1864 at age 60.

³⁸⁹ Roswell Steele (1805-1863) was a hardware merchant in Albany.

grudges can think we see a propriety in his making some immediate provision for his nephews and nieces. Yet he may have supposed they had enough.

The idea of John Townsend having been obliged to give up his charge because of poor health is strange. I had supposed he bid fair to be as great burly an Englishman in personal appearance as I suppose he is in creed.

I was much pleased to receive the photographs of Abby and Eddie etc. I will send a letter to Abby senior at the end of the week. I suppose she is getting quite matronly now, though despairing of ever catching up to Mrs. Jo[nathan] F. Has the health of the city of New York increased since the advent of the new doctor there? I pity his wife and would pity him more had he not in so many ways proved a degenerate Dutchman. But what can you expect. Henry Bleecker was safe as long as he remained in the old two steepled. See what a miserable deterioration has befallen all her degenerate sons, or nearly all. G. F. W., H[enry] B[leecker], W[illiam] E. B[leecker], J. F. T. I might even swell this list. The same propensity which leads them to think they are so much wiser and holier than their fathers and mothers carries them into extremes in everything alas.

I am pleased the children were remembered on Christmas day in our Church. I always requested when at the head of the Sabbath School I did not feel able to indulge them as I am glad to see C[hables] V[an] Z[andt] does. It is one of the fancies in which I indulge as a waking dream that when I get home I may be able to aid many of our school by saying a few words about Japan. I know too much about it now to write a book. Perhaps I might succeed in a lecture and get a few to listen to me.

I will send you via California the letters received from Bertie, who I hope has already written to you announcing his safe arrival in France. It appears but yesterday since I walked the wharves in the rain watching the receding ship which took him away and left me with no connecting link with home. I counted the days for a long time. But tomorrow four months will have passed, months which I count not so much for what they were worth, I am sorry to say, or for what I enjoyed but as so much taken from the heap of days which must still pass away before I can sing "Homeward Bound."

I thank you much for your slips on *Littell's* which are always read in advance of every paper you send me. And your letters contain just the things I most wish to hear about. The political news I always get in advance from the newspapers of England and some which reach here in advance of your dates by letter.

The whole foreign community are looking with anxiety for the next mail due here in a week, the mail of February 10. A war in Europe will affect all business operations in the east and it is much dreaded therefore.

My health continues as good as usual. I have been very free from headache since I have been in Japan.

I cautioned Bertie about the use of flannels and gave him as much advice about the care of himself as he deemed needful and far more I think than he will observe. Frequent

changes in climate require unusual precautions. But as Mr. C[unningham] is an old traveler I have depended much on him. The death of his little Ruth near Ceylon was a sad thing and unexpected as said. I suppose Ber has given you the particulars.

I thank Sue for her letters and will not remain long in her debt. But as she reads all I write to you it appears unnecessary to be so particular about a special dedication of some portion to her. Unless indeed I feel called on to do so by way of admonition. I much fear she will miss me sadly. You must endeavor to make up for it by giving her that cheap commodity, good advice.

I must now close this letter. I suppose Portman who is at his own house is beginning to ask whether I will miss the mail, which closes quite promptly.

You will as usual please remember me specially to all enquiring friends. I hope at once to acquaint myself of all existing obligations by at once noticing all unanswered letters.

Say to Charlie that one conjecture as to the reason why this government gives me no further advice etc. about the steamers is probably because their foreign policy is still unsettled. We will be safe with them however. As long as we have a surplus on hand we will be safe and they also.

With love to Sue and Abby and Charlie and family and kisses and love for you and my dear little Charlie my precious, beloved wife.

Ever yours,

Robt. H. Pruyn

March 17

My beloved wife, after writing to Charles and the Collector, to Bertie, Mr. Bonney, Barings Bros. & Co., Mr. Forbes, Russell & Co. at Shanghae and also at Hong Kong with 3 dispatches also to the government this morning I close my letter to you. My head fairly splits, so Sue must pardon me once more and accept each tired line of your letter for herself.

We had our monthly communion on the first Sabbath of March, and an addition of three members in the profession of their faith: Hattie Brown, a quartermaster on the British navy, and old George E. Horton, 84 years old. He was with Nelson at the battle of the Nile and afterwards in our navy. Commodore Perry at his regret left him at the Bonin Islands where he resided over 10 years. He was brought here against his wishes a few months ago by the Japanese for which I have made a claim. He is now rejoiced that he was thus treated. He says his mother was pious and taught him to pray, that while in the navy he read his Bible and prayed but while at the Bonin Islands those feelings passed away, although he read his Bible quite through while there. He is very feeble or rather his hand trembles much. He walks very well. Surely at the 11th hour almost at the 12th it is possible to find a savior if sought for.

More would have joined us could they have got ashore. Please let Dr. Clark know the above. The prospects of the Church are very encouraging.

I should have said in my letter to Mr. Ten Eyck which I have just finished that Mr. Brown proposes to write to the Churches in New York for stained windows.

I feel, my beloved wife, as if I must go out in the air.

I will therefore finish my letter earlier than I had intended. My headache would scarcely have been noticed at home and will pass away with a little exercise which I will at once take.

Kiss my darling Charlie for me. Give my love to Sue, Cornelia, Alida, Abby, Mary and all, not forgetting Townsend and Betsy.

I send bill of tea. Only pay duty on 120 pounds Japanese tea and send 1/3 of that to Mr. Fisher's father as before requested, subject to all charges.

Ever and never more than now,

Your loving husband,

Robt. H. Pruyn

I have sent your letters to Bertie and will send via California all received from him.



[April 1864, based on events]

I wish you would say to Dr. Clark that our little Church is highly blessed. At our last monthly communion we had 11 additions, 10 in profession, all from British ships of war, five different vessels and more would have joined had they been able to come on shore. One was detained by sickness and others by duties on ship board. Two of the members are marines from the steamer *Argus*, one decorated with a medal and five clasps for service in China and one with a medal and two clasps for services in the rebellion in India. The officers report a deep and earnest feeling on many of the ships, regular daily prayer meetings being held on several of them. Captain Moresby³⁹⁰ of the *Argus* is a pious man. He has had Mr. Brown on board several times to preach and has invited him many days when he could not go, also to hold a Thursday Bible class. There are three chaplains in the fleet and they are in arms. They have remonstrated with Captain M[oresby] saying they were willing to conduct the services but he is unmoved. When I tell you that on the 1st Saturday of the month we had 24 seamen at our monthly concert and that they give more than \$2 each month for missions and at the next Wednesday

³⁹⁰ John Moresby (1830-1922)

English prayer meeting 23 in attendance you can guess how engaged these men are. Over 100 have joined Mr. B[rown]'s temperance society.

I have had a short correspondence with the admiral about these men coming ashore. He was unwilling to grant any extra facilities. I arranged it finally with Captain Dunlop of the *Kestrel*, who at first thought he could not grant the permission without leave of the admiral. There are difficulties of course in the way. But God is more powerful than Puseyite clergy men who regard bishops as more essential to salvation than faith. I bowl with one of these chaplains. He knocks down the pins finely. He is orthodox in the alley. But I would rather roll with him than hear him preach. The chaplains act also as schoolmasters. The midshipmen are their scholars. And I suppose if merit be at the basis of the choice, the merit most regarded is that founded on mathematics etc. and not on theological acquirements.

I regret any objections should have been made to Dr. Clark preparing a memoire etc. of Mr. Miller and to his using his journal, and cannot but hope that having been made through some mistake they may be withdrawn. Mr. M[iller] had a very lovely character and his journal must contain some pleasant and precious remarks and exercises.

I have no doubt, my dear wife, that if I have to return I will notice sad changes in our Church. How many familiar and loved faces will have passed away? Will there be more? God grant that the list may not be greatly swelled.

The *Medusa* has brought me letters from our Consul at Nagasaki and Cavanagh, a prisoner who was tried for murder and sent to prison for 5 years for manslaughter and whom I directed to be sent here as the gaol at that place was insufficient.³⁹¹ I shall be obliged to transact business which will prevent my writing you more than this sheet. But I really do not know what I would say had I more time. I suppose the thoughts would come however if my mind was not diverted to other channels. The letters I enclose may be always regarded as forming part of your own and you have therefore a fair quantity at least.

I hope dear Bertie will be with you when this arrives but I shall not write to him till the next mail.

Miss Mann will be married next month. I have been trying to get her a white silk for her wedding dress for at least a month. It came today. After examining it I sent him away keeping the silk and telling the merchant to come again Monday.

³⁹¹ Apparently this was a common occurrence. Lane Earns notes that "there was no jail in the foreign settlement [of Nagasaki], and according to [the U.S. Consul Walsh] the Japanese one was so bad that it did more harm than good. U.S. citizens sentenced to lengthy prison terms had to be sent to the jail in the Kanagawa foreign settlement." ("The Foreign Settlement in Nagasaki, 1859-1869," *The Historian*, Spring 1994, Vol. 56, No. 3, p. 495)

There does not appear to be much prospect of my immediate return to Yedo. You will not be disappointed to learn this. I suppose our government would be pleased to have me there, but it would be folly to go in the face of declarations that they cannot protect me. Besides there are great advantages in being near my colleagues, with whom by the way I am on excellent terms. But it is never safe to calculate upon entire freedom from little jars, though both the new ministers are very decided improvements on the former ones. If we were free from our terrible war my position would be improved an hundred fold.

I see nothing in Sue's letter to need any special notice so I will write on and ask her to select for herself as many sentences as she may think needful from this letter which I hope you will jointly at least be able to decipher.

If I do not write more than I do about coming home you must attribute it to the right course. Even months make me feel unpleasant when they array themselves between us. And where everything is so uncertain it is hard to look with confidence far ahead. A few days ago I was dining with the British Consul when a gentleman spoke hopefully and cheerfully of his meeting his family at the end of five years, having already been about two years and it made my blood run cold. I told him such a prospect to me would be intolerable.

If our war is to be protracted Ber had better go to school in Europe. I should regret to see him drafted and would prefer to furnish half a dozen substitutes. I think it is, if not sure death, at least entire destruction of constitution when young men of 18 go into camp.

If at home why not make an arrangement with Mr. Wrightson³⁹² to prepare him for college or with some other competent man. A few dollars more or less do not consider. I do not see how he can get ready by September.

I hope the lily roots and trees etc. arrived safely. The lilies you will find superb. As the ship was only 28 days between this port and San Francisco, I hope for the best.

Should exchange continue very high it may be well for you to use the credit on Messrs. Brooks of which I presume they will advise you. The same remark will hold good as to what I have in Messrs. C. Brooks & Co.'s hands. I placed funds there as interest was so high. Gold was the currency and I did not wish to trouble you with its care. Do whatever you think best. I cannot judge at this distance. Perhaps you may be able to secure a good mortgage on property of undoubted value and then again government stock may be best.

You have advisers on whom you can rely and I therefore say no more.

It appears but as yesterday when Charles was married and he has already reached the honor of a tin wedding. You and I will be rich shortly in a silver one, may we be spared

³⁹² George Wrightson is listed as a teacher in the 1863 Albany *Directory*.

to celebrate it with all our dear ones!

I hope your silks arrived safe and you have something to wear.

Russell & Co. have written me that they would send you Chinese preserves, etc. this month. You will soon know how excellent some are. I think I have told you the best cannot pay a profit on the United States.

A ship will leave here in about a month for San Francisco by which I may send a few things. Mr. Brooks informs me his partner Mr. [Edward F.] Hall has gone East to marry. I hope you will see him. He is just such another pleasant little man as Mr. Brooks himself.

I shall bear Dr. Vanderpoel in mind. He will in some way and at some time have all he wants which Japan can supply.

I really hope Van Santvoord will not leave us and be swallowed up in the great maelstroms of rowdyism and bad government. Will I have a hankering for that city? It seems an epidemic. May you and I escape! A week or so at a time is sufficient for me or at least has been.

And now, my darling wife, I must close. Mr. Portman has come for my letters and I have placed a long document in his hands to read and keep him quiet. I see he is getting near the end.

My dear boys are ever in my thoughts. Give them my love, and what shall I say of, and for, you? If I get back I don't think you will have occasion to regret our separation. I did not need it to learn your value, my darling. But with it I could not be ignorant of it however much inclined to shut my eyes. With love for Sue and all and kisses and love for you, my darling, from

Your husband,
Robt. H. Pruyn



No. 9 Kanagawa, April 1 1864

Having, my beloved wife, finished my official letters for the mail of this afternoon, my quarterly accounts and my letter to Bertie, I have a few hours in reserve for you.

Political affairs are unchanged. The Tycoon is still at Keoto and it is said the whole foreign policy is under discussion and rumors of a grand revolution which will virtually make the Tycoon a mere shadow and place the real power of the country in the name, as it is in fact, under the control of the great Princes, are very abundant. It is said there is to be a council of these Princes under the nominal Presidency of the Mikado. This would virtually supersede the Gorogio which is now always filled by the small Daimios owing allegiance to the Tycoon. Whatever may be the form of the government, the

treaties will override all other councils, modifying every measure and law which may be adopted not entirely hostile and crushing out in some way all that is entirely antagonistic.

Japan you will see is making vast strides in civilization. At the reception of Lady Alcock last evening we had lemon ice, the product of a machine brought out by Sir R[utherford]. Risley's Circus has also made its appearance and the Japanese admire the clown very much though the very poorest I ever saw. Large number have gone to see it but I imagine the most of them are servants of foreigners who have tickets given them. My servants were very glad to go. But as the price of admission for the Japanese is one *itzabu* I imagine few would be forthcoming if payment was to be made from their own pockets. The Japanese are very fond of champagne but never buy it. The price of admission to the circus for us outside barbarians is only \$3 which you will see is exceedingly cheap for so intellectual a performance. A further advance is made by the arrival of a soda water apparatus, though the absence of ice will be a great drawback to its success. An ice house is already talked of and when you consider that this place is already as far advanced as Shanghae was four years ago, it is probable that even that may soon be an accomplished fact.³⁹³

The mails arrive with great regularity now, as frequently as a day in advance or after the time fixed. If you have the timetable of the P[eninsular] & O[riental] line of steamers from Hong Kong to Southampton, you can anticipate within a few days the time when you may expect letters. There may be some more of irregularity at your end of the line as the mail from the east may arrive too late for that by the Liverpool steamer some months and may lie over for a steamer. But you may now expect letters say every two weeks which is perhaps sufficiently near a calculation.

The cake arrived in excellent condition and has given immense satisfaction. The neck ties etc. were very acceptable also. Please thank Abby and the children and Sue for their remembrance of us outside barbarians, though I appropriated all that was sent for Bertie. I gave the slippers to Mr. [Francis] Hall and what I do not need will be properly appropriated.

I regret there is a prospect of Ber being deprived of the pleasure of seeing Italy, though I do not entirely despair of a change in Mr. Cunningham's views which may lead him to carry out his original plan of travel. Giving up Italy involves the omission to see Switzerland, the Rhine, etc., etc.

In a few days another ship sails for California and by it I hope to send sundry articles to add to your curiosity shop. But I shall not give you a description, but will leave the articles to speak for themselves. It may be well to say the small specimens of Japanese lacquer will surpass anything you have had or will again have from me or anyone else,

³⁹³ As it turns out, Risley was the first seller of ice in Japan, a business he pursued because of financial concerns.

being old pieces very costly and very rich, some small boxes being really worth here from \$50 to \$100 each. The Japanese themselves pay wonderful prices for some kinds of lacquer.

Messrs. C. W. Brooks & Co. sent me a present which was very acceptable. Sleeve buttons and studs made of the gold quartz rock of California. My old sleeve buttons are well worn and nearly used up. I had given Mr. Brooks and Mr. [Edward F.] Hall of that firm two very handsome presents.

I hope the Japanese coin I sent arrived in season for your great fair. If so the larger coins will have proved great attractions and as I sent so large a stock of the small coins some of those may have been sold to great advantage. So of the silks if they arrived sufficiently early. But I fear this was not the case with the boxes sent direct to New York.

You cannot be too liberal in aiding the war. Give at any time whenever you are asked to do so to assist sick and wounded volunteers. And so also with the Church, give for everything and anything as much as Lansing Pruyn or Van Santvoord gives. I am glad to see that the Church gave Dr. Clark the liberal New Year's present and that the ladies remembered Mrs. Clark. I think you must have a good wardrobe. If you do not know what to do with the silks I sent give some to any fair in any city. I am told by a gentleman here from San Francisco that some of the silks I sent would command more than \$5.00 per yard there. He states the plaid (heavy and wide, white and black) has been sold at that price. Do not therefore be governed at all by my prices. If you part with any, except to give away, get a good round price. This in view of the great price of exchange will indeed be necessary to give me back my money.

If you make up any silk quilts the silk wadding should be whipped up (I believe it is so called) to make it loose and light. You have plenty of thin silks to make quilts, of which let each bed have a good one. It is the greatest luxury you have enjoyed in the way of bed furniture.

I suppose you have enough crepe and silk and crepe scarfs. Those by the way would have been a grand contribution to the fair.

I have ordered some grape vines from the north of China where it freezes harder and deeper than with us. They have a large grape like the white Malaga and two other varieties which I am promised next fall. They will be forwarded from Tientsin by Mr. Meadows, late British Consul in China.

[Sheet] 2 Business

Bertie has written me a letter about an allowance to be made him, which he is careful to say he does not wish to be too large and he, with as great providence, desires it shall be not too small. He wishes if a horse is not to be kept that an eye shall be had to his

hiring a saddle horse of Harris.³⁹⁴ Now I shall assume you do not wish to be troubled with horse shoeing, horse doctors etc., etc., and that you will therefore prefer he shall patronize Harris' establishment. I have no idea what will suffice. You must therefore negotiate with the young gentleman. And if you overrun what is needful he will understand he is under no obligation to spend it but may keep a balance with his banker. Will you pay him and charge me each quarter, say \$100. It appears to me \$400 per annum will purchase his clothing as he will probably have a good stretch when he leaves England and pay for horses and his charities and pocket money or say \$500 per annum. If more is needful pay it but not less.

As to the State Street house I wish to keep it. I do not rightly understand whether the title is on you or myself, or in other words, whether it forms part of what your father gave you. If so and you desire it can be transferred to me and I will pay your father's advance. I never supposed it would be necessary to record the deed to your father, but infer it has been done from seeing in my account no credit for rent or debit for cash paid Life Insurance & Trust Co. It appears to me if Miss Kidd³⁹⁵ has it for another year she should pay an increased rent.

So also when you write about income although generally good at guessing I do not know whether in this mine was or was not included. I mean the dividend of my Commercial stock and my rents of property I hold with Charlie. I suppose, by the way, he has destroyed what paper I gave him by way of security.

The money at San Francisco I see is well and I doubt not safely invested at 1½ percent a month. I send Mr. Brooks more this month and while it is at your service at any time it may be as well perhaps to leave it with him. But of this you must judge. I am too far away.

If the war continues another year paper [money] must be more abundant and be of course more depreciated. Had I been home I should have been willing, had you liked it, to purchase S[amuel] W. Barnard's House, and should any opportunity offer which you wish to embrace, the funds in Mr. Brooks' custody, with what you can control, will probably be ample. You must not be surprised I speak of these things occasionally. When you consider what ample time I have for thought you will see if I knew more what to write about you might reasonably expect I should indulge more in problematical recommendations.

I hope the strikes in New York will not delay the completion of the gunboat. Let it be hurried up I entreat.

I shall also be pleased to hear that Charlie has made a good sale of the Works, but I suppose I shall find it on hand when I return. He need not despair, if I live I will

³⁹⁴ George Harris & his son Henry ran a livery stable in Albany.

³⁹⁵ Misses H. T. and M. T. Kidd are listed as teachers in the 1863 Albany *Directory*.

guarantee it shall be well disposed of. After the war closes there may be a short stagnation in business but it will be grand shortly afterwards and we will then float off the old hulk. You and he may dispose of them meanwhile as you please. I can, and am inclined to do so, submit to any sacrifice he chooses to make, and expect my willingness to take the real estate at a fair price if it will aid in making a good sale. Property must advance in that place.

As to Street Railroads in Albany, I have not much faith in the stock. They will be badly managed I feel sure and will pay only the proprietors who get out of them at the flood tide. Mark that prediction.

I am sorry to see J.V.L.P. is not in the Senate, as I fear the Capitol project will not fare as well with liens at Washington.

Do not let my Chicago and Northwestern Railroad stock be forgotten and say to Charlie even Bellefontaine and Indiana I suppose must now be above ground. Both of these cripples however may do to keep, better than sell. He can decide after the enquiry.

I have had two hours of my time unexpectedly and unprofitably occupied this morning, having been obliged to go down street with Mr. Fisher.

We have elegant weather now. Trees all in blossom, radishes, onions, salad in market and oranges not yet gone. This is really a wonderful country, perpetual spring almost, three crops each year in the same ground.

I see the City Bank has been changed into an association under the General Banking Law. I hope you did not part with your stock there.

I note what you say about the small dividend received from M[echanics] & F[armers] Bank through Mr. Boardman, which was the final one.

I have not heard of the arrival of any commission to take my testimony in the Dudley will case. I suppose when they get ready they will send it.

The Central Railroad election resulted as I expected. Should that stock go down to the old figure when the war ends it may be well to get a larger interest there. The stock is so good it cannot be spoiled.

I suppose Ber cannot go to college this fall. If he do, bear in mind that a Dutch college is good enough for our children.³⁹⁶

Your answer about the endowment was all right. I hope the effort has been crowned with success, and that our people contributed their fair and free share.

Should Mrs. Alden be in Albany yet, do not fail to give her one of the silk dresses or if she has returned to San Francisco her sister can forward it to her.

I regret to hear Weed thinks of living in New York. I do not think he will be satisfied out of the Astor House.

³⁹⁶ "Dutch college" is a reference to Rutgers College, of which RHP was an alumnus.



No. 11³⁹⁷ Kanagawa, April 5 1864

I send this letter, my beloved wife, to San Francisco with directions that it be forwarded overland by which means you may possibly hear from me in advance of the steamer mail or express, though I think it safer to trust the bulk of my mail by that route.

The *Harvest Queen* leaves here for San Francisco some days in advance of the day fixed as the occurrences of several holidays would otherwise detain her longer than desirable.

I have been so busily occupied for two days in packing two boxes forwarded for you as to have less time than I wished for letters, but you may receive every box as carrying with [it] a message of love as every one of them has had no hand save mine to it. And you have little idea of the labor involved. The articles are so delicate, many of them so fragile as to require the utmost care. At the last moment I was obliged to put some articles in too hastily but I hope all will reach you in safety, and I think you will find them well deserving my care and your reception.

As it was I was obliged to leave out a large number of silk horse balls which I wished to send and I fear some of the prettiest ones.

I sent you some of the letters received from Bertie, the last being from Ceylon. Should the ship be detained by adverse winds as the mail is expected in two or three days I may possibly have another one to send.

There is nothing new here save an attack on an Englishman named Sutton at Nagasaki at 8 o'clock in the evening. He is desperately wounded but it is hoped he may survive.³⁹⁸ This is the first occurrence of that kind at that place.

But we hope for better things soon.

I write you by way of Marseilles April 1 by regular mail as usual, which now leaves punctually every two weeks.

I have pretty nearly exhausted all I had to say having written this month letters of some length. When you reflect how little of interest transpires here, etc., one wearies even of so inexhaustible a subject as oneself.

This letter is intended only as a kind of carrier pigeon, not deserving the name of dove, sent over the wilderness in the hope she may arrive in advance of Vanderbilt's Ark.

With love and kisses for Sue and my darling boy and my precious wife.

³⁹⁷ RHP misnumbered this letter and the subsequent one, reversing numbers 10 and 11.

³⁹⁸ See <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1864p3/d481>

From the loving husband and father,
Robt. H. Pruyn



Although I feel more like lying down than writing more this evening which you will better understand if my hand trunks reach you safely, I will fill this sheet before I stretch myself out for a quiet reading. It is now nearly 9 o'clock and before many moments pass I shall place my head on my solitary pillow.

First let me say that one of the gold lacquer boxes is the dressing case of a Japanese Lady of quality. You will see that the case bears the crest of a Daimio and the silver within it is marked by the same crest. The little silver vase is designed to hold the small silver articles, such as the chop sticks, the small instrument for smoothing the ashes of the small vessel or *hibatchie* in which is placed the coals for lighting the pipe, the pointed instrument with a circle above it which is a substitute for a fork to take up a piece of vegetable or fish, the tongues for similar purpose, the small feather used for putting on the face paint.

The small boxes etc. are 1. the one with silver open work top for ashes and fire. The ashes I should say, to be quite correct, must be made of the wisteria and is then white almost as snow. 2. a small jar for perfumed flour 3. a box with different compartments for paints etc., etc.

The silver articles will serve to show what good workmen the Japanese are in silver. I think you will pronounce the workmanship fine.

I think all articles will reach you safely unless two saucers made of inlaid copper and porcelain prove to have been badly packed. Also the large ivory cigar holder which by the way has some magnificent carving on it. I had not time to find small boxes to put them in and thought I would risk them. I hope they will not be damaged.

The small pieces of bronze which will serve as paper weights are not made for that purpose but for holding water with which to mix the India ink which is used. The Japanese write with a fine pencil instead of a pen reed. You would be surprised to see how rapidly and well they write and also how generally and almost universally they are so far educated as to be able both to read and to write. There are few countries in the world where so few persons can be found in the population who cannot read and write.

My comprador writes a very beautiful hand, it is marvelous. I must send you a sample.

Some of the lacquer boxes now sent are most superb specimens of work, which cannot be surpassed. One of these days you may be able to understand their beauty and

³⁹⁹ The first three pages of this letter are missing. It begins on sheet 4.

value. This grows as you see them. You must see poor lacquer to understand that of a good quality. It takes years sometimes to make a small box. True labor and patience to an incredible amount are expended.

It is now 10 minutes after 9 o'clock, my back aches and I prefer to take an hour, if my life is spared, to complete this letter tomorrow morning. Besides what you see I have had several business letters to write to Messrs. C. W. Brooks & Co. and to the Department. I have been by no means idle today. And I believe if I am not older than formerly that there is something in this climate which prevents you from straightening easily out again when you lean over much, or if I have a hinge in my back it is somewhat rusty perhaps for want of use.

So adieu, my dearly beloved wife. While a pleasant day is I hope opening before you, the shades of night are gathered around me. So good night dearest as I have talked so much of my lame back I must say a few words to assure you. How can I do better than to say I take regularly as usual 3 cups of tea and to be more strikingly regular in my habits do this three times each day.

April 6 7 a.m.

I have found it necessary to write another letter this morning, my darling wife, to Mr. Brooks. I am so uncertain as to what I have already written to you that I fear the only good I should accomplish by writing anything more will be to give you one day later dates thus assuring you of my continued health up to the departure of the ship.

You must be exceedingly careful in unpacking the boxes I have sent. The large ivory which opens this has had the stem which is placed in the same box slightly cracked or split. I did this in packing it. As this is exceedingly beautiful and was presented to me by the French minister it may be well to have a little silver band placed around it. Examine the carving closely with a good powerful glass.

You will find a great number of small things put away in every drawer and little box. Examine closely among the papers and cotton that none is thrown away.

I have written to Mr. Weed and to Mr. Ten Eyck and so deprived you of a few pages but as everything is open it is just as well and perhaps better for you as it certainly imports more variety.

I have written to you and repeat as this letter may possibly arrive first I do not wish the State Street house sold. I can afford to keep it and would prefer to buy what adjoins rather than sell.

Examine the small black box I send with two drawers and hanging flowers on outside. See how beautifully finished even the sides of the drawers are, even where it is hidden inside when closed. That is a superb box.

I hope one day to have the pleasure of pointing out beauties in these articles you will have failed to see. They will bear the closest examination. The lacquer is put on and

rubbed entirely off except what is absorbed by the grain of the wood and the polishing and placing on of lacquer is often repeated for years. I have heard of over 10 years being occupied with a small box. There is one for sale here at 500 *itzabus* but I prefer some of the smaller and really more elegant specimens I now send you.

As I am expecting in a few moments to be called to breakfast I must finish this letter, in some respects the most unsatisfactory I have written. It has been so much hurried and I know so little of what it contains. I fear you will derive very little satisfaction from it.

I think I have had a photograph taken which I have not sent you and the best of all. I will try and get one and enclose it if I succeed. If I recollect rightly it was taken after the one I now enclose was taken of which you have received copies but I am not sure. Beato insists upon taking still another. As so large a fleet is here he sells large numbers of copies and gets well paid as the price for each is \$1.00. He made hundreds of dollars from his group of the ministers and admirals.

And now, my darling, once more good bye. It is a comfort to know that only about 16 mails will leave before I can hope to turn my face homewards. Kiss my darling boy for me and believe me ever and devotedly

Yours,

Robt. H. Pruyn



No. 10 Kanagawa, April 10 1864

The *Harvest Queen*, my beloved wife, leaves here tomorrow morning. We only received notification of this yesterday. More cargo was expected and she was not to leave till Friday. I was engaged all day yesterday in packing two boxes for you, one of which is not yet completed. When they arrive you will be able to form some idea of the time occupied. All the work was done by me and I am sure you will pronounce it well done. The boxes of lacquer are so exceedingly delicate as to make me fear if I called in aid some might reach you in a damaged condition which I think is now impossible.

The Chinese puzzles I send for my darling boy. He will have to work them out for himself or find some instructor as I am unable to give him any aid.

The ivories I have sent and now send you have each a story which they illustrate. I cannot find time to give you a description now. Some of the lessons may be so plain as to require none. Those which prove unintelligible must be deciphered by Bertie or wait my return. There is now a group sent of the horse, tiger, cow, rat, cock, serpent, etc., these are the months of a year. A better one has already reached you. There is a fine

ivory shaped like a persimmon presented to me by M. de Bellecourt, the French minister, which has within it when opened rock and landscape scenery, very fine. This requires to be examined with a powerful glass. Some of these ivories you will see are exceedingly beautiful. They are all very costly. Charlie wished me to send him some. I will supply him when I return as I will have duplicates. But he will open his eyes when he learns the cost of them. The large one, two figures on horseback, cost over 170 *itzabus*.

All the lacquer I now send I wish kept.

The Chinese fans I send must be kept in a dry place or the ivory faces of the figures will come off. The plain and pearl fan is for you, the sandalwood and painted fan for Sue, and also one of the sandalwood card cases. The Japanese fans cost too much to send many, though they appear to be elegantly made. I ordered more but they charged two *itzabus* each for them and I refused to take them. These I send cost from $\frac{1}{2}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ *itzabu* each. You may say an *itzabu* here equals a dollar in currency at home, which I could now get for it if I invested in Sterling bills.

The large sandalwood box is for you, in commemoration of our engagement. It will reach you before July 11. Is it not elegant?

The Chinese caned work is far more elaborate and infinitely cheaper than the Japanese and though exceedingly delicate, they cannot produce such works of genuine art as this people produce. They fail in the human figure. The Japanese excel in their carvings of the face and figure, although the horse etc. are often monstrosities.

You will probably see in the papers another attack has been made on a foreigner at Nagasaki, the first made at that place. As far as known it was entirely unprovoked. Our Consul Mr. Walsh informs me that Sutton, the man wounded, who is an Englishman, was of good character, sober and of good temper and had not given offense to anyone. Affairs are not worse here than at such places in our own country where arms were formerly habitually carried. And perhaps we must expect such isolated cases for some time. The only way is to be prudent and not needlessly expose oneself. My impression is we have passed through the worse stages of our sojourn here. The Tycoon is still at Keoto. Though nothing is known of what has taken place in the first council now assembled, it can scarcely be doubted that better councils will prevail.

This paper looks rather unpromising for one accustomed to use ruled paper. It is somewhat typical of affairs here however and as such I accept it.

I wrote you by overland mail on the first instant. It is possible this may reach you in advance of that letter.

I propose sending a few lines to go by mail overland to St. Louis, directing the larger package to be sent by steamer via Panama, for the purpose of seeing which will be the most expeditious route. Ships from Japan to San Francisco make far shorter voyages than vessels bound to Japan from that port. Bound outward they are obliged, in order to secure the trade winds, to go south as far as 18 to 20 [degrees], which carries them

far out of the direct route, besides obliging them to go where the degrees are longer and where the earth of course is larger. Homeward bound vessels go far to the north where favorable winds prevail and where the degrees are shorter. You will see this by looking at the map. An outward passage of 45 days is short while homeward ones are made inside of thirty days, even. You may therefore hear from me therefore by overland mail to St. Louis inside of 50 days.

I enclose letters received from Bertie which I hope will be months older than those received by you. They may contain something, however, of interest to you, short as they are.

I do hope and pray he is having a pleasant journey, blessed and good health, as he will have ample opportunity to see all worth seeing and with an intelligent companion.

I have finished, but very little to my satisfaction, all that I can send to others than yourself and now add a few lines to you, my darling, just as the mail is closing.

I believe I told you of the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Allmand minus their baby left at Norfolk with his family. If I did not I intended to do so in my last letter, and to thank you for the articles sent by him, very acceptable indeed. Some of the articles I shall find very useful. Such little things are just the articles which our stores do not supply, or if they do, they are charged at most outrageous prices.

Mr. and Mrs. Ostrom, you will observe, have been obliged to go home in consequence of his lamentable condition. He has had some disease of the brain which has left him like a child.

The last mail brought intelligence of the death of Miss Adriance⁴⁰⁰ also of the Amoy mission family here, residing with Mr. Brown.

For the last two months we have had no additions to our Church from the fleet because of no leave being given to come ashore on Sabbaths. It is understood several are prepared to make a confession of their faith. The temperance society is a decided success, numbering over 100 members. Mr. Brown has been invited to preach on the British war steamer the *Argus* and is to conduct services on it next Sabbath.

I will now close this letter, my dear wife, and take it to the consulate where, if I find I have time, I will commence another one. The time fixed for closing the mail has nearly arrived but this mail is by no means as rigidly regulated by rule as the British mail and something may have occurred to keep it open.

Even while I write we are expecting that the outward bound mail is half way to our port from Shanghai.

It would have been very pleasant to have answered by this opportunity the loving messages I hope so shortly to receive and thus have kept the circle less interrupted but it is hardly possible that I shall have the chance though Mr. Fisher has even now come

⁴⁰⁰ Caroline Adriance (1824-1864) served as a missionary 1861-64.

in and calls out to me that the mail will not close till 10 o'clock tomorrow morning, which enables me to send a few lines more than I had looked to do.

What I have written has been so hurriedly done as almost to tempt me to destroy it and commence again.

I shall not read what I have written lest the temptation to do so becomes too hard to resist.



No. 12 Kanagawa, April 13 1864

Again, my beloved wife, I have the privilege of sending you a few lines, a privilege highly prized because of the pleasure it gives as well as of the evidence it affords of the still further narrowing of the term of our separation.

I have now your letters of January 7, 15 and 25 and have derived great comfort from their cheerful tenor and the very full and detailed home news which they contain, as well as the satisfactory information they give of your health and that of my dear boy, of Sue, and other friends and relatives. There is one remark which excites some degree of uneasiness. You say you have been forbidden to write at night. While I fully concur in the wisdom of this advice under ordinary circumstances, I cannot know with information given some time ago as to a trouble with your eyes and fear you may not have told all of the truth. I did not give much heed to it at the time because it would have been a strange thing to have seen you with any such affliction worthy of serious notice and I hope now that the advice given was in no such connection.

The last mail brought me no letter from Bertie. I hope you were more fortunate and had before that time heard from him. I shall write him only a few lines addressed to him at London, as I am not sure a letter sent at this time would reach him, but am quite certain it will be the last chance before he will feel inspired to hasten home.

I was glad to hear of the arrival of the Japanese coins and hope they proved an attraction at the Sanitary Fair. You ask if any of the silks sent direct to New York compare to those intended to fill Aunt Sue's order. Your letters were so glued together at the fire that I have been unable to refresh my memory as to what was desired, but presume out of so large an invoice you will be able to suit all tastes and requirements made or to be made.

7½ a.m. April 14 1864

I made an effort last evening to fill this sheet but was obliged to desist by reason of a lameness and pain in my hand. A few days ago in bowling I sprained quite slightly the

small cords, as I supposed, in the back of my right hand. As Dr. Caldwell of H.M.S. *Osprey* advised me to roll a few games yesterday to take the stiffness out, saying it was the small muscles in the back of the hand which were affected, I tried the experiment, but could not go through the second game. When I write my hand is a little cramped by the effort of holding the pen. But who ever found all things right when prepared to write letters. Some business intervenes or some intrusion compels you to lay aside your sheet or in some other vexations and unforeseen way you find good intentions scattered to the winds and the fulfillment meagre when compared with the rich promise.

I do not know what measurement you apply to my letters, but if adjudged by a surface measurement please bear in mind how large a number of words I get on a page and give me the necessary credit.

I was writing of the fair when I left off last evening. It appears to me you must have found many little things which could extract the dollars in such a cause. These small flowers could expand into rich fruit and I hope you had some of them. The small coins could expand hugely in volume and though I am aware you could not understand as well as I could have advised what to appropriate, yet I hope you were able to make a satisfactory display as well as ample contribution. If Dr. Armsby intended by his offer of \$2,000 to make an absolute purchase, I fear the actual cost even here, to say nothing of exchange, of what you have would surprise all of you. The French minister was saying yesterday he had proposed founding a Japanese museum in France, a purpose which he had abandoned in consequence of some differences with his government, but that he should say when he reached home that he had parted with most of his collection but if they wished to see a complete one they must go to the U.S. and see mine. He sold his collection at auction this week and I purchased two of his best articles and some trifles. He expects his successor by the next steamer. He leaves after having failed to satisfy his government, but he has been vigilant, writing and faithful, and is really an able man with very many faults of which it is better to speak than write.

I hope the silks arrived in good order but you will remember that many of the pieces sent had passed through the fire and had been dressed over. I would not therefore be surprised to hear many were spotted, even of those entirely new. Exposure to the air I have heard is generally a sure remedy.

I am sorry to hear of the resignation of [my brother] Augustus, particularly as no reason is given. He has great cause for thankfulness and talking according to the manner of the world could not very reasonably calculate on longer immunity. And yet, if spared, it would have been better to be in the army, as I do not see what prospect is elsewhere open for any young man till the war is finished. He has fair ability and with his experience would doubtless do well were some path in civil life opened for him. Were I home something might be done. I think I might even secure for him a captain's commission in the regular army.

You need not be apprehensive on my account. No unnecessary exposure takes place. I am more cautious than Bertie ever was. He perhaps was often incautious because he did not perceive the danger and you know I am not constitutionally very brave. I have shown a little courage here it is true, but perhaps in battle I would fairly have run away. Who knows till he has been tried. Perhaps I might have faced the foe had time for a calculation of chance been given. I believe at [the battle of] Solferino most of the killed were in the reserve. That fact should be made known to the timid. It might strengthen many a feeble knee.

I am pleased to hear of the continued success of the Church, though not prepared to hear that my debt remained. Please say to Mr. J[acob] H. T[en] E[yck] that is wrong. I shall be pleased to receive the sermon on the death of Mr. Miller. I suppose it will be on the way before this reaches you.

On looking again at my letter from the department I find the language is "leave of absence will be granted if affairs etc., etc." I am at a loss whether I am to be the judge of this or the department, in other words whether leave is actually given or promised. I shall act in the first assumption when that ship arrives, if my life be spared and nothing unforeseen occurs.

I wish to hear all about that prospect. The absence of information about its progress is a sore trial and I wonder it is not given. I wish no long letters, two sentences would suffice to give all needful information. A few words could be spared to you if not in the shape of a letter to me. And I am afraid I shall have trouble yet by reason of this unaccountable reticence.

The boxes by the *Maggie Atkinson* contain some Japanese dresses made up. I fancy few of our expansive crinoline loving damsels would fancy such a fancy dress, especially when consummated by straw shoes. You have enough carvings, paintings, etc., to enable you to form an estimate of the extreme Shaker-like grace of the costume.

I regret you will be disappointed in the sewing silk. I will try and send some by the next opportunity.

I am very glad you loaned my two pictures to Palmer. We certainly should spare no exertion nor expense in such a cause. And I wish Mr. Vermilye's application had not been made at the time they were elsewhere engaged.

Your effort in drawing dividends is one, my darling, which very many would be willing to spare you, and I hope none more troublesome or less satisfactory will be in store for you. I hope you did not part with your City Bank Stock. I have a high opinion of Martin. He is a safe manager, honest and fearless and has proved a true friend. I wish you, when you can do so, to give him my kind regards.

Miss Mann is to be married next month to D[eWitt] C[linton] Brower, who is a partner of Mr. Allmand. His mother is now a Mrs. Lancer. He was from Belleville New Jersey, a young man of good character, particularly so for an eastern man who is hardly

to be judged by the home standard. I had always promised the wedding dress and it is ordered. She will probably be married in Yedo, the first foreigner ever so married. That is the present idea. Only Sir R[utherford] Alcock, Lady A[cock] and the ministers and the family to be there, go up in the morning and back the same day. Whether by native boats, or a small steamer, or by one of the British gunboats is not decided as it is still an unacknowledged engagement of only a few days' standing.

I have finished my letters to London including a short one to Bertie and have two hours left for you, my dear wife. I hope my writing will prove legible. I am writing in pain which fairly has reached part of the day to my shoulder.

We had last evening, and also at the last reception of Lady Alcock, some veritable ice cream, Sir Rutherford having brought some ice freezing machine with him. Lady A[cock] appears to be a very sensible body. She has a daughter in England about whom she was talking a few days since and Mrs. Fisher asked if she were at school. Lady A[cock] replied no! she was with some aunts who had a finishing school and she took such lessons as she chose. Many with a title prefixed to their name would have been anxious to have kept so much of the ship in the dark.

I have again read your account of the preparations for the fair. It takes much to stir Albany, but the old city when once aroused goes in with a will. I can readily imagine that many of those you name think they are doing a martyr's work and earning a martyr's crown. I am glad you took the course you did about advice to Mary who, I shrewdly guess, was to have been followed if you had the good fortune to think with the court.

By the way it could have been a most capital idea to have had a collection of old uniforms commencing with the revolution. Then my bell buttons would have properly had a place.

I am sorry you put so poor an estimate on my ivory carvings. Those I just sent I know were rather common but some of the later ones are real good works of art. Better ones will follow and then we will be able to round out the collection. The price has advanced royally and I only purchase new a few choice ones.

You speak of rouge powder. I do not remember of sending any. The pink powder in common boxes is tooth powder. It should not be used too frequently as it is sharp and wears the teeth. It is made of the cuttlefish I think, but it is said to be very good used once a week.

Sue and Charlie must take a share of this letter for themselves. I can very fully appreciate your anxiety about the little fellow, yet he must very soon go to some other school. You can but tell whether he is getting too far advanced for Miss Kidd. You cannot wish as heartily as I do I was with you. It will take good traveling however to reach you. Wishes will avail very little. I am right glad such a thing as a 3 years' absence was not in our minds when I left. That would have been unsupportable. It is bad enough to have the absence gradually assuming such formidable dimensions. I can only say it

would never do to be away when that ship arrives. I must be here, if it depend on my will and my life is spared.

I am glad you sent a present to [my aunt] Alida Boardman. You cannot now err on the side of liberality.

I have ordered some more of the elegant grape from China as large as the large white Malaga growing in a colder climate than ours. Will have them forwarded next fall, 3 varieties said to be superb. I hope the seeds and trees I have sent have amounted to something. I will send more next fall if my life is spared.

I enclose a very hurried letter for Professor Cook. I had not the courage to write such a one as was proper and could not delay as it will scarcely reach now as soon as the box does which I hope will be before Commencement.

The sables I think I told you are to come via San Francisco. The Amur River ones are quite cheap, the Kamchatka ones rare and valuable, only 3,000 skins attained in a year. Should Abby want any, a letter to Brooks & Co. may suffice as a larger supply may reach them than I have ordered. I forgot what I ordered but I think about to the amount of \$600 each, or \$700, I think 25 skins for each. But they are to be such as you rarely see East, if indeed ever.

When I close this sheet I must go down street, as I found I have a letter to write to Shanghae and I must first see my agents here.

I sent a parcel of letters via San Francisco not because I thought you would care to read them but only to get them home.

I see one of my dispatches has been quoted by the Ministry in the House of Commons in their defense. My treaty, I hope, will be regarded in the U.S. as showing I have managed well here. I see it must have reached home at a time when it was less expected than war would have been. I take it, it will be the occasion of great surprise.

One of the officers of the fleet has this moment left me. He had the good sense to make a short visit. But it would have been strange had I entirely escaped some interruption.

I hope, my darling, you have long since had cheerful letters from our dear Bertie and that he will be home when this reaches you. I had supposed he would be away till July but suppose his return will have been hastened by Mr. Cunningham's sad loss. He is so young that he may look forward to a visit to Italy at some future day. You may be disposed to join in such a trip when I get home or find courage to meet me.

And now, my dear wife, again I send remembrances to dear relatives and friends. Love and kisses to dear Charlie and Sue.

The months are rapidly flying. I count them, the weeks and days. I fear I only value them when they are gone, or rather regard them then with more favor. Do you think kind strangers, green fields, a fine climate, even if not to be found at home, can compensate for home and friends, wife and children?

Adieu my beloved. God bless and keep you and my precious ones in my constant prayer.
Robt. H. Pruyn

I think that I have written that you had better provide Edward with a house for another year if needful.

Make Bertie a handsome allowance and see what he can save. I would like him to have enough to make him feel it was his duty to put by a portion. It will form a good habit. Give it from my income or if you wish to share, do it.



[First sheet missing; April 1864, based on events]

...not fail though the day is at least two days in advance of the time by the schedule.

I was much grieved to learn Charlie's and Abby's bereavement⁴⁰¹ and shall send a few lines to them. Such departures are not to be deserved but are they really to be greatly mourned? The flower is taken to a place of shelter, where sun cannot scorch, or wind overthrow or time wither it. These are all common place sources of comfort which strangers and friends can more easily speak of than the mourner can truly feel and yet they are nonetheless true to those who hope and believe.

This makes me think of the other Helen.⁴⁰² I cannot give you Mrs. Ostrom's residence which is somewhere in New Jersey, known however to Mr. Peltz. From what I hear I think his recovery extremely doubtful. It is a strange providence that he should be so struck down just as he had acquired the language and was prepared for usefulness.⁴⁰³

I am pleased to see that your bazaar has been so decided. Success. I was much gratified by the receipt of papers of the same date as your last letter but the catalogue to which you refer did not reach me. I may expect it by the next mail, I presume. Nor did I have an opportunity to judge how fulsome the article in the journal to which you refer really was, which I should have liked as you may have deserved more praise than your modesty would allow. We need less years however than we have seen to know that there is a vast deal of humbug in the world and that few are judged as they really should

⁴⁰¹ Charlie and Abby's daughter, Helen, died on March 4 1864 at the age of 4.

⁴⁰² RHP refers to Helen Lansing Ostrom, who was named after RHP's late daughter.

⁴⁰³ It is unclear what illness Ostrom had, but RHP's dire prediction did not come to pass. Ostrom died in 1898. His wife, on the other hand, died in 1866.

be. Those who have much invariably get more.

I am nevertheless most displeased at what J.V.L.P. says of Governor Seward's praise of me. There is no humbug of course as to my deserving all he says and much more too. But then I will probably get most credit for what I may really think deserves less, while other things to me more deserving as it would appear will be passed over.

I do not know what you mean by your saying that you are waiting to hear from high quarters whether to get a new card for me. That is to say I do not know whether your remark is made in consequence of your hearing of such promotion being contemplated, or whether your statement is simply in response to my request to send me a card should such promotion take place. I have thought it was proper without reference to anything done here but simply because politic and calculated to impress the Japanese government. I shall of course be better pleased if our mission is placed on the same footing as that of England and France because I have earned it. I therefore am inclined to hope you have received an intimation that it might take place, though I fear not, as then you would have probably been more explicit. Therefore I will wait, without unduly exciting my hopes, only to be disappointed.

The articles placed on exhibition were doubtless well worth a visit, even if you were not favored with that fearful "hari kari" sword of which you speak, which as the boy would say was all in "the eye." I suppose Bertie will be able to set you straight on Japan matters but my presence will be necessary to enable you to see things as they are. I see the *New York Observer* has an advertisement of a Mr. Van Benscholen of Japan Coffee, which shows how highly favored you are in the United States, as we have seen none (let alone tasting) any here. It is said they raise a little indifferent coffee somewhere in Japan. But we drink here old java. Sir Rutherford has some mocha and Mr. Allmand some from the Sandwich Islands. But I have heard of none so fortunate as to possess the highly famed Japan article which is tickling the palates of Gotham.

I did not hear from Bertie by either of the two last mails, but conclude it is because he is off the main route of travel. By the time this reaches you I hope he will be safely housed with you and that he will accept a share of your letter instead of one I had designed to address to him. And as Charlie does not forget the dogs in any letter he writes, I shall profit by his lesson and say to Bertie that Tommy is perfectly well and is still "the horse" of the place, an universal favorite.

I am distressed at one part of your letter describing the partition of Mrs. Dudley's effects. It is true I have my mind at rest as to the old andirons possessed by Mrs. Nelson and the brass curtain rings fortunate in being transferred from a senator's widow to a governor's wife, but who, who in this wide world of all the loving relatives of the dark browed and dark eyed departed beauty, will wear that crowning ornament, that chef acme of art, the immutable turban? It must never be placed on horns less beautiful and majestic. Were I at home I might try and induce Mr. Thomas O[lcott] to allow his wife

to show herself at the window occasionally with one like it, if the original session piece could not be secured, in order that the picture so familiar to my sight might be recalled to my memory. With a vivid imagination I may however feel the loss of the real *bona fide* article less. Did Palmer model it? Where was Armsby? Can we not secure it from the observatory? To be placed in some conspicuous spot. Though that were needless, as wherever placed that would be the spot. I make a special presentation of this hint to the Dr. to be acted on as soon as he is at a loss for a healthful excitement, though I fear the mercenary scamp would insist upon securing it for Sarah and she is too light. Why was it not used at the bazaar, placed on some antique, admission 50 cents?

I am delighted you will have an opportunity to send Cousin Kate Lansing a dress. She has my hearty sympathy. What a strange lot has been hers! I am glad she has visited you and hope you will derive comfort from it. See how good it is to have a husband safely shelved away in Japan. Why, I am fortunate here in having no credit. I sent for a pair of shoes which I had sent to be mended. As I did not know the cost I sent no money and the messenger, the U.S. Marshall, who may have been rather ungracious to and unpopular with the cobbler, was told he must first have the money, that was his rule which he could break for no one. Thrice happy country where the credit system is unknown! Why did it become so bloated and overgrown in our country? When I get home I forbid any one to trust me. I shall put a notice in the paper that I will pay no debt of my (not my wife's) contracting.

I thank Charlie for his thoughtfulness in preserving for me a file of "The Canteen"⁴⁰⁴ of which I have received two copies, though not the one in which our collection is noticed. The collection, which I will have when the articles I now have reach home, will be richly worth half a dozen of that at the Hague.

There is no danger of my having an attack of silk fever again even if prices had not gone up so high. All silks have advanced and those I sent you could not be purchased now at double the price. The Japanese are now paying 15 *itzabus* for what cost them only 6 *itzabus* years ago, and a few wide silks, such as the plaids, wide, washed silks which I purchased for 22 *itzabus* were bought here yesterday and 46 asked. So you need expect no more. Crepes have gone up just as high, 66 *itzabus* now asked for 22 yards of this wide kind which would be equal to as many dollars home, adding exchange.

I hope the vines and bulbs reach home safely. Mr. Brooks cannot have sent those around the Horn.

I received a very kind letter from Mrs. Alden, which I cannot answer this mail. Should you see Miss Weed you will please say I had anticipated a part of her order and

⁴⁰⁴ "The Canteen" was a daily publication that accompanied the Albany Army Relief Bazaar, which took place in the spring of 1864. There were a total of 12 numbers. It is available online at <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/nyp.33433079024273>

purchased some of the very articles, or better, than she desired for her father. I hope soon to visit Nagasaki, which is the place for the egg shell China.

The crystal balls can be bought of 6 inches diameter price 3,000 *itzabus*. I can see no such value in them.

I think there is more than a large streak of improvidence in the quarter in which you locate it. You need not trouble yourself to say your loan need not be repaid. I think that will be the result without your saying it. It is our shame as you certainly wished neither the loan to the Colonel or Mr. M and that is the actual result...



No. 13 Kanagawa, April 26 1864

Two years ago yesterday, my beloved wife, I first placed my feet on the soil of Japan, an age and yet almost but as yesterday. The forms of the visitors to our ship, the novel and yet beautiful scenery, the relief after 35 weary days of ocean life, the very cordial welcome, all are before me as fresh as if but a day had passed away. The very calls of the cranes now sounding in my ears through the open casement sound as the echoes of those of which awakened me or accompanied my awakening in April 1862. And yet momentous days and weeks and months have passed by, prolonging our separation. The most agreeable aspect they present is that they are gone. Numerous as they are, they do not loom up in the future an obstacle to our reunion but have almost imperceptibly faded into the past. And with this comes the more agreeable hope that as many of their fellows will not follow in their retreating pathway before the more pleasant shores of home, sterile though they may appear, yet rich in country, home, friends, wife and children, will rise to my view and brighten the eye and quicken the pulse.

On Sunday the mail arrived bringing me a letter from Ber of February 23, the day before he expected to reach Suez, giving good tidings of health and a safe and pleasant journey, saying he was to stop at Messina. This modification of plan leads me to hope for the further change which will enable him to visit Naples and Rome. At this very moment however you know far more of his movements than myself. The same mail brought me your letters of February 1 and 7th and papers of February 9 forwarded by you. The departure of the return mail is hastened by the change of the monsoon. The steamer was to have left tomorrow but a heavy storm which has presented the discharge of cargo has obliged the agents to postpone her departure a day, so the mail will not close till tomorrow afternoon. A longer delay, if it take place, will make it impossible most probably to connect with the steamer at Shanghae which always leaves on a fixed day and necessarily regulates the time of departure from this place which as yet is a mere

offshoot of the mail route and forms no regular portion of it as yet. The failure in your regular receipt of letters has originated in cases known to me and probably in and thus unknown to me at that point. There should never be so long an interval as a month between any letters. Though I can see if all is right here one of three weeks might occur by the prompt arrival at Marseilles, which would catch the Liverpool mail in the one case and the failure to connect at another time.

I had resolved to commence my letters by this mail immediately on the arrival of the steamer which would ordinarily give me a full week and was not prepared for the change which limits my time so much. Nor was I surprised to learn last evening that governors had come down from Yedo to see me and with whom I have an interview at 10 o'clock. They invariably come when I least want them and are sure then to be most tedious.

I am very glad to see by the papers that the government are so well pleased with my conduct of affairs here. My letters from Washington are not of so late a date. Though as far received, they have been quite flattering. The more recent good news (even now received) must afford still more satisfaction. I am more and more satisfied every day that our prompt and energetic action at Simonoseki saved us from war. The least timidity or hesitation at that time would have led to concerted action on the part of the Daimios. The peaceful course since that adapted by the government, including the reduction of duties etc., etc., are in a great measure due to me, though it would be ungenerous, if not unjust, to claim most of the credit. Therefore I shall leave facts as disclosed by the dispatches of all the ministers to tell the story.

9 p.m.

As I anticipated I have had a weary day and more so because as yet barren of results. The claims on the government have been under consideration and before anything is decided other conferences must take place. In this connection, and to continue the political part of the letter, I may say the French minister told me he was not sustained by his government which had on several occasions written to him about the providence of the American minister and his success though not two years in Japan. If I must be here it is pleasant even for you that it should be under such circumstances. I cannot, when I look at the difficulties which have all the time surrounded me, see how it was possible for one so entirely inexperienced to succeed so well. And I cannot be too grateful for it.

You have said nothing in your letters about two books of Chinese paintings on rice paper which it appears to me must have reached you, though I really forget what vessel took them to San Francisco. I should be sorry if they have miscarried. One box of the gold coins was for the State of New York, all marked by me, and a letter for the governor accompanied the box, together with the Japanese original and a translation certified by Portman. I hope these have arrived safely. There are no silver half *itzabus*. That coin is

the small silver gilt one of which I sent large numbers. I hope you thought of giving some of those coins and some of the quarters to the Sanitary Fair. They would have yielded a large profit. I shall have a full supply of all the current coins of the country except those large *obangs* of which one must suffice, the one presented to me. The price of another would buy me in the U.S. two hundred dollars of government stocks. They are obtained with great difficulty even at that price.

I suppose you were able to make a very fair show of Japanese curiosities and that you kept back none that were desired. The fair must have been a great success. I should be much pleased to be the possessor of one of Palmer's contributions.⁴⁰⁵ Should the engravings in the *London Illustrated News* of the ministers etc. be good I should like you to get three or four copies. That of Admiral Kuper published in the paper received is admirable, that of Colonel Neale not so good. Beato, the artist, tells me the next steamer will bring the paper containing the group of which I sent you photographs. I knew you would be pleased with the splendid views in India etc., etc. He has Jerusalem also. His price is so large here, especially when exchange is taken into account, that I thought I would wait for these till I could buy them in Paris.

I hope you can read my cramped writing. I crowd a great many words into a page.

I was pleased to receive from you some late papers by last mail via Marseilles. Nothing via Washington in the shape of papers after December. You can see how letters sent there are delayed. Judge [Robert J.] Hilton's letters of December arrived on the 24th April. Send nothing there except what is very bulky or not desired speedily.

Affairs at home are not as decided and favorable as I had wished, but patience and faith are needed.

I should like to know whether the colored crepes retained their color and were not spotted as it may be well then to send a few more. If Aunt Sue wishes any other silks let me know and I will get them. As to the articles desired by Abby and others I will have enough for all when I get home. It is impossible almost to fill an order here, articles must be purchased as you see them, and from a dozen different owners who bring them. The dressing case with silver articles by the way belonged to the wife of [the Daimyō of] Satsuma as also the other articles marked with the same crest. These articles get into market 1. the owners (women) wish money and dispose of them to the peddlers, tempted by the prices they get of foreigners. 2. Sometimes they are sold by the higher servants or attendants to whom they have been given 3. They are stolen in the confusion etc. attending their removal in cases of fire or at other times.

There has been recently a large fire at Yedo over 2,000 houses destroyed and over 150 lives lost. The money loss in such cases is not as with us. Sensuke, who was servant of Heusken and now of Mr. Fisher, says his father was burned out. He rented a home

⁴⁰⁵ Erastus Dow Palmer (1817-1904) was a sculptor in Albany.

and lost his kitchen furniture and other goods total loss 20 *itzabus* which Fisher and I paid and made him a happy man, he and his wife coming and bowing to the ground before all of us, even those who did not give. The tenants of dwellings own the doors and windows which are sliding and movable and in case of fire these are generally the first things saved. The beds are all ready for removal, always rolled up by day, the clothing can be contained in a small bundle and a Japanese household on the move can ordinarily carry all their effects. The sum necessary to support a family in Japan is ridiculously small. No people live or even have lived who occupy dwellings and are half civilized who have succeeded in reducing the cost of subsistence to so low a sum. Straw shoes are universally worn, hats rarely, rice is eaten by the richest and constitutes the great bulk of their food. Tea is the sole drink, except water and a vile cheap *saki* or wine made from rice. Coolies, mechanics etc. are supported say on 2 cents or 3 cents a day, and I suppose the food of the richest prince does not average a shilling. They are a contented and happy people, wanted nothing from foreigners and have thus far gained nothing. But we are here and foreign residence is a fixed fact and will never be given up again. Unless Christianity shall have sway here better for Japan we never had come.

In this connection let me say, as the British claim for the murder of Richardson is paid, that many merchants from China have spoken unfavorably of his character. He is said to have been overbearing and cruel. He was brought before the British Consul at Shanghae several times for ill treatment of Chinese, reprimanded and fined and threatened with severe punishment if brought again. A leading merchant from China told me a few days since that he (Richardson), having found one of his servants asleep, who had stolen as he supposed some of his cigars, made him swallow several cigars and some brandy, then rubbed him with oil and roasted him for some time before a large fire. Such are some of the men we have to deal with in the east. The difficulty is many regard the Chinese as worse than animals and treat them like dogs. I have heard a wealthy merchant speaking of having accidentally shot a Chinese who died from the effects of the wound with as much concern as I would speak of having killed a rat. In other words say he had killed the man but no proceedings were taken because the Chinese said he was the friend of the Consul who would have to try him and it would therefore be useless to make a complaint.

It cannot be possible therefore that trouble will not arise here. The Japanese will not bear such treatment and many now reside here and will yet come who put Chinese and Japanese on the same level and that will not answer. This people are far more disposed to resent and revenge an inquiry or insult.

7 a.m. April 27

After 3 days of rain we have a most beautiful day and it is now probable that the steamer will be able to catch the mail at Shanghae. I write in better spirits when I can

nearly fix the period when my letters will be likely to reach you.

Pleasant as the old corner house on Broadway might be in many respects, it was not as a residence that I contemplated to use it. It was only for its associations I wished to possess it. You know I have the organ of locality or adhesiveness or some better name which phrenologists give to that tenacity which retains what you possess. I never parted with a servant or workman without regret, though they may have been poor ones. I do not intend ever to sell if I can help it the Chapel and State Street house. I suppose I do not like even to throw aside old pants, coats etc. So should that old house be in market before I get back, buy it. You will have funds of mine which will enable you to do so. Remember you need not use what the Barings will put at your disposal. It appears to me you had better not unless a grand investment can be made until the war is evidently near its close. You will bear in mind that if exchange and gold is high so is everything, in the shape of stocks at least, or when gold falls to par or rather our depreciated currency comes up to gold, \$100 will buy what now requires \$130 or 140 or even more, whereas if you have the money in London you will be well guarded yourself and able to act in any emergency which may arise to great advantage. But I leave all this to your judgement. There may be some things there would be great advantage to purchase such as an undoubted mortgage or a valuable piece of real estate which the owner may be obliged to part with at a sacrifice. But all these opportunities will very likely multiply when the war closes, if that good time shall ever arrive.

I am pleased to hear you were able to aid army friends of Aunt Maria. I often feel as if [I] was not attentive enough to the old Lady herself. I remember old Mrs. Vedder distinctly and of course Miss Gates. Do not fear to give too much in such cases especially to our old Dutch poor in both Churches. We are as able to do as anyone. Our income, with what I have here, was and is very heavy and let it do good. As to a lease of the State Street house I would prefer to have it untrammelled when I return.

I do not fear you will desire "a leave of absence" when I return. Nor do I think either will be disposed to wander except in each other's company. It is true in 1863 I spoke of my return in 1864. I could now leave if that ship were here and can do so next fall if something unforeseen do not occur. All I can now say is I wish it. I desire no further honor in this direction. I know there is great risk in so doubtful and difficult a country to lose even what has been acquired. And as to luxury here what is it? Suppose it to be what you imagine. You cannot live on syllabub, or plum cake or ice cream always. Onions sell here for \$4 the bucket of 34 pounds. Turkey for \$10. At Shanghae, where more money is made and people are extravagant, one has sold as high as \$40, many last Christmas as high as \$25 each. See what luxuries you have. If Mr. Rochester's mess forbade the mention of such delicacies in camp how should it be with me so far distant from them.

Mere physical enjoyment has no more to do with my remaining here than it has to

do with keeping the man in the moon in his place for centuries. I suppose he is weary of his fixity of position, even though having the pleasure of being acquainted by sight with all the people of Earth and becoming the depository of their secrets, especially those disclosed in lovers' moonlight walks. It is well the old fellow is not gifted with speech, or if so gifted is so distant he cannot blab, or if his voice really could penetrate this distance that he is so wonderfully discreet as never to have betrayed confidence even by echoing a kiss. There, all that must make you feel young again and very romantic, but you have brought it on yourself by speaking of Tivoli and recalling those scenes when you were so tender to me, a phlegmatic young Dutchman.

You write of Mr. DeWitt's varieties of camellias. I wish you could see the superb ones here. I have a variety unknown, Mr. Hogg says, in our country. It is pure white fringed with a bordering of pink. We have many pink and white variegated. But this is pure white, all except the edging. Perhaps at home there may really be more varieties than can be found here in any one collection at least. But then imagine a tree sixty feet high and nearly two in diameter filled with dark bright camellias, one 20 or 30 feet high filled with double white ones. The price of a camellia plant potted with a dozen or more flowers is even to foreigners from 3 to 6 cents. What must it be to their own people? I have gathered from the dwarfed trees a few peach and plum blossoms literally like roses. I never believed till this year the printed accounts of large blossoms. I will have them preserved and sent you if possible. I enclose one now and hope it may reach you safely but fear it will not as it is not dry now.

I am pleased to hear of the zeal for the Bazaar and should like very much to see the red white and blue damsels, to say nothing of the antiques in short gown and petticoat. I agree with all of you that Mame is better at home. If Albany cannot turn out enough matrons and damsels of all shades styles and patterns it will have better not to import at all events. I wish no interest in the importation. If made I shall be glad I was spared the sight. Everyone would of course be glad of the profit derived by such an exhibition but those who had urged it most would probably indemnify themselves by shrugging the shoulders and complacently saying rather she than I, on the "Love the treason but hate the traitor" principle.

I have been called away by a silk man. The stores here are closed and for Mrs. Fisher and also at Lady Alcock's request I had sent for my Yedo silk man who has made his appearance. He has occupied an hour and will take at least one more. Consequence, you will have two sheets. But count the words and you will find as many as in five of yours. I try by quantity to compensate for quality.

I am much grieved to hear of Mrs. Seaman's death. She always appeared to me to be much of a lady and exceedingly amiable and good. I am also pained to hear of Amanda Lansing's affliction and hope her recovery may be neither uncertain or protracted. She always appeared to me to be exceedingly nervous. Is Anna yet married or does she find

engagement too pleasant to be terminated? Dr. W will make a good husband I doubt not. I do not think he will be less happy for having made a matter of fact marriage. I shall not be displeased if I learn that you have remembered Anna Ten Broeck when she started on the voyage of matrimony. You have a large fund to draw on and need never say on such occasions what shall I buy. That is one thing I wished to guard against, being started not on the last night of the year to toil in the purchase of a New Year's present. So you see how selfish I have been after all in what I have sent you. I have letters from Hong Kong saying that in May Chinese preserves will be purchased and sent to you. You have no idea what preserved ginger (good) really is. You will be better able to judge when this supply reaches you. The best is never sent for sale. It costs as much in China as the article usually exported sells for in New York. A small supply made from young and tender selected roots is made each year for the large China houses for their use and for their friends. It is crisp and delicate instead of being tough and stringy as ours frequently is.

The guns are thundering forth a salute from the French frigate for the new French minister⁴⁰⁶ now landing. He has left his wife and his daughter, whom it was at first said he was to bring with him, at home in France. Lady Alcock is therefore the only lady minister here. She is exceedingly agreeable. I dined there last week and she very pleasantly played and sang some simple songs after dinner and required no urging. She is quite natural and in excellent state of preservation. She has some peculiarities, just sufficient I suppose to enable her husband to distinguish her from the rest of her sex, which is very useful and the absence of which I suppose in some cases lead to the mistakes we often read of in married life in the everyday world. In Japan, where none are supposed or expected to be virtuous till married, we do not hear of such things. I have seen one poor miserable looking wretch pilloried for this offence against the Decalogue. But as he was said to be a physician perhaps he may have been singled out for punishment for some side reason known only to his countryman. I did not see the woman. And can only say of her she showed a most pitiful lack of taste. But I suppose the saying "there is no accounting for taste" holds good here as well as elsewhere.

In this connection I will give you a bit of scandal *subrosa*. You have seen the name of a missionary figuring in the papers W[illiam] P[aul] Bagley. Tempted by the devil in Japanese absence of petticoats, he found that a young Bagley was about to visit Japan before entering any other country. His conscience began to trouble him. When known to the Japanese it would not disgrace the woman or prevent her marriage, but she would

⁴⁰⁶ Léon Roches (1809-1901) served as the French Minister to Japan 1864-1868, replacing de Bellecourt.

be liable to be sent to the *Gankiro*,⁴⁰⁷ a place set apart for public women. Besides, a child with his blood in its veins would be brought up a heathen. He concluded it was his duty to marry the girl and consulted our consul about it and spoke to me. What he might finally have done it is difficult to say.⁴⁰⁸ The parents cut the knot by saying she might live with him as long as he pleased but they could not marry. I mention this to illustrate Japanese ideas as to such relations and not with reference to the male sinner who I believe is sincerely repentant. There are very few saints here in this respect. I think the scandal aroused by one of my colleagues (the French) in this respect has had much to do with his recall as it was notorious he had at least 3 wives. One of his old ones had married a merchant. Having purchased some articles of his I was surprised one day by one of Mr. [Francis] Hall's clerks coming to me and saying Mrs. de B[ellecourt] wished to see me and there was the fair creature, ghastly and hideous with blackened teeth and shaven eyebrows, come for the money and bringing me the purchased articles. Her husband was as well aware of her antecedents as was de B[ellecourt], and I have often in the store seen all three together. But I believe according to Japanese custom and morals there is no danger of her servicing now. There is much of this I cannot write about and I am somewhat surprised at my noticing these things now. You cannot understand Japanese character however without such details, unpleasant as they may be. But we will pass them by simply saying the absence of all delicacy here on the part of the female sex is amazing. They will exhibit for sale the most obscene pictures and articles without coming within a hundred miles of a blush. When the *Jamestown* was here I was passing a bath house with Captain Price and other gentlemen. I had never been in one. We stepped in and girls and women went in bathing more unconcernedly than you can imagine. Squatted on the floor in all attitudes they responded as with entire indifference, indeed newcomers began to divest themselves of clothing paying no more attention to us than if we were invisible. Must not great changes take place before any good can be hoped for in such a country? Such people I suppose St. Paul found at Ephesus and Corinth. What God accomplished there by weak human instrumentality can be done here.

Sunday June 12 1864

I attended this afternoon the funeral of Mr. [J. C.] Jaquemot's little boy who died yesterday afternoon of hydrophobia. He was bitten on the lip nearly three months ago by a foreign dog. It was an unmistakable case I am told. The little boy, only six years

⁴⁰⁷ The *Gankiro* 岩亀楼 was a government-sanctioned brothel that catered to two separate clientele: Japanese and foreigners.

⁴⁰⁸ RHP retells this story in another letter two months later, adding that the child mysteriously disappeared, implying either as a result of infanticide or stillbirth.

old, was in convulsions and most of the time out of his mind and yet he knew his mother. He bit Mrs. Van der Vos, the wife of the interpreter of the French Legation, twice, though fortunately so as not to draw blood. I am told hydrophobia has been thus far unknown in Japan, which is very fortunate as dogs abound and almost outnumber the children. And most of them are ugly curs, almost savage. They travel especially at night in troops and have been known even to attack man. I felt for the poor mother today. Her little girl went home to her native Switzerland to be educated in the same ship which took Mary Fisher to England. Mr. J[aquemot] wished this little boy to accompany his sister but the mother could not consent and now she reproaches herself. It is a great sorrow to lose a child of this age and the only one at home. But how bitter and numerous the drops to the cup of sorrow when the little one is snatched away by such a horrible disease and the parents alone in a far off land. Be careful of dear Charlie's pets at home.

I feared this letter would leave for home before any letter was received from you. The last mail failed to reach here in one season on the 2nd instant, the steamer having been disabled in a storm this side of Aden. The French steamer *Tigre* (Ber's steamer) came alone and brought passengers and mail to Ceylon, and this morning I received your letter of March 15 and what has not before happened, a later letter from Washington and a letter from Ber from Rome. And also by the French mail one from Paris, April 9.

As the mosquitoes are a little active tonight I will now get under the net and get to sleep and, if my life be spared, will give you a reasonably good letter tomorrow. Though in all probability it will not reach you until after your xxx one, which I hope to send in a few days via San Francisco. Good night, dearest.

Monday June 13, 10 o'clock [1864]

I wrote the few lines on these pages yesterday, my darling wife, but not wishing to commence my letter with so sad a subject I have numbered the sheet 2.

It is difficult to find anything here of sufficient interest to write about. I soon tire of writing about myself. My findings are necessarily stereotyped. I feel here just as I did on the Pacific, as I rose each morning I found the same wide ocean stretching all around, illimitable and changeless except from fair to stormy as the sky which arched it. So it is here, a dull drear uniformity.

I often think how strange it is I am here and yet I feel it was right I should come. Had we been able to look a few days ahead, it might have been otherwise. As your father then felt, though he did not actually realize it himself, it was unavoidable. As Charlie felt and we all felt it was equally unavoidable. I would never forgive myself if the reproach could be truly laid at my door that personal ambition, loss of place or even of profit, had been the cause of this fearful separation. But I dislike to dwell on this topic and

banish it by saying the thing itself shall vanish as soon as duty and honor will allow.

While I do remain, be assured however I am really as safe here as I could be anywhere. Our naval and land force, thus far all European, is too strong to admit of the thought of attack and when the struggle does come it will be at a point hundreds of miles distant and in a form which will contribute to our security and to the peace of the empire. Nor do I expect to go to Yedo though I regard it as measurably safe. I had hoped this season to have visited Nagasaki and Hakodate. Shall do so, so soon as I have a steamer at my disposal. As it is I have seen much less of Japan than I had intended or supposed possible.

The Japanese are busily engaged building barracks for the 20th regiment about to arrive. They are certainly a strange people and have made no objections to the landing of these troops thus sparing the British minister much embarrassment. The new French minister is a very excellent man of higher position than the last and I believe content with one wife and that one in France. Five ladies, wives of officers of the 20th, will soon arrive and there are nearly 100 wives of privates of that regiment so we will really begin to look more homelike.

The circus proved rather a failure here. One or two performances will attract, whether concert or theatre or circus, but to sustain anything, the population being so small, tickets must be sold at 2 or 3 dollars and extravagant as they are in this eastern world, such entertainments will not bear repetition, especially when of so insignificant and spiritless a kind as Professor Risley's Circus, which has probably at successive stages left all its merit behind, so that now it can be found no one [*sic*] than in a play bill.

I never read till a few days ago *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. I was rather prejudiced against. Presuming you have not read it, I now advise you to do so immediately, assuring you it will prove very interesting. Read by the light of this rebellion, it possesses additional interest and I can only wish everyone at the North would now read it, though I do not see how the curse of slavery could be more fully shown than now as written in the bloodshed by this rebellion and the blazing roof and wide spread destruction it has scattered so purposely over the entire country.

I shall close this letter with this sheet, my darling, reserving what I have to say or rather can find to say for the *Emily Banning* as her letters will probably reach you first. As the public letters I have nearly ready could be subject to over \$30 portage via Marseilles, I reserve all of them for an eastward journey.

I am pleased to hear of Henry Gansevoort's progress in the army and have no doubt he makes a good and darling officer.⁴⁰⁹ Edwin Lansing's course must be highly satisfactory to his friends. Please present my regards to the governor and Aunt Sue and

⁴⁰⁹ Henry Sanford Gansevoort (1835-1871) was the son of Peter Gansevoort. He fought at Antietam.

Uncle C[hristopher] and Aunt Sarah and particularly to Kitty and Anna. I suppose I will be able to join the evening even of these young ladies for a few moments when I return, though they must be prepared to find one much changed. My gravity is profound and my capacity for silence awful. I can imbibe conversation as quickly and freely as a dry sponge and have actually learned the truth, difficult as it is to acquire it, that we all are gifted with two ears and I was about saying cursed with one mouth. But strike out that word and say favored, blessed, etc., any other more pleasant words. With love to Abby, Charlie, to whom I wrote last mail and will again this week, to Cornelia and Alida and all my good friends, Mary and Augustus, Kitty etc.

And with a full oceanful for yourself, true and unfailing, my darling, beloved wife,
Yours Ever,
Robt. H. Pruyn

I have finished a few rambling lines to Charles and resume my letter to you, my dear wife, hoping to get quickly into a more amiable mood. In an hour I must see Lady Alcock and then I hope to have sufficient time for a few lines to Sue and Charlie. I should say to you however that I wish it distinctly understood that I do not impart any blame to Mr. T[en] E[yck] for that matter about which I have written to C[harles]. I know very well who was the mover, just as well as if present. Let it pass.

I do not write to Bertie by this mail as I suppose before it reaches London he will have embarked for the U.S. and long before this reaches you, you will have had the pleasure of meeting. Do not fear for me. You know how buoyant my spirits have generally been, never long cast down. I will get along very well during the short time I may yet be obliged to remain, though it would of course have been more pleasant had he remained. As it was I should have kept him, had you not been concerned. You and Bertie were rather too much weighed in the scale against me though I actually weigh 150 pounds. Think of that, of me who always was one of Pharaohs' lean kind, I look lean enough even now. And yet the weight speaks for itself. I do not apprehend however I will ever get uncomfortably fat.

We are to have a meeting this afternoon of sailors, quite a number of whom will probably connect themselves with our little Church the coming Sabbath. On one ship they have now a daily prayer meeting and Bible class and the weekly meetings are well attended on shore. The captain of the *Argus* who is a Christian man gives liberty for that purpose to such of his men who desire to meet Mr. Brown. I hope we have as yet seen only the beginning of the work of grace. There are faithful praying men on some of the ships and their heart is in the work. Over 100 are now pledged temperance men. Intemperance in the east assumes frightful proportions. And more of those who come here on business are killed by rum than by the climate. The climate has to stand the blame. This is true of India and China. The climate here is so fine that it would be

preposterous to make the charge.

To return once more to business, I should like you to send me a memoranda of what you and I have, showing number of shares and how many dollars in each share and so of other property. Adding this to what I have not under your care I will know just how extravagant I can be in Europe. I am holding up here, saving now all my profits from exchange of *itzabus* and trying to become miserly and avaricious as I suppose I must be in my old age now so rapidly approaching. I thought before I commenced I would give you a good tolerable wardrobe, so take care of it. You have a fair start, now for the dollars. Those who have been the most lavish generally end in the opposite extreme so tremble, little woman, whenever you contemplate asking for a shilling. You have about a hundred new silk dresses as near as I can calculate. Have you nothing to wear?

Why do they not raise Dr. Clark's salary? They should have given him at least \$1,000 on New Year's day. There I really forgot what I have been saying. But perhaps after all I am not inconsistent, only generous at other people's expense. Now send Mrs. Clark a silk dress to make up the deficiency and to cure yourself of too much variety which may be engendered if too much clothed yourself.

The French minister has this moment called and introduced his successor. He said as it was mail day he knew I was engaged and therefore early took leave, but half an hour had passed. How weary the minutes are at times, then again they rival electricity.

Say to my dear precious boy he must wait till next mail for a letter. Meanwhile put me down for ten tickets (I care not a pin how many pins they cost) in that beautiful panorama which he and Jim McNaughton are getting up. Only don't let them smash up the Academy of Music the very year of its birth. Give him some good Japanese picture so as [to] make his gallery of fine arts complete.

And now, my dear precious wife, I must close this letter for two good and sufficient reasons, one of which I give interrogatively: what more can I say? 2. The mail will close in half an hour. If therefore I write much more you will get nothing. These lines must be sent, with specimens of all kinds of writing which I hope you will be able to decipher. I succeeded very well this time with Charlie's hieroglyphics though he had taken the precaution to shade them well by passing them through the letter press, but then even the most beautiful picture is never complete without a shadow.

There are numbers to whom I desire you to give my regards. You will please consider the standing list as forming part of this letter. Just as the general banking law becomes a part of the charter of each individual bank, remember me to all. Kiss Sue for me. My dear boy consider yourself most thoroughly kissed. If Bertie has arrived let him act as my substitute clothed with 40 horse power.

Adieu my loving and beloved wife. God grant we may soon meet and may He in his infinite mercy spare us for many loving happy hours of life, engaged in each other's society. This I ask daily and more than daily. It is part of my Book of Common Prayer,

the only one I wish ever to use.
Lovingly Yours,
Robt. H. Pruyn



No. 16 Kanagawa, June 13 1864

I mentioned, my beloved, in the few lines written yesterday that your letter of March 15 had then arrived and Bertie's from Rome and Paris. You will see from the date of his of April 9 how much later dates I should have received from you, but I presume the British port office officials forward nothing by the French line. I felt this morning, more deeply than I have thus far, a feeling of homesickness creep over me, connected with Ber's separation from me. While he was afloat in some place not known, his position and mine were so like as to cause no such feeling. But now that he is in Paris he appears to me as near home as a few years ago I would have regarded Watertown, and now, as I am led to hope, he is really at home and nestled there. And I am not.

I was much pleased, though not surprised, to learn that after all he had seen, Rome etc., and though he has unfortunately missed seeing Switzerland, he will be much puzzled to find any one of his age and position who has seen so much. I was so much surprised to learn he had received no letters from me, when I had written once to Naples, twice to Rome and also to London, indeed by every mail since he left I had addressed letters to him at some place, which at some time I hope will turn up as they are by no means choice specimens. I was surprised to learn that Mr. Kip is roaming through Europe with "Secretary of Legation Japan" on his cards and hope the young gentleman will not be arrested for false pretenses, though so blind is human justice that I fear many poor fellows have suffered for less. In personal character as well as in landscape is it true that distance lends enchantment to the scene, and speaking as an amateur artist I have no hesitation in saying that the greater the distance in this case the fairer the view. And I should judge he was getting no better very fast by reason of his long sojourn abroad. Dr. Lindau,⁴¹⁰ the Swiss consul recently arrived here, met him in Paris. He then proposed going to Spain as his liver was affected. It is as a liver that many young men need repairs, but the tinkering is necessarily so frequent as to work as much injury as the end to be remedied. The soldering of one open seam is so apt to disclose or make another equally requiring the application of remedial art.

I think that bit of scandal will suffice for 6 o'clock Monday morning and may fairly

⁴¹⁰ Rudolph Lindau (1829-1910)

carry me through the week.

Speaking of Dr. Lindau, let me say he is an old acquaintance returned and the most marvelous likeness of Mr. Willets you ever saw. You would not hesitate a moment in addressing him. Face, form, manner *identique*. I will send you a photograph.

I am much pleased to hear of the success of our fair. Large as the sum realized is, it appears small for Albany and neighborhood when placed beside that of Brooklyn. That my Japanese articles were regarded as so useful a contribution to the community shop is highly satisfactory. If what you have is so highly esteemed I cannot but think the whole collection will be likely to produce a sensation.

I am now daily expecting the *Jamestown* for which I sent a few days ago and if other ships of war have left for China Seas, I have an open letter with our consul at Hong Kong calling them here. The government has given me very full powers, and I am a regular General Jackson man as you will have already seen. And as the government has fully approved every act and letter thus far, I shall not fear to act according to my connections of duty. It is impossible to wait for instructions. The minister here and in China must act without them. I received a letter yesterday approving highly of the manner in which I had made the demands on this government and, what was even more gratifying, of my controversy with the Swiss minister.⁴¹¹

I have succeeded in getting an indemnity for old George Horton of \$1,000 which will last him as long as he lives. He is 84. I had asked 2,000 but accepted half, as rather than pay all they would have sent him back to the Bonin Islands which he now dreaded as he has joined our Church. The money has been paid and I have placed it in the hands of our Consul.⁴¹²

I regret to hear Cousin Eliza is so unwell. She has suffered long and much. I remember her as one of the gayest young ladies I ever met.

It sounds strange when you speak of the luxuries Ber will be obliged to give up, especially when the flavor of asparagus, raspberries, cherries, etc. to say nothing of strawberries, mutton, salt mackerel, honey etc., etc., etc., must at the time yet tickle your palate. By this time you will have witnessed, I hope, Ber's voracious appetite and will have marveled and concluded he has been starved for two years. Poor boy! How he must struggle to make up for lost time. Do you not remember how, as the Israelites traveled East, they longed for the fleshpots of Egypt? You have biblical as well as ancient authority therefore to show that epicures must travel west and not eastward. Now I hope you will not be as wicked as Bishop Colenso and question the Macrorie

⁴¹¹ See <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1864p3/d518>

⁴¹² See <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1864p3/d491>

account.⁴¹³

I have already informed you of the arrival in perfect condition of the dress and cake you sent, and that Ber got what was intended for him. And I do hope that your silks will arrive in good order.

Mrs. Fisher has a grand reception this week. Lady A[cock] unfortunately by accident issued cards for the same evening, but as their residences are near, it will probably be better as it is, unless indeed the band cannot be spared, which would be a disappointment as there are not calculations for an old fashioned dance. But as my dancing days have long since passed I have no special interest in the result.

I have as yet received no letters from Charlie about the ships on which I can base any calculations, certainly none sufficiently accurate to base any arrangements on them. I can scarcely imagine therefore that he refers to anything thus far received. I only hope that when the gunboat does come I shall have already received the information by mail which I desired so as to be fully prepared for a settlement. I do hope I shall be able to leave this fall, though I wish I was better prepared. Affairs look squally but it is questionable whether they will be more settled for years.

We are acting more than providently in reference to the Church. Though we have a very valuable lot and about money enough for a Church, we have not commenced building as we have the use of the Consulate for our Sabbath services and yet I cannot but think our attendance would be better if we had a good Church edifice.

I hope the bulbs finally reached you in good order. Mr. Veitch⁴¹⁴ sold them in England at 8 guineas (\$40) each, you see they have taste as well as wealth there. You will be delighted with the flower.

The season thus far has been very backward. The mercury stood as low as 57 at 9 o'clock some days last week. And I only took off my winter under clothes yesterday. But we may now expect very warm weather.

I saw there was a debate in the Senate about increasing the rank of Mr. Sanford⁴¹⁵ our minister in Belgium, which was finally done without increase of salary. As nothing was said about Japan I infer nothing is intended. My influence here could have been partly increased had it been done. It would have so signally demonstrated the approval of the government as to have enabled me to bring affairs to a more speedy and satisfactory close, at least such a result might be fairly expected with such a people as this.

Our home troubles have added very much to the difficulties of my position. The

⁴¹³ William Kenneth Macrorie (1831–1905) was bishop of the South African Diocese of Maritzburg, while John Colenso (1814-1883) was bishop of the South African Diocese of Natal.

⁴¹⁴ James Veitch (1815-1869) was a British horticulturist.

⁴¹⁵ Henry Shelton Sanford (1823-1891) served as U.S. minister to Belgium 1861-69.

Japanese officers understand all about our civil war. They often ask me about its progress and more frequently get information elsewhere. There are not wanting those here [who] would be perfectly willing to see American influence weakened, if not destroyed, and I have reason to believe they have neither been idle nor unsuccessful in some degree though not to the extent they expected and desired.

I long for the presence of a good sized squadron, to show we yet have a nation. I am getting anxious about the spring campaign. I long to hear of the stirring events which must have thrilled your hearts and yet I almost dread the arrival of the news. It appears to me it must be good. I have great confidence in General Grant and in the discipline and strength of our armies. But has God yet sufficiently chastened our people? And has He yet brought them to the point where principle and not miserable party will be the chief and controlling thought? That man must be blind indeed who does not see that the God of battles controls events, more unmistakably now than ever. His arm has never before made so bare to human vision since the day the haughty fort of Sennacherib withered and vanished in a night. And the result must be such in His good providence as shall advance the hands on the dial of humanity, civilization and religion. A slave republic would be a disgrace to humanity. Lunatic as are the Southern people now, not one sane idea could exist if success crowned their unhallowed cause.

The *Emily Banning* will probably leave here within 10 days. Her owner has received information of her sailing from Shanghae on the 2nd and he says she will only remain here 5 or 6 days. As it is quite certain letters by her will reach you in advance of this mail, I shall write less than I otherwise would and yet see how much I manage to get on one page. I hope to write many letters by that opportunity.



No. 17 Kanagawa, June 26 1864

The unusual opportunity, my precious wife, is now presented of sending, by three different vessels, letters to you in the space of one week. The mail steamer will leave on the morning of the 28th, the *Ida D. Rogers* for San Francisco on the 29th, and the *Emily Banning* for the same place on the 4th of July. As this will reach you in all probability after the letters which I hope to send via California I shall not write at as much length as I otherwise would, although I cannot suffer the regular mail to leave without a small contribution nor should it be so moderate in dimensions did it not leave at a season of unusual occupation. I have my regular quarterly accounts and drafts to send, which although prepared by Mr. Portman, require much personal supervision. By these same ships several dispatches will be sent which I have kept back in consequence of the

numerous and lengthy enclosures which will accompany them. As the postage on even one of these dispatches would be at least \$30, I propose saving that sum equivalent now to \$60 of currency. I therefore anticipate a very busy time for the next week. Even should I be spared the infliction of a visit from the officials at Yedo, pretty sure always to be paid when least desired, I am in daily fear of this as the Tycoon has just returned from Keoto and the signal will soon be given for long profitless interviews of which we last week had a very unsatisfactory precursor.

The effort now is to induce us to keep back a contemplated expedition to Chosiu, alias Nagato, which will be fruitless unless their promises or performances become stronger. At present, strange to say, they even promise less than they said they were actually doing many months ago.

We have had another exhibition of bigotry from the Episcopal chaplain who spontaneously and naturally does everything in his power to make himself odious. I wrote you of the death of a little boy of Mr. Jaquemot, a Swiss by birth but a naturalized Englishman, who was bitten by a mad dog. Mr. Schoyer, an American who was aiding Mr. J[aquemot] in his distress, sent the undertaker Mr. Frey⁴¹⁶ to borrow the pall from Mr. Bailey, the chaplain aforesaid, who said "Mr. S[choyer] is an American and you are a Dutchman and you have no business to bury a British child. You shall not have it and if you dig a grave I will fill it up and make it cost you £10,000." After having indulged in this flight, not quite as Christian as it was xxx and full of mammon, he probably got a little more sober and hurried off to see the vice consul, Mr. Flowers,⁴¹⁷ who told him he was making a fool of himself as the pall was in [the] charge of the Church committee and the burial ground not being Episcopal or even British he could of course have no control over any grave there. It is now said the British residents propose taking this case up and cutting the court of prejudice of this flaming Puseyite rooster. Mr. and Mrs. J[aquemot] were in our chapel last Sabbath and Mrs. J[aquemot] today. Mr. J[aquemot] is even more deaf than Mr. Sumner and can hardly be expected to attend. Our fair friend Mrs. Hepburn has been a constant attendant at that chapel for some months, being a little of a Presbyterian Puseyite, who has never relished well the formation of our Church and she therefore, except on communion days, has suffered the Doctor to go to our service alone. But as it so happened that Mr. Thompson, the other Presbyterian missionary was to perform the burial services, this may account for our having been favored by her Ladyship with her presence also for the same two Sabbaths. Perhaps her wrath may speedily evaporate and she go back once more to the books on which she

⁴¹⁶ Perhaps Hendrik Johannes Frey (d. 1872), who is listed as a shipbuilder in Yokohama in various directories.

⁴¹⁷ Marcus Octavius Flowers (1818-1894) served the British Consul in Kanagawa 1861-1865, the Consul at Nagasaki 1871-1877, and the Consul at Hyogo 1877-1880.

has been feeding spiritually for at least 6 months. When in New York, and the Church in which her husband was an elder was near her door, she could not accompany him to its service because it had an organ, which obliged her to trot off alone nearly a mile. What sacrifice we can make for conscience sake. I think she might even endure the organ now.

I was much pained to hear of the death of Dr. [John N.] Campbell. When my fancy took me home and I indulged in visions of interviews with friends with whom I could have a hearty intelligent gossip about Japan he was one of those with whom I had hoped to have many a pleasant chat. And frail as he was, he was so methodical and regular as to lead one to believe he would probably survive very many whom he has preceded to the grave. His Church will never have a pastor who so insensibly at times and so friendly at others influenced its policy and controlled its action. Perhaps indeed it will be better it should not, although his influence was very generally executed to its advantage. I often said to the Doctor he was Pope in his Church and even more so than he of Rome in his jurisdiction.

Should my life be spared to reach home, all these changes will appear to me as having occurred at the time of my arrival, the far off intimations I now have of them falling lightly, though painfully, on the ear. I must see again the places that were known then not to realize the fact of their departure as fully as do those at home.

It is quite warm today, which will serve to account for the appearance of the opposite page, which is marked by my fingers and more profusely adorned by the contribution of a by no means parsimonious drop of perspiration which had been silently gathering on my beard. It looks a little as if it had dropped from a beard like Aaron's and had been able to demonstrate that oil and water can unite.

Your last letter gave me the very agreeable intelligence of the gratifying addition to the Church in April and of the expectation, which I hope will be more than justified, of an equally satisfactory result in July. You ask me whether Bertie took his letter, and as I know he did I hope the next Sabbath will find him in the communion of our old Church. You must have been much surprised at his very unexpected and sudden return, curtailing so strongly his stay in England. At his age and with the increasing facilities of travel and having once whirled around the world, he will think little of a trip to Europe, though I wish even now that he had remained a little longer. I suppose Mr. Cunningham encouraged his return and I am inclined to think he did so in consequence of what I wrote to him. I have never dared to tell you that Bertie once rose in his sleep on the *North Star* just before we reached Aspinwall. The recollection of this was one of the chief objections I had in my own mind to his leaving me. When I saw he was so anxious to return I feared to speak to him and remind him of this and caution him on the subject as it might so rest on his mind as to occasion the very difficulty I wished to prevent. I therefore wrote to Mr. Cunningham and asked him to see if possible that some proper

person was placed in his state room and entrusted with the above, so that all needful precautions might be taken. I have had no little anxiety on this subject and am very happy you have been spared it.

June 27 1864

I read with much interest yesterday a portion of the memoirs of Dr. Murray.⁴¹⁸ I have not heretofore been partial to that kind of literature, but for the reason that our selection of books is not very large and also because this was kindly sent from Albany I commenced with no idea however of so much pleasure being derived from it. I have lately read for the first time *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. When it was published I in some way devised prejudice against it, associating it with those anti-slavery publications designed, or at least calculated, to promote strife among the whites without a possible hope of benefit to the blacks, and any anti-slavery vices I thought sufficiently decided and strong without being stirred up to blood heat. Human wisdom and human strength were powerless to grasp with an antagonist which has convulsed a continent and called forth the aim of the Almighty for its overthrow. I cannot praise the book too much. I wish every man, woman, and child in the land would read it. Now at least it would be productive of unmitigated good by arousing the thoughtless and fortifying those who have no deep convictions of duty. And if you have not read it, my darling, do not fail to do so, and I will engage you will be deeply interested in its pages. It is written in the spirit of charity and love. It must give a fair picture of the detestable traffic and, if a true portraiture, is it a wonder that the arm of omnipotence has been put forth for its destruction?

We have all been educated by that stern teacher, experience, to that standard which it was necessary for the North to reach before it was prepared to do its duty. I suppose not one single human mind at the outset of our struggle was able to appreciate the monstrous issues involved. I remember when the troops first went south and in my journeys to Washington I saw them by the wayside and in the camp, this war was regarded much as a mimic battle and a holiday pageant. It was not believed possible it could attain the proportions of European conflicts. Were we not brethren? How like a colossus has it stalked over the land and written its history in rivers of blood to be read by the lurid light of burning dwellings and with beating hearts whose pulsations could be heard above the roar of cannon and the din and shrieks and groans of battle. This would be sentimental if less true.

June 27 1864

⁴¹⁸ *The Beloved Physician : A Memoir of Peter Murray, M.D., of Belle Vue, Scarborough* by Robert Balgarnie.

I have no idea at present wherein the preserves could have come whose arrival you had notice of from Messrs. Low. It is possible Mr. Overbeck, having heard of the loss of the teas and preserves sent by him, may have ordered his agents to duplicate the articles, but then I think he would have written either to you or myself. He is still in Europe and I do not know that he contemplates a return to the East. They cannot have been sent under my order to Russell & Co. because I have letters from them saying their invoice was to leave in May. I suppose however we should know by whom they were sent certainly by their appearing in my account if ordered by me. It is possible Mr. Thomas Walsh may have sent them, but I think they would in that case have gone through his own agent in New York and I now recollect he had a bitter quarrel with A. A. Low and he cannot be the man.

I hope you will have tea and presents enough with what has arrived and is on the way for a year. I have ordered some more of the best China tea. I am glad you like the Japanese tea so well. It is pure green tea, uncolored, though they are beginning to color the Japanese teas for our market. Our people require everything highly spiced or richly colored. The natural color of tea must necessarily be that of any dried green leaf. You cannot expect it to be as perfect in color as when the leaf is on the shrub. I will send you some leaves. The Japanese fire the tea very slightly. The foreign merchant prepares it for a sea voyage by refining it. All moisture must be expelled. They place the tea in large round kettles placed over a slow fire and it is constantly stirred with the hand to prevent it from being burned. As the room is necessarily very hot and the Chinese or Japanese engaged in this process freely perspire I suppose the process can hardly be regarded as very clean. I am inclined to think that the individual who estimated we all must necessarily eat at least a peck of dirt exceedingly illiberal in his ideas so far as quantity was concerned. In the East we are luxurious and get a full heaped up measure.

I fear you will be disappointed when you receive this letter. It will be very meager. As a thought comes athwart my mind I reserve it for my other letters and may lose it all together.

I am told many weather-wise Japanese are predicting this year a very severe typhoon. The season has been enormously backwards. I am wearing linen clothes yet, but have on my thick winter drawers. And in the evening it is always safest to wear woollens. The Marines are in camp. The frequent rains at this season and the heavy dews must make camp life very disagreeable. My short experience when Adjutant General was enough for me.⁴¹⁹ The 20th regiment is expected daily as is also the *Jamestown*. Captain Price has not completed the needful repairs he was making at Macao, when he received my letter.

⁴¹⁹ RHP was appointed Adjutant-General on the staff of Governor Myron H. Clark on March 5 1855. He held the post until 1857.

I hope he will berth Fourth of July, in which case all the ships will salute and as we will have 21 men of war at least, we will have our full share of noise.

The large force we have here has brought us a goodly number of evenings. As Lady Alcock never goes out without an orderly sergeant with sword etc. in her train, she, in memory of *Lady Audley's Secret*,⁴²⁰ has been dubbed Lady Orderly, and as Mrs. Winchester, the wife of Dr. Winchester the British Consul, who is only about 5 feet 4 inches high, weighs over 200 pounds or very nearly she has been christened after the great 60 foot copper image and is familiarly called Daibutz.⁴²¹

The same day that Mrs. Fisher's cards were issued for the wedding reception, Lady Alcock issued her "at homes" for two evenings, the first of which was on the same evening as Mrs. Fisher's, which proved very unfortunate for Lady Alcock and not as she probably anticipated for Mrs. Fisher. Unfortunately for both it rained quite hard. Lady Alcock's "at home" footed up: Ladies, none. Civilians, two. Officers and Officials, a fair supply. Mrs. Fisher had 11 Ladies and rooms crowded with gentlemen officers too. It was generally said Lady Alcock should have changed her evening as none of her cards were actually issued until after she knew of Mrs. Fisher's invitations by receiving one herself. But she only made the trifling blunder of mistaking who was to be the sufferer. She addressed, it is true, a note to Mrs. F[isher] regretting she had earlier known [*sic*] her intentions to which Mrs. F[isher] replied it was usual in our country, when a wedding was private, to have the reception the ensuing week and saying she hoped as they intended to have dancing she would be spared the band which Commander Hunter had informed Mrs. F[isher] would be at his service, but Lady A[lcock] took the band. The admiral however sent other musicians who, playing at violins etc., really supplied the best dancing music I have heard in Japan. So everything passed off satisfactorily, dancing being kept up till ½ past 2 o'clock.

You see by the above how hard pressed I am for subjects to write about. Japan is possibly well exhausted and you must tire to hear about my feelings, hopes regrets etc., etc.

Gossip is therefore my only resource, and human weakness finally its best source.

This reminds me of yet another subject. Long since I should have written home urging the recall of Mr. Goble, who is missionary of the Baptist Church, had it not been for his wife, however reluctant I might otherwise have been to be personally involved. He has often beaten his wife, perhaps more frequently brutally beaten Japanese workmen under circumstances which have induced me at times to believe his life was

⁴²⁰ A novel by Mary Elizabeth Braddon published in 1862, in which the titular character commits bigamy, arson, deserts her child, kills one husband and plots to kill the other.

⁴²¹ *Daibutsu* 大仏, "great Buddha," referring to the statue of Amida Buddha in Kamakura. See <https://perma.cc/N6ZQ-Q6AC>.

held by a frail tenure. Lately he shot a valuable dog of the British Vice Consul which entered his yard and on Mr. Flowers, the Vice Consul, remonstrating with him, said he need not put on airs because he was a John Bull and wears gold lace or he would punish him. Mr. Fisher fined him \$50. He appealed to me. Fortunately the law did not give the right of appeal and though Mr. Flowers could have proceeded still further he waived his right to do so. The lesson he has now had may be of service.

Another missionary who has now left, finding a Japanese girl was about having a child, consulted our Consul about his duty. He could not endure the idea of a child of his growing up a heathen and his duty he thought was plain. He must marry the girl. Mr. Fisher said what he could to show the folly of this. But it appears he intended to persevere. The father said his daughter might live with him as long as he chose to pay for her but she could not marry him. The Gordian knot was cut, not untied. In some way the little half heathen either did not see the light at all or else liked it so little as immediately to shut its eyes forever and vanish from the stage of life. Another extraordinary event, for if there be infanticide here, I do not see how children so greatly abound.

I think I may as well end with a good spicy statement. You have spoken of my worthy predecessor [Townsend Harris] frequently and I have often restrained myself from saying what you had best know. Ber can fill up any gaps I may leave. He had some desperate attacks of the *delirium tremens*. On one occasion Dr. Simmons, having prescribed a dose of brandy, was surprised by the remark (with a look of great indignation) "How dare you recommend such an article! Do you not know I never touch a drop of spirituous liquor" and this at a time when the doctor was obliged to nail up all the liquor in the house to keep him from it, using none at the table. In his private room it abounded. Strange world this. Hence the nervous headaches which are mentioned in his letters as laying him up for weeks. I am told that for weeks he saw no one and did no business, but it was not because of nervous headache.

I think you will value missionary intelligence less hereafter than formally and a little grain of allowance should be made even for letters of the Minister. If I get home I shall believe nothing written about Japan. I shall be in that direction an out and out skeptic.

But I must now close this letter to send another with loving messages to merit this, after having for days hasted away from it. I will go to Mr. Portman's, prepare all my drafts, sign, certify, etc., all my accounts and then be at leisure for you again.

I hope before this reaches you, you will have received both parcels of letters and the two small boxes of goods I have all ready to send per Mr. Brooks and that I shall have paid my debts to all correspondents, although as is generally the case those California ships are very uncertain in their movements and after long delays sail very suddenly in the end.

I have an unpleasant cold in the head which makes writing rather irksome and unpleasant as the position then assumed is not one to enable you to forget the cold even for a moment. It has now hung on for some time, owing perhaps to the goodly proportions of my nose from which it fortunately has so great an affection as not to descend any lower.

With love and kisses for my dear boys and for Sue and a copious measure of both for yourself, my precious wife, and the normal remembrances now become stereotyped. I close this letter to commence others which I hope will prove so interesting as to make you, when this arrives, overlook its abundant faults.

Ever and entirely yours, my love,
Robt. H. Pruyn



No. 18 [portions of this letter damaged]
Kanagawa, June 27 1864

I have mailed for you this afternoon a letter which will leave tomorrow via Marseilles and on the morning of the 29th this will leave for San Francisco, my beloved, in the *Ida D. Rogers*.

As I am writing the *Jamestown* has come to anchor and as this will subtract from the time I can allot you in the morning I will prepare a few lines at least this evening.

Your letters of March 25th and 29th and of April 4 and 11 reached me on the 19th. At the same time I received a letter from Ber April 22nd London informing me he had taken passage in the *Scotia* to leave the next day from Liverpool. By this time I hope he has become an old resident of Albany having quietly settled down, as I hope to do, after his extensive wanderings which will enable him to spin yarns by the mile and tell stories which will sadly try the credulity of his hearers.

I am afraid nothing will be left for me on my return. Japan, China, Ceylon, Egypt and the common place world of Europe will have been exhausted. As I come along in the Red Sea I must try and find for Charlie that chariot wheel of Pharaoh which the old woman's son once saw there or disobey your injunctions and bring a pyramid or I shall find myself entirely supplanted.

I see your grape vines and bulbs had not arrived. I hope no mishap will befall them. The bulbs are such as are now selling for \$40 each in London and New York. So you can make a small fortune. I wish they had [damage] in time for the fair. [damage] find one or two hundred lilies of other varieties perhaps nearly as beautiful, though not so rare.

The heavy silks I sent you cannot be purchased here now for less than \$40. Add to this 25 percent exchange and it would make without duty \$50 in gold in New York. Crepes for which I paid 35 *itzabus* now sell for from 60 to 80 *itzabus* each piece. \$30 to \$40 and the same proportion will hold good as to all the other silks. I have made an estimate that if I repurchased those silks at present prices, the money regained would, if invested in Sterling bills and sent to you, produce more than \$6,000 in currency. What an extravagant wife I have. Have I not to have such a wardrobe!

You say nothing however of the scarfs of which I sent two varieties. I do not know what short pieces you allude to for [damage] all the Japanese silks [damage] for foreigners come in pieces of 4½ yards for *obi*'s, the scarf or belt worn around the waist and by the way I now remember I sent two specimens of heavy silks to show what they make for their own use and one thinner stiff silk which was presented to me.

I thank you for your information as to Commercial Bank. I neither expected nor desired to be continued as a Director in the Susquehanna Company. Engaged as the Board is in building their road they needed men, not names. I am glad the road will succeed. It will be of very great benefit to our city, which will assuredly be more injured than benefitted by the bridge. As to that we really had no choice. It was that or something worse, the diversion of travel by the way of Troy.

I am very glad Ber remembered your wishes for pressed flowers which I feared he would overlook. I am having some prepared for [damage] as I come along will [damage] a few. I do not [damage] from my purpose.

It was as well you did not meet Colonel Frisby.⁴²² He never was a friend of mine, though I knew him when in Albany. And in California, he did not appear much inclined to show he regarded me as such. But I suppose I will not need friends now—a Brigade if needful. They are articles which abound most when you least require them. I shall only need the doctor to take me up and lionize me. I think I may rival the infant orator⁴²³ and perhaps get an engagement from Barnum himself. Or you may exhibit me at home having had a vast experience in curios and their exhibition. Your reputation has reached me via Troy even through Mr. Paine of the *Jamestown*.

I am reminded [damage] that ship of a good [damage] was unintentionally perpetrated at Capetown on its way out. It was, you will remember, when our relations with England, though peaceful, were not the most harmonious. When the salute had been fired it was found to the great surprise and no small mortification of Captain Price

⁴²² Edward Frisby (1809-1862) was a career military man, serving in the New York State Militia and the New York Volunteer Infantry during the Civil War. He was killed in action at the Battle of Second Bull Run on August 19 1862. It is unclear why RHP mentions him at this late date.

⁴²³ Apparently a reference to Charles Stratton, aka "General Tom Thumb," an American dwarf who performed in P. T. Barnum's Circus.

that by mistake the Turkish flag had been hoisted and the crescent saluted instead of the Cross of St. George. The Fort commenced returning the salute and had fired 7 guns before they discerned on shore the Turkish flag flying when the return salute was stopped. Captain Price hoisted the right flag, fired the salute again, which was returned, and all was right.

I send you by the *Emily Banning* 113 photographs of Egypt, Jerusalem, Constantinople, and Athens which will give you [damage] complete set. There is [damage] Lucknow which you may find a place for in your India book. I was able to get these at half price and so was tempted to buy them. They cost \$2 each, which is awful here, equal to \$4 currency now. I paid \$100 for this lot.

I shall close this letter as the ship is to drop out this afternoon and if it shall be detained I will add a few lines, though as the [*Emily*] *Banning* follows so soon there is less inducement. The more I send by the [*Ida D.*] *Rogers* the less by the [*Emily*] *Banning*. With unabated love, my darling,

Robt. H. Pruyn

[damage]

Still everything is so uncertain as to induce me to fear to dwell too certainly on so hoped for a result.

The money at San Francisco is invested by Mr. Brooks at 1½ percent per month payable in gold. I will send nearly \$4,000 to you by the *Emily Banning* and as soon as you think best. You may draw whatever amount you desire from San Francisco. I directed Mr. Brooks to invest it to save you the trouble, and thinking it best to have a fund in gold. My impression is I told him to send you all beyond \$6,000. Perhaps this was before my April remittance, and in that case you will have received less than \$3,000. If he has not sent you anything he will have when all is realized, somewhere near \$12,000. Do with this as you think best. I have written that you will decidedly [damage] so high it may be well to [damage] it in government securities. But where is gold to stop unless the rebellion is now crushed?

The Works did exceedingly well and Charlie deserves great credit. He could scarcely have been expected to push them more. The labor would have taxed him too severely.

I am glad you are pleased with my proposal for Eddie's monument. Ellie shall have one equally enduring. It is white and more enduring than marble and it will not be speechless. You now have the means for one or both. And if you determine in favor of both make them as you shall be advised either \$2,000 or \$2,500 each.

I think I have already informed you the Church lot is secured and the title in our Board of missions [damage] despite the [damage] of all the ministers and all the consuls I succeeded. And when the Japanese government promised them the balance of the block to be divided among all the nations except the United States I remonstrated so urgently and often and so effectively that it is now said we shall have our share of what

is left.

I suppose Mr. Lodge wanted to make a coat with a stand up collar which would have been all wrong. You could not have sent me the coat in a more desirable shape.

I cannot say how much gratified I am that you sent Cousin Kate a dress. She has my sincere sympathy and although her brother is so wealthy he must be penurious and it must be a sad thing to be dependent in any degree on him.

[damage]

...bell that is not quite [damage]. I had supposed it might be necessary to invoke the aid of another bell.

The silks were all in good order when packed but as some had been dressed after passing through the fire at Yedo, I suppose they were more liable to be affected by the voyage. I recur to this subject observing what you say of Aunt Sue's offer which was very handsome but it was just as right to decline it.

I intended to fill her order in this way, as she can now select for herself, and I presume you can without much sacrifice spare a few dresses. I was very much to be concerned when buying so many silks that I did not select a plain white silk which would have been suitable for a wedding dress, but you must bear in mind I had not then received your letters about the hanging moss and other touching manifestations of tendrils so I rely upon your making my peace in that quarter.

[damage]

...of the Christian association. The organization must have been productive of much good, how much those who were ministered to can best measure.

When I reach Canton I will try and bear in mind your commission as to lacquered tables. I have thought it would be well to make a selection for myself, but I may send and have them made to order with your initials on the top and in that event also I will remember Aunt Sue.

Much as I prize your letters I feel entirely unwilling you should write till 2 o'clock a.m. That is wrong and you should remember you have boys at home to whom by example as well as precept you will have to preach temperance in all things. I shall expect you therefore to be more consistent henceforth.

I am not surprised to hear [damage]...infant prodigy. It is not that it was regenerated, so as to run to emptyings but because it is of so comprehensive a character as to embrace the minute as well as the great. I regret to hear his wife's eyes are affected. Her ears have been more healthily exercised. Those have been more exclusively appropriated to her husband while her eyes have been miscellaneously at work and pay the penalty of their wanderings.

It appears to me it may be well if you can get a good rent to have the Chapel Street house up to May 1866. I will not in any event be home till the middle of 1865, and you and I will require 6 months to look around and determine what to do. Perhaps by that

time Pearl Street may wear a more decided mercantile aspect. I think the house No. 52 requires no additional tea room. That investment could not pay. The rate of interest here is high, minimum... [damage] ...you must expect me as soon as I am settled down to out-germain Jermain. Arouse mighty spirits of defunct misers and welcome my return. I have a soul above 7 percent.

Among the articles I send you will find a little pocket book shaped xxx with green glossy interior which when rubbed will give a bright vermilion which soap and water removes with difficulty. This article is the one used by Japanese belles to stain their lips and color their cheeks. It was presented to me by a merchant fresh from Keoto. The fair one who shall use it need not fear being kissed. Such an application, I may say healthful application, will not damage it. It will at the worse only improve the lips of the one who makes the impression.

I think your red and black paste... [damage]...Sue had better decide to dare meeting me in Europe or Egypt. You will have Bertie to guide and guard you.

The visit to the New York bazaar I can easily see was more beautiful in the prospect than in the actual enjoyment. I suppose some improvement was made afterwards so as to permit visitors to make purchases. I see that a very great sum is expected from it and I hope and believe the expectations of its projectors will be fully realized.

The party who supposed my long absence might have so weaned me from home as to incline me to wander much afar when I had returned had better try a three years' residence here. I think that would suffice to swell the ordinary comforts of home into great luxuries.

I am amazed that I have been so cheerful as I have. When I remember my impatience at Washington when my visit was unexpectedly prolonged a few days I wonder at my patience here. But then I was made restive by uncertainty. Now I know pretty well what I have to expect.

[damage]

...as you will have other packages sent shortly and I shall arrange for a regular supply when I leave of all such articles as can be procured and will be desirable.

I have not been inattentive to the extraordinary state of exchange owing to the depreciation of the currency. I am obliged however to have funds under my control to meet any emergency. It is quite possible when the *Fusiyama* arrives I may be obliged to keep her for some time and I cannot run or support an ocean steamer without funds. But with what I have put at your disposal in London and at San Francisco you can avail yourself of the rate if it continue so favorable. You must bear in mind that the rate at the time the papers leave New York may be much higher than it is when they reach me and a still greater change may take place before... [damage]...if property is selling in Albany for currency as low as that house of J[onathan] F. T. it might be well to purchase one or two desirable pieces. Real estate must advance after the war closes. It is now kept

down by the cost of improving it. But an expansion of the currency must eventually lead to a very decided improvement in real estate. I would confide very much in this respect in Mr. Olcott's judgement. And it might be well to consult him before you make the considerable investment you will have in your power.

A ship arrived from China this morning bringing me among other articles for you, a miniature painted by Lamqua the most celebrated Chinese artist in ivory. It is so unexpectedly good I send it to you ordering another for myself. The box is of ebony and... [damage]...with your initials carved in the side. I hope you will like them. I send also two ivory carved balls, splendid, eight or ten inside of each other.

I stopped writing today first because Captain Price called and then I went down street to buy some sewing silk and I bought all the man had but he has promised some more which I hope to get in time.

The price paid for sewing silk here now is 24 *itzabus* for 1 1/3 pounds which is a catty. Now, as an *itzabu* invested in exchange would produce a little over a dollar in the U.S. you can see how extravagant Betsy obliges me to be just as I was getting an economical habit well fastened on me. But I suppose she must be kept quiet. I succeeded in buying 28 *itzabus* worth, \$28. I groan.

[damage]...it blew so hard they [damage] no cargo on board and today is a Japanese holiday and no work.⁴²⁴

My cold in the head is better today. I resorted last night with some success to the old fashioned remedy of a whisky punch and shall repeat the dose tonight. As it was uncomfortable to sit up I went to bed as early as 8 1/2 o'clock and rose at 6 o'clock after a quiet sleep when I once succeeded in closing my eyes which I found difficult as I perspired so freely.

Captain Price has later dates for Washington by two weeks than mine and has been ordered by the Navy Department to give me his assistance so after the 4th of July I will see what I can do in the way of a more vigorous demonstration. Oh that I had two or three steamers, then there would be no doubt of the result.

[damage]

...So you need not give yourself any trouble about these arrangements and after all you must do what you think best. I only make these suggestions to serve as hints to save you the responsibility as far as possible of deciding and simply to show the one of a dozen things I will be satisfied with. I have no doubt you will do all that is right. All you wish to remember is to put it where it will not fall too much when specie falls. Government stocks will not fall should the war close soon. Should our debt double they must decline, keep this in view. Should the war continue a few good bonds and

⁴²⁴ It was the 25th day of the 5th lunar month, which in itself is not a holiday, but the sexagenary cycles for the day and year on this day were both *kinoene* 甲子, making it an auspicious day.

mortgages would be the best investment. But we must stand in full with the country. I hope we shall throttle the rebels...

[damage]

I hope you have secured some good photographs of dear Eddie. Mine was destroyed at the Legation fire. I should like one of his and one of Ellie's sent me.

Don't try your eyes too much, my darling. I put you in Sue's care and Charlie's and Bertie's and charging them if necessary to put a straightjacket on you. Let Bertie write long letters now, a dozen sheets each mail.

I suppose Betsy will be willing, now that she is provided with sewing silk, that I should come home. Make a good use of it. I shall not send more if prices advance here as they have...[damage]...and other provisions are double here, treble what even foreigners pay in Yedo. I don't know but what they are finding the true way to get rid of us: making it unprofitable to remain. They can soon clear out the merchants in that way.

I am getting along very peaceably with my colleagues now, no differences but all pleasant. The government has so far approved everything. Now I wish to get away soon while I can do so with credit. I have great reason thus far to be satisfied with every dispatch I get from home and although the responsibility is greater than other ministers here who are near at home, it does... [damage]...exercise your own judgement. You are so far off we can give you no instructions. What we now say may be useless when it reaches you.

The Secretary of the Navy has ordered *Jamestown* here to take my orders and I intend to do as I formerly blamed General Jackson for doing, take the responsibility. Tell Cousin Bob I have come around.

I can't do less, I must act. But I shall be prudent and as forbearing as this people will let me be. [damage]...rambling letter, which would have been more worthy of your acceptance both in matter and style had I felt as well yesterday as I do today. My cold has improved so much since noon that I indulge the hope I have gained the mastery of it and that another day will see me free from it.

It was my intention to have written many letters by this ship but I have been unable to bring myself up to the task, though I have had full time till today and yesterday.

But as soon as this has left the bay I must commence a letter for the overland mail or you will be a long while without a letter.

[damage]

...than any human being can give him. I have no more doubt of Cornelia's happiness than of the Virgin Mary's and I show a Catholic spirit when I say that. Please say for me what you can so much better.

Mr. Fisher has kept the mail open two hours for me. I have only this day prepared the papers in Cavanaugh's case having arranged this morning to send him, and my

dispatches by this ship are very heavy, two have a dozen enclosures each. My letters to the Department and others will outnumber those of my previous year and are likely to increase more.

[damage]...undergo a great deal of anxiety. Of all countries this is one where you can least tell what the morrow will bring forth.

With the large force we are safer than ever. But Great Britain will not always have such a force here, we must act while we have it.

Give my kind regards to all friends who remember me particularly of our Church, to Dr. Clark particularly.

My love to Sue, Ber, and Charlie, Charles and Abby all my side and your side of the House. I had intended to write to Mr. Weed. Will send him an overland letter...

[damage] God grant my precious wife we may soon meet with all our dear ones well. I shall be delighted when I am able to see the peak of Fusiyama descending beneath the horizon. It is very beautiful. I shall be willing to gaze on the Catskill!

With love and kisses my beloved,

Yours,

Robert H. Pruyn



Kanagawa, July 1 1864

My Beloved wife,

On this anniversary of our engagement I send you an ivory card case and your miniature painted on ivory in Canton in remembrance thereof. Before their arrival I had boxed up for you a beautiful ivory carved box as a memento. But take all. I wish I could deliver myself in person. This mail now closes. It takes three larger packages for you besides this.

Tenderly and affectionately,

Robt. H. Pruyn



[Undated; likely June or July 1864]

I have just completed two more dispatches for the government and a letter for our Consul at Hong Kong and for Captain Price sending for the *Wyoming* and *Jamestown*. The

first were rendered necessary by our recent conferences and the last measure is merely precautionary. I had already written for them. So you see how cautious and careful I am getting to be. An ounce of prevention is what I am providing. This power of peace and war is one which I would wish to be spared. But the power so generously and confidently given shall be exercised cautiously, kindly courageously, prayerfully.

Please say to Maggie Robinson Chicago is the last place to which I would send a son. There are enough of the characters she may seek to shield him from in that city to form a division perhaps, certainly a brigade with hundreds qualified for brigadiers.

I am glad you saw Mr. Baker and family.⁴²⁵ The son is a young man of excellent character, good business habits and is prospering greatly. Like nearly all the businessmen here he avoids Church which is deeply to be regretted for his own sake, and for the example to others. While the businessmen stay away God is moving on the waters. Next month (1st Sabbath) at least six more from the fleet are expected to unite with us. And as we now have 17 ships of war here, we pray for a spread of the spirit now pervading some of the ships to all in the harbor.

Howard Brown has gone to Nagasaki to say farewell to his sister whose husband is now stationed there as one of the interpreters to the British Consulate and has hopes to be able to go to San Francisco on the *Ida [D.] Rogers* which will leave next month and by which I hope you will receive letters about as soon as this will reach you. Perhaps earlier as I may have occasion to send a telegram to the government.

2 p.m.

Our guests have left us. I remarked at breakfast to Mr. Roches, the new French Minister, that I supposed Madame R[oches] would soon be alarmed by the rumors of difficulty in Japan as you constantly are and he would be in the receipt of letters like those I had from home. He replied Madame R[oches] was acquainted with the Oriental nations and knew he had no fears. He has been 8 years Consul General of France at Tunis and before that was in Algiers and Morocco. He is very sociable and between us a very decided improvement on his predecessor with whom Mr. Harris had bitter quarrels and who has tried my patience to an extent you can scarcely conceive. Mr. de Bellecourt is a man of generous impulses, but very impulsive, decidedly obstinate and when once wrong hopelessly so. I anticipate a better time with all my colleagues. I will send you via California a specimen of my letters to two of them, one *suaviter in modo* and the other *fortiter in re* and you can judge what I have had to encounter. The American

⁴²⁵ In a letter dated January 31 1864, JALP writes, "Last evening I was called into the parlor to see Mr. John Baker of New York, whose son is living in Yokohama. This is the second time he has visited our city within a year. The first time to see our Bazaar, and now to see the governor." (B2F5)

minister has been regarded as having too much influence with the Japanese and at one time he had all his colleagues arranged against him. I can say to you his good temper and common sense did not fail him. And you can judge for yourself how he came off in these encounters.

I hope you thought of giving Anna Ten Broeck a handsome dress. I have much sympathy for that family. I hope they will not leave Albany. I think Cornelius would make a great mistake in doing so. Now he has friends on whom he can always rely and he would soon be swallowed up in New York and Brooklyn. He may think not but “out of sight, out of mind.” And he would have a crowd jostling him there.

I suppose Rufus K. Viele is doing well in these times, as he doubtless has his stables, home etc. in full and successful operation. Drew Lansing’s wife may not be as much of a beauty as the old flame but I cannot imagine she is less domestic and less fitted for home life.

I see Dr. R[ogers] is, as I supposed he would be in New York, successful. But I cannot believe him as thoroughly satisfied or self-satisfied. He must find he has shrunk a little in dimensions. He may be full as large and yet not relatively so. A reputation is very ephemeral there and very circumscribed except it be in a few cases, such as Beecher’s.⁴²⁶ Albany is sufficiently large for a solid and world-wide reputation as Dr. Sprague has demonstrated. I hope Dr. Clark will not be migratory.

The day is charming. M. Roches says he has never seen such a country, and if it were not for the two swords and the troubles he would be content to pass his life here. So would not I. That is the language of a gentleman who expects to pass his life in the public service and of course somewhere out of France. Were I so situated and you here I should hold the same language. For such a country and such a climate can be found nowhere else in this world. Both are perfect. It is a paradise without any serpent but sin. Why in the providence of God it is the home of such a people requires more than human wisdom to say. The common people are environed by an espionage which has never been surpassed. It is all seeing and the arm of the government has a thousand fingers which fasten on the fibers of every heart, even in the humblest cabin in the country. Justice is only administrated to the common classes as and how it suits the *yakunins* and is the most costly article for them in Japan.

If anyone asks when I am coming home please say, on leave as soon as possible with the hope of inducing you to return with me. That will be the most discreet. Between ourselves I can only say as soon as it is possible for me to leave with honor to myself, safety to others and justly in regard to our own government. It is impossible for me to enter into details, but it cannot be that I have failed to say enough on this subject in

⁴²⁶ Apparently a reference to Lyman Beecher (1775-1863) who was a Presbyterian minister in New York.

former letters to satisfy you. I wish to acquire no more reputation here. By staying I endanger what I already have. But the risk must be met or great trouble may arise. I believe one had better keep in his own hands the control of affairs. If not for my own sake I must do it for others.

As I am expecting Portman with his budget every moment to sign the papers he is copying and to take this to the port office I can write no more than this sheet. If you count the words you will find the 12 pages I send you tolerably well filled. My habit is to send off without reading what I have written for fear I may wish to make too many alterations. Therefore please correct my mistakes as you read.

The ship must reach me so that I can return before summer. I should dread the Red Sea at that time. It must be dreadful from the accounts I have heard.

On this occasion I desire to be particularly remembered to my kind friends in the Church, both those whom I met in the Sabbath School and at the prayer meetings and to those who serve on our Board of Trustees, and also of course to relations on both sides of the house, just as if they were named here serially.

To my dear boys, both of whom I hope this letter may find in good health, I send my love which will never fail and to Sue the same. I regret I cannot hurry off a sheet for her, which I certainly expected to do in the two hours of which so unexpectedly deprived. What I have written to you has been so hurried as I fear to be at times almost illegible. But you will have the requisite patience to decipher.

I shall only bring one of the Sphinxes with me. And neither of the pyramids as the freight by the P[eninsular] & O[riental] line is costly, but if I could contribute to your happiness, I should try even that.

And now, my darling wife, with a xxx of messages of love to dear Sue and my darling children and you, my precious wife, believe me

Ever yours,

Robt. H. Pruyn

Remember in the box sent to Professor Cook there are some specimens of a remarkable magnificent coral for you.



[No. 19 via] *Emily Banning* Kanagawa, July 5 1864

I received, my beloved wife, on the 2nd instant your letter of the 25th April and Sue's

of the preceding week. The intelligence of Cornelia's death⁴²⁷ was a shock to me and yet, my darling, how difficult at this distance to realize its full import. Had you informed me she had gone to Australia never to return but with the view of spending the residue of her days there, it would scarcely, conveying as it would the idea that we would never meet again here below, have announced a greater or less important event. Though in that case would have been the idea of the discomfort and danger of a long voyage and now she has safely reached her happy home. The loss is only to the survivors.

These successive breaches in our circle are dreadful. The mind shrinks from their contemplation.

I do not like, my darling, to hear of your eyes troubling you, but like [damage] to hear of your [damage] to write till 2 o'clock a.m. Much as I delight to receive your letters, I should be better pleased to receive a very few lines than a long letter thus written. And I beg you will not do so hereafter. What you can send off to me without such injurious expense I shall gladly welcome.

July 6

I was in the midst of the last sentence when interrupted by a visit of Captain Price of the *Jamestown*, and the balance of the day was employed in conferences with my colleagues. The result has not yet been reduced to writing and is not therefore in a shape to send to the government, but will go by next European mail, but I may now say to you the 23 men of war which will be in harbor at the end of the week (21 now) will not remain idle much longer. If the government do not in 20 days do it, the fleet will destroy the batteries etc. of Nagato. The *Emily Banning* was not to have left till the 10th, but it is possible she may leave tomorrow morning, though I hope not till the next day. The movements of the ships for California are so uncertain as to make it unpleasant to write that way. You are never sure whether their departure will be hastened or delayed and in some way are sure to be hurried at last. And I never have felt so little inclination to write as this very day. I attribute this to the fact that the rain is falling plenteously and it is quite cold for the season and my unpleasant catarrh continues with a slight headache which is of extremely rare occurrence.

I send by the *Emily B[anning]* two boxes sundries and one bundle containing fans and sewing silk. I sent some of this silk a few days ago by the [*Ida D.*] *Rogers*. The boxes now sent contain one handsome china carved ivory box and one cigar holder and one [damage] tortoise shell [damage] receiver. Japanese fans and curios. There are some small boxes containing a square which looks like charcoal which when burnt exhibits on one side flames and forms in colors even when the underside is all live coal. Put in flame of candle and blow it till all has ignited. The little ducks contained in boxes with

⁴²⁷ Cornelia Pruyn Van Zandt died on April 24 1864.

sliding tops have a small piece of camphor wood below which has the effect to make them move when in the water.

I do not suppose sewing silk is cheaper here than at home. Price 24 *itzabus* per 1½ pounds, which is equal to \$24 at home in currency. You will find what I send good. Fans are very high here. Those I send cost from ½ an *itzabu* to ³/₄, 1, 1½ *itzabu* and [damage] some [damage] as 3 to 4 *itzabus* each. But you will find them durable and as you specially asked for them I send them notwithstanding cost. You will see some of them have 36 bamboo slips, these were the most expensive and were in the box. They are black. Those also that have the notches on them are more expensive than the plain ones.

I have sent by this mail a pretty large remittance, C. W. B[rooks] & Co. to forward you when sold or collected which will produce you in gold about \$3,800, perhaps more. This they are directed to forward absolutely. The residue of what they have you will do what you choose with. The above remittances constitutes part of my savings for last quarter, so you see my office is not particularly a bad one.

I have made another remittance to California, one James C. Cavanaugh, whom I have ordered to be confined at hard labor in the state prison in that state to serve out the balance of his term of five years, a little over 9 months of which he has been confined here and at Nagasaki when he was sentenced by Corporal Walsh. I approved the sentence and afterwards ordered his transfer to this place and now to California. I had no doubt of my full power but took the precaution to make such order after he had in writing made a request to that effect which accompanies the commitment.

July 7

I have this moment had a message that the governor has come down from Yedo asking an interview at 1 o'clock which I must give. The mail closes at 4 o'clock. On the 12th another overland mail leaves which serves to make me feel less keenly how satisfactorily both to you and myself I am improving this opportunity. You remember the cold in my head always ornamented my nose with fine sores. Now though most of the time for past month I have had the cold, none have appeared, whether this is owing to the free use of glycerin or to the different character of cold I cannot say but you can readily believe it is not pleasant writing when your head is converted into a fountain, even if not of tears.

Our little Church at its last monthly communion had an accession of 3 members by profession, one from the flag ship and the others from two large ships which induces to hope for the greater spread of the truth. Heretofore [damage] to three or four [damage] now we have representatives from about 7 ships. May God bless the work and approve it as his own.

Howard Brown is still unfortunately at Nagasaki. Mr. Dew would have given him a

free passage to California.

Mrs. Fisher had company on the 4th July evening, dancing etc. It was a very spirited affair. The Americans all celebrated the day by keeping open house with champagne to all comers. All the ships of war, 21 in the harbor, were profusely decorated with flags and at 12 o'clock a national salute was fired. Under 10 guns they are not saluting ships. I imagine over 300 rounds fired from heavy guns all within a period of less than two minutes. [damage] ...is now the most powerful here which has ever been gathered in the Eastern Seas at one place and time. And other ships are to arrive. I could not avoid thinking on the 4th of Gettysburg and Vicksburg and hoping that the day might be made glorious this year by much more signal victories for our arms. By this time you must have had some dreadful battles. I long to receive the news but shall receive it with trembling. I hope for the best but the Southerners fight with such desperation that I never feel at ease when the mail arrives.

I wish you would give my respects to J.V.L. [Pruyn] and say I hope he will remember he was an American before he was a Democrat. I think [damage] of Congress should not be too critical. It appears to me a man must be an outrageous party man who cannot break from his party when such men as State of New York and Kernan⁴²⁸ do. I should not, like as he did, stand alone with Fernando Wood⁴²⁹ of all the New York delegation.

I regret to hear of so much sickness in our Church and of so many deaths of members. It is pleasant however to see so many coming forward to take the vacant places.

I wish you would say to Uncle Jacob that it appears to me to be just that Dr. Clark's salary shall be increased. The way to bind a pastor [damage] is to act [damage] his salary must now be insufficient. Do not hesitate therefore to send Mrs. C[Clark] a dress and I shall be very happy to give my full share for an addition to his salary.

I am glad to hear Edward has again entered the army. He should now take care of his family.

It appears strange to me Augustus should have given up voluntarily so desirable a position.

I send for Charlie a few receipts with the seal of the Custom House of Kanagawa. English and all just as received by me.

I now go at ½ past 12 to meet my tormentors who I am now engaged [damage]

I shall add as many pages as time will permit. Unfortunately my cold and the mosquitos have driven me to bed as early as 9 o'clock for many days past and writing in the evening has been out of the question. My cold today shows a manifest

⁴²⁸ Francis Kernan (1816-1892) was a politician in the Democratic Party.

⁴²⁹ Fernando Wood (1812-1881) was a politician in the Democratic Party, and served twice as mayor of New York City.

improvement. Two handkerchiefs suffice today. My daily allowance has been four.

I hope to be away from the governors in time to add 2 sheets to this rambling letter.



No. 20 Kanagawa, July 12 1864

Nothing of special importance has occurred since my last letter forwarded by *Emily Banning* except the arrival of the 20th regiment. It has not disembarked as its barracks will not be ready till Thursday and I now hear the band playing from the transport. We have three bands here now. But the probability is the force will be scattered early in August as I can scarcely think the Japanese government can do or will attempt to do what is required of them. I would have more sympathy for them if they were less faithless. There is considerable dysentery among the marines who are in camp, 80 were down with it yesterday, one had died and two were not expected to live through the day. The sick were ordered on board the *Conqueror*. This is part of the force which will go to the Inland Sea. I am not surprised at the great sickness. The bad *saki* and the unripe fruit now profusely in the market, most of which is eaten by the soldiers after it has broiled for hours in the hot sun, are either of them bad enough to kill a regiment. The men had been five months on ship board and the changing of climate but especially of diet is great. The weather has become more seasonable, sun has been quite hot, thermometer as high as 87 in the shade. It rarely if ever happens that the mercury stands over 93.

I expect to go to Yedo in a day or so, taking the *Jamestown* and landing 100 marines and seamen as a guard while I am there. I have business which I hope will occupy only a few days. The government is very much exercised about the guard, would prefer I should not land them. They have procrastinated business so much that I am forced to this. Do not be uneasy. I shall always have some of the officers of the *Jamestown* on shore and a larger guard, also most of the time I am there some officers of the British Army (Major May of the Engineers is first going), and of course their orderlies. I think a week may serve to finish what I have to do. The Dutch Consul Governor will go up also while I am there. I think they will be likely to hurry up business to have Yedo once more free. They sent me a letter this morning saying they would finish the legation in three months. This has been determined on because of my complaints last week.

The French mail a few days since brought us a telegram that on May 7 a battle was going on between [George G.] Meade and [Robert E.] Lee, also that it had lasted three

days and Meade was victorious.⁴³⁰ We have to wait more than a week before we learn the details or know whether this be true. May it prove a great victory.

I was very much distressed last night by a dream. It appears you had married and was in the carriage starting off on an excursion and was provoking me by not saying when you would return. Whereupon I very boldly threatened to bring one of the children and go after you. My uneasiness was removed this morning when I reflected the bridegroom was your brother Charlie, so there will be no trouble in the family.

How strange it seems that by the time this reaches you Bertie will have been home more than five months. I sent you by the [*Emily*] *Banning* a photograph just taken showing the bay and the ships and a view of the town with the British Legation on the right and the American Consulate on the left. Bertie will be able to explain the localities. The view is taken from the hill near the French location.

I fear the last sewing silk I bought of the lot sent by the [*Emily*] *Banning* may not be of first quality. I did not examine it, the first having been found all good by Mrs. Fisher, particularly as the man did not wish me to take some saying it was second quality. Mrs. Fisher ordered some which when brought was found to be of inferior quality and the man said there was not better then in Yedo. But I will hope all is right.

My cold is vastly better, since I have reassumed sea bathing. The interruption of this is the chief regret I feel in view of my visit to Yedo. It is scarcely a cold but a regular catarrh, showing itself in sneezing and other accompaniments as unpleasant as unchanged. But two handkerchiefs, even one a day, will suffice.

I have been interrupted by Captain Price to arrange about going up. Portman and Mr. Hogg will go by land. I will go by *Jamestown* and propose landing with the marine guard and seamen for the purpose of making as much of a demonstration as possible. I do not care for this guard for the sake of safety, feeling as serene in that respect as ever, but I land the guard as the government has given me a good opportunity to do so for the purpose of bringing them to a speedy settlement of all outstanding business. They will be more anxious to have me leave Yedo. So we propose giving them a handsome display, drum and fife and flag and soldiers.

I am sure you will be disappointed when you shall receive my more recent letters. They contain so little to interest compared with what I have heretofore written. This depends upon how you feel. And although not by any means unwell, I have most certainly not been in the writing mood.

I have sent you through Mr. Brooks bills which will yield you from \$3,800 to \$4,000 in gold, which you will please use to best advantage. I have written to him to hold all my funds subject to your orders. As you are so good a business woman and have so

⁴³⁰ This was the "Battle of the Wilderness," May 5-7 1864, in Spotsylvania and Orange counties, Virginia.

little to do being relieved of all care of your most troublesome property, myself, I think I had better keep you occupied.

My deposition in Mrs. Dudley's will case was sent home by *E[mily] Banning*. I may and probably will be home time enough to act as executor. I suppose they will prove the codicil whether I am there or not. I suppose also Judge [Robert J.] H[ilton] would prefer not to have me act. But if he has not thought of it, Charlie had better suggest that establishing her ability to make the codicil by reason of her sanity, will have an important bearing on sustaining the will. It would therefore be well to prove that.

I see Congress is likely to increase the income tax. It happens very singularly that while that will be increased 2 percent, a new regulation is made in reference to the rate at which I am to receive the Mexican dollar which is more favorable by 1½ percent which dates back over one year and affecting all my accounts will leave a considerable balance in my favor. So you see I need not care much. I wish if it would only end the war they would quadruple it.

I shall order a good assortment of ivory and other ornaments such as the bracelet I sent you last, which will answer for all the New Year's and bridal presents as may desire to make. You will not have to say, "Robert what shall we buy?" and to send me out to purchase gifts at 10 p.m.

See how old foggyish I am preparing to become. But I do not know anything which will be as acceptable as such pretty bracelets and some carved pins which I will send you one of these days, or bring you, which will be far better. But as I have opportunity I send along to lessen my cares.

Dr. Campbell's congregation may be able to agree on a successor to him. They will never fill his place. He was the Church, more so than any protestant Divine, even Beecher himself. Unlike Dr. Sprague his voice was heard and hand felt in every movement of the congregation in which everything was molded to his will.

I see you did not succeed in your benevolent intentions in my favor on the Palmer's Marbles.⁴³¹ Fortune is fluid. I shall never doubt the Jade has a thick handkerchief over her eyes. I doubt if she has any eyes. Only a painter could not well represent her blear eyed as without eyeballs and make a bearable picture and so the resort to the handkerchief is a painter's license. Never mind lotteries are immoral. These marbles would have been a standing or hanging, which was it, reproach to us. We might rather buy, avoid the Sathanas! Perhaps Dr. Armsby may in need of my good doctrine see that I do not lose by it. Perhaps he can find a way of making the public believe it is indebted

⁴³¹ "The Palmer Marbles" usually refer to twelve sculptures from an exhibition at the national Academy of Design in 1856 by Erastus Dow Palmer, who lived in Albany. However, here RHP is referring to four sculptures that Palmer donated to the Albany Army Relief Bazaar for display, and which were lottery prizes at the end of the Bazaar.

to me in some way so as to make it bankrupt in reputation if it do not get me a Palmer's Marble. Am I not as good as an infant prodigy. I ask the Doctor to adopt me!

And now, my darling wife, I must close this letter and send it unworthy of your acceptance as it is. How insignificant and few are the events I have to record. I seem to have exhausted everything and myself. And every performance appears to be getting worse and worse. What is the use of resolutions, which are so easily broken?

I hope to make up for this by next mail. Four letters in two weeks have proved as dilutive as is the warm weather.

With love to Sue, Ber, and Charlie and yourself, my precious wife, I must close and with kind regards to all friends.

Affectionately and Ever Yours,
Robt. H. Pruyn

June 28 Overland No. 17

July 1 *Ida D. Rogers* No. 18

July 8 *Emily Banning* No. 19

July 12 Overland No. 20

I shall try and write by next mail to Mary and also to Sue and Abby and Bertie.

I hope to hear by next mail due here 20th instant of Ber's safe arrival home.



No. 21 Kanagawa, July 25 1864

I received on the 17th, my beloved wife, your letters of May 6 which were gladly welcomed, announcing as they did Ber's safe arrival in good health and spirits. One line of his letter in which he said he found you unchanged was worth a volume of letters to me. You have now a decided advantage over me, my darling. I am the only one away from friends and home.

I shall not be able to write you a long letter by this mail as I go up to Yedo tomorrow leaving at 4 o'clock accompanied by Colonel Maturin, Commissary General of the British Army,⁴³² and Mr. Joseph, the agent of the Sassoons. Two weeks ago I went up landing 65 marines and seamen from the *Jamestown* as a guard. Mr. Portman is now at Yedo. The guard has with it permanently a lieutenant of marines and also one of the acting lieutenants of the ship and one of the surgeons and their officers in turn visit.

⁴³² William Henry Maturin (1814-1889) became Deputy Commissary General in 1859.

Major General Brown⁴³³ the Commander in Chief of the British Army will visit me at end of week. My impression is the end of the week will again see me away. I have been here since the 18th trying to settle our affairs which was promised if I would meet the governors here. Saturday they agreed to pay for loss of fire at Legation of public and private property \$10,000, but failed to keep their promise as we differed about some other matters afterwards. I think I may succeed in bringing them to terms yet. Have no anxiety for me. I am perfectly safe.

I shall try and write to Ber by this mail. For fear I may be prevented, I now say I wholly disapprove of his Harvard project and cannot consent to his going anywhere else than to New Brunswick. And I charge you to yield to no outside pressure of which you speak. My outside pressure will suffice. It would be an awful blow to Rutgers College if I, a trustee, had a son at Harvard and it cannot and must not be. If Ber know all he should learn at Rutgers College he will be wise enough. It is strange that he should be so easily persuaded by strangers to go contrary to what he knew to be my wishes. If we do not support our colleges who will? They will of course be poor affairs. Others may be recreant. I shall not and I repeat I positively prohibit entering elsewhere. And I charge you, my darling, to see my wishes respected. I shall write to Ber placing this matter in a proper light. I write to you strongly. I have no time to select honeyed words. If he should be at Harvard I wish him at once to leave. I cannot consent to his remaining there. Pay for the whole year but let him leave. Bertie should have talked to me had he any prejudice against Rutgers. Besides Harvard is one of the last colleges I would consent to his entering even if we had none. It will be before long a hot bed of infidelity and there are other reasons. There are [damage] of observatory fame. He [damage] not be there a day. I cannot tell you how much this worries me and I have enough without it.

I have now written a few lines to Bertie sharing what a great injury would be done to the college if I had a son at another college while a trustee of Rutgers. Did not that occur to you, my darling? I should certainly withdraw at once from the Board.

But I know Bertie will see what is right and will willingly give up an idea which he will dismiss readily because adopted hastily and unwisely.

We are now anxiously expecting the news which the next mail will bring us. At present we are in the midst of the first operations, hope [damage], having great confidence in Grant, and yet accidents may have happened to defeat his xxx.

God grant our distracted country may soon have peace.

A few days will determine our position in this country. A powerful expedition will start for the Inland Sea unless we have guarantees which will render it needless. Affairs

⁴³³ William Gustavus Brown (1809-1883) was Commander of British Troops in China and Hong Kong 1863-1864.

must be brought to a more satisfactory shape. All the ministers are agreed on the course to be taken but the papers are very voluminous and cannot be sent this mail.

I am thoroughly tired out. Last week I met the Japanese officials every day and I had also frequent conferences with my colleagues.

Mr. Brown has passed an hour with me. He tells me the state of New Jersey has granted the lands given to it by the government to Rutgers and that the fund it will receive will suffice to endow three professorships. This will greatly strengthen the college, enabling it to have professorships connected with agriculture and science as applied to the arts.

What you tell me of home matters appears all right. Charles Van Zandt could not make better provision for the care of his children.⁴³⁴ As to the marriage of Augustus, I should certainly advise Kitty not to wait for Augustus to make a fortune, as it would necessarily occupy some time.⁴³⁵ If they do marry I advise him to do something. Let him take any respectable place he can get in order to be occupied. If he cannot get \$2,000 a year, let him get \$1,000 or 8, 6, 4 or \$200. Anything not to be idle. He might through J.V.L.P[ruyn] get some situation in the Central Road seeing what his object was. He might then be able to advance himself by making himself useful. But let him show some feeling of independence. Let him read this as I cannot not write him. Gertrude's case is a hard one and if my life is spared, I shall be willing to aid little Willie in his education as to give him in a start in mercantile life as he shall incline and if necessary will now aid in his support, say by paying his school bills. Do as you think best about this now. I hope we soon may talk it over. She may with a little aid make a man. I wish to do all I can be reasonably expected to do for those who deserve it by showing a disposition to take care of themselves. I thoroughly dislike the character which will be content to sit with open mind and idle hands.

My cold has very nearly disappeared. It had vanished altogether but a sudden change in the weather brought it back again.

I should like Ber to give me a pretty full account of his experiences of travel, it might be of advantage to me. I do not see why he did not get a full supply of clothing in Paris or London. I hope he brought you gloves. He had no limit as to money and he should have used his credit liberally for you. It did matter what the rate of exchange was. He took funds already in London and which I shall not disturb. If the money is paid for the Legation fire as is likely I shall send some by next mail say £1,000. But I am not sure it will be settled. I only hope so. I had arranged to send it this mail. But Japanese are mighty uncertain.

I think I told you besides the yellow lilies, there are two kinds of white. Mr. Dingwall

⁴³⁴ Charles Van Zandt became a widower when his wife Cornelia (RHP's sister) died.

⁴³⁵ Augustus married Catalina ("Kitty") Ten Eyck on September 19 1866.

will therefore please examine what you have distributed so that any mistakes may be corrected. If an opportunity present I shall send some more this fall and as the shrubs and trees fared well also, send a large number of those.

You will see from my hurried letter to Mr. Weed, we are to have still more troops here. The Beloochees,⁴³⁶ who are men from the hills in India, have been sent far from Shanghae. Ber probably saw them there and can describe them.

I am told by Dr. Vedder of the *Jamestown* that the best ponies in the world are found at Matanzas in Cuba where his father lives. I propose asking him to write to his father to send a pair. They are cheap and I wish Charlie to say to [William M.] Stetson some time I will ask they be sent to him and I hope he will receive and forward them. It may be they will not reach you before I do, so do not fear you will be troubled. I shall ask that he take his time till he find what shall precisely suit him as I am in no hurry. Dr. Vedder says a lady can ride one and hold a full glass of water without spilling. They are so easy. One will be for you and one for Charlie. Ber will have to use big horses.

I hope you will be able to read what I write. I have been a poor correspondent of late.

You need be in no hurry to part with your crepes and silks. Any piece of crepe you have will cost here, the small or narrow ones \$12 to 15 and the wide ones \$20 to 25. Double this and add duty and you have the cost in currency. Narrow crepes are worth 30 *itzabus*, wide ones 50. That is the number of dollars they should bring at home, taking into account exchange etc., etc.

Remember I am glad you have let Mary have a crepe dress. But by what process of arithmetic you made it \$10 I cannot devise. Remember always call each *itzabu* \$11 and then you scarcely get cost. I put any *itzabu*, you must also remember, at what they cost me, which is from $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ less than I can sell them for. So I lose the profit on the *itzabus* in all such cases. You must reject entirely the invoice I sent you. It is worth nothing now. Prices have entirely changed and it was a bad guide before. I wrote you these heavy silks are worth here 60 *itzabus*. Ber can tell you all about the *itzabus* and the difference between their selling value and the government value in Mexican dollars which makes it unnecessary for me to enter into details. The thinner black and grey silks, like traveling silks are 40 *itzabus*, say \$40.

Now add a large margin for currency. I do not know where that would be. Remember a Mexican dollar is worth in the U.S. say 106 to 112 [*siz*]. I can buy here with a thousand Mexican dollars a bill which will produce in the U.S. in gold say \$1,300.

Let me give you an example. I had \$4775. With that I purchased a draft on Shanghae for \$5,000. That bought a draft for \$6,200 I think, which you sold at 171 or thereabouts. It produced nearly \$10,000 for my \$4775. Charlie can tell you the amount. Now give

⁴³⁶ Baluch Battalion

away whatever you choose. I only don't want you to sell to any giving them the idea they are paying cost when you do not receive one half of the cost.

I hope you were able at the high rate of exchange to realize the amount I placed at your disposal with the Messrs. Barings. If you have funds uninvested I think I would buy New York Central, a good real estate at a low figure.

It looks as if we are to have a snow storm. If so I will not get off tomorrow and may be able to add a few lines to this very unattractive letter. I almost have forgotten whether the letter published by Dr. Clark was addressed to him or my dear little boy, but I suppose to the doctor. You will have to keep a very close watch on Ber's clothing now that there is so great a change in climate. He should put on flannel early and keep it on late. I do not think he is as prudent as I am in dress. I am a thorough believer in flannel. I have on linen pants, but my thick drawers yet, then vests of the zephyr kind but always put on woolen coat at evening. He never changed as carefully as I did and he needs watching and cautions, often. He will scarcely realize the great changes which take place at Albany and he should change his dress with every change.

It is now 8 o'clock and I must go to bed early if I expect to rise at 3½ o'clock. It is blowing quite hard but it may be a pleasant morning.

Lieutenant Barton⁴³⁷ of the *Jamestown* has been relieved and goes home by this steamer. He is from Maryland and I do not wish to trouble him with any commissions. I have a few small articles I should like to have at home but will wait for another opportunity. I wish Bertie would go up to Troy and see Mrs. Price. If the Captain had gone home we should have been pleased to have had him see you and tell about Japan and I have told the Captain that Bertie would doubtless think of it and hope he has.

I see some of the ladies lost their lives because of their severe labor at the New York Fair. I hope you did not suffer from exposure at our Albany Fair.

My little Charlie must excuse my writing this time. I always receive his letters with pleasure. I hope they will grow longer now that Ber will doubtless set him a good example.

Another poor fellow fell from the yards of the *Pelorus* today and was killed. The 20th regiment has buried as many some days as 3 since its arrival. They were quite sick when they got to Hong Kong and the unripe fruit and stale vegetables do them no good here. We have now 7 to 8,000 soldiers and seamen. We are getting quite an army.

And now, my darling, I will seal up this letter. Should I stay tomorrow by reason of a storm I may be able to add more, which I shall very gladly do. Meanwhile good night with an abundance of love for yourself and Sue and my dear boys.

I hope the gunboat is on its way. Perhaps I may have a chance of going home with Captain Comstock and if Mr. Weed should be along that would be a grand. He is so

⁴³⁷ W. H. Barton of the East India Squadron.

good a traveling companion. He would be sure to meet someone he knew even at the Pyramids.

Love to Charlie and Abby and for yourself, my precious wife. Love and kisses.
Faithfully yours,
Robt. H. Pruyn



U.S. Legation Yedo, August 2 1864

Mein Geliebte,

Here you see I am once more domiciled in Yedo and writing you as aforetime. I am of course shut out of the world and am far from sure this letter will leave tomorrow evening as I hope. Mr. Fisher wrote by a courier who arrived late last evening that a ship he heard was to leave for San Francisco on the 3rd. As it was British he did not as yet know it for certain. A letter just received does not speak of it at all. I write therefore in ignorance of the time of its departure hoping this will reach Yokohama in time.

Having only the *Jamestown* at my disposal to enforce demands which had been resisted one year, I determined to ask Captain Price to anchor her as near Yedo as possible and have a guard landed. This I felt authorized to do and yet be consistent. I had always spoken, written, and acted against the principle and practice of landing foreign troops when at peace with Japan. But the Gorogio, to keep me away from Yedo very unwisely wrote that they could not guarantee my personal safety, and I said I would aid them. I have 65 marines and sailors. We have three officers, our flag, drum and fife, morning and evening parades, guard mounting, reveille, etc., all the calls and discipline etc. of a regular camp. Our parades are attended by admiring *yakumins*. When the governors call we receive them with military honors.

Now for results, I expect to leave here Friday the 5th, as soon as Colonel Maturin, Commissary General of the British Army in the East, and other British officers who are to come up today shall terminate their visit. I have received from the Japanese government \$10,000 for public and private property destroyed at the Legation fire, of which, including for Bertie's watch destroyed, I have say \$8,000. I have also the written pledge of the government to pay \$10,000 for *Pembroke* indemnity and \$1,200 interest on same in 30 days, also for submission of the other claims to the Emperor of Russia if not arranged in same time. Have I not cause for thankfulness of such a triumph, no threats used, no force at my disposal, only military occupation of Yedo with its millions of inhabitants by 115 Yankee tars. I most particularly am gratified by their agreement to refer to Emperor of Russia. This government probably will arrange with me but I

insisted on this pledge to prevent delay. It now by this act steps in the line of nations and acknowledges the sanctions of international law. It agrees to submit to the decision of a power whose officers it insulted and imprisoned only twelve years ago, which was proscribed and shot on from its ports. I would like Charlie to read the above to Weed or give him its substance. I feel proud of all this but grateful to God for his goodness.

My stay here has been pleasant. An English merchant who was my great agent of the great India House of Sassoon wrote me this morning. He had informed Sir Rutherford Alcock he had never felt so safe away for days in Japan as while with me in Yedo. So you must not be anxious especially as so short a time will elapse before my departure. I should by the way have added that the government has yielded to another demand of our government to rebuild the Legation. I have in writing fixed the time for its completion in this the present year.

I am entirely free from cold in the head now and remarkably well, though the cessation of the state of excitement which these prolonged negotiations necessarily occasioned has left me with a feeling of lassitude and great weariness.

We are still without news from the U.S. beyond May 16, but are in joyous expectation of good news. It appears as if Grant will not fail. God has indeed tolerated slavery as he has other sins. But it now appears as if the time of his forbearance has ceased.

I forgot to say General Burgeoine is with me. He has presented me with an elegant pearl, large as a pea and perfectly round as much so as if turned by machinery, of the best luster probably worth this single pearl \$200, certainly over \$100. It was given him by a Chinese [named] Kwang, governor of a province. He wore it as the chief ornament in his head dress. It is mounted so as to show its entire size. It is a beauty and shall be yours if I can devise some way of having it mounted in enamel so as to be serviceable. I resisted taking it for a long time. But he said he had another and would not be denied.

I must now send off this letter to reach the mail. I am obliged to give the coolie at least 7 hours to go down and be safe, though occasionally 5 and even 4 hours have sufficed in an emergency and with the stimulus of extra pay. Should the ship not sail tomorrow I may have opportunity to write more and send it in time. I have written this fearing you may be uneasy for me. The next overland mail will, I trust, carry your news of my safe return to Yokohama where I will be obliged to remain for the residue of the year. My business in Japan will now have been brought to a successful issue, so far as relates to our country specially. Now for our joint affairs in which there is entire harmony of views and action I suppose a few months perhaps weeks will suffice to bring them to a close or at least an issue.

With my love to my dear boys, to Sue and Charlie and Abbey and an ocean full for yourself, my beloved wife,

I am ever yours,
Robt. H. Pruyn



No. 22 Kanagawa, August 11 1864

You will no doubt, my beloved wife, be pleased to hear I have resumed my residence at this place. A three weeks' sojourn in Yedo enabled me to bring the Japanese government to terms. They have paid \$10,000 for damages sustained by loss of public and private property by the Legation fire. They have given me a written order for the sum of \$11,200 payable September 5 for *Pembroke* affair, making my memoranda receivable for public dues to that amount if not paid on that day. They have also signed an agreement to submit the other questions to the arbitration of the Emperor of Russia if within the same time they fail to settle them (\$20,000) to my satisfaction. I am pleased with all this not only because it is a great triumph as I have only the old *Jamestown* here but because it leaves one with business all finished. It is true the *Monitor* was fired on by the same Prince on the 17th July, but I think I will quickly dispose of that. I am particularly pleased with the agreement to submit the *Jamestown* to the Emperor of Russia. It is a great compliment paid to him and it is a great triumph for me to have secured the recognition of the principle of arbitration by this government, the Tycoon arguing to submit to the decision of a power which a few years ago was not admitted to land and whose officers were imprisoned and maltreated by the Japanese.

I have no idea the arbitration will take place as they will most likely pay all I require. I insisted on this as a substitute for the pressure I had on them while in Yedo and which would be resumed the very moment I left the city.

Bertie will be able to describe the premises I was forced to occupy for three weeks. The rooms all opening into each other and no possibility of any privacy. And yet my house was full of guests. We all rode and walked freely through Yedo attended only by Japanese guards. I am happy to say the marines and sailors behaved admirably towards the Japanese. I was the only sufferer, my larder having been twice thoroughly cleaned out, once at the expense of a silver spoon, my wines taking legs or wings and walking or flying away and myself all the time uneasy till they were once more on board fearing at the last moment all of good might vanish by reason of some unfortunate escapade of Jack. But fortunately American and Japanese fraternized most lovingly. We had some curious episodes. One day great amusement was afforded by a grave two-sworded man giving lessons in bowing to an ambitious sailor, whose efforts to imitate the elegant and lowly Japanese bow were exceedingly grotesque. Master and pupil preserved the utmost of gravity, both entirely unconscious of an observer taking notes.

While at Yedo I dined and otherwise accommodated an average of 12 each day,

sometimes 15, including the officers of the *Jamestown*. I embraced the opportunity of giving all the residents in the place who had not visited me and whom I thought proper to ask, a chance to see the house. I had besides Captain Endicott⁴³⁸ and Mr. Gay⁴³⁹ of Shanghai, Mr. Weld⁴⁴⁰ of Boston, Colonel Maturin, Commissary General of the British Army in the East, and Captain [William] Hartman, assistant to Major General [William G.] Brown, Commander of the Forces in China etc., etc.

We returned from Yedo on the 5th having on the way down visited the Lake of Sensakai where Count Eulenburgh⁴⁴¹ had his picnic and the temple of Itanyama both of which Ber can describe to you as well as our route to this place via Omouri⁴⁴² and Kawasaki. The last ride I took via these last places was when he was with me. I could not but think as I rode towards the Tokaido at Omouri of his being with me a few months before at the same place and then of his thousands of miles distance. I was accompanied by Colonel Maturin, Captain Hartman and by Lieutenant Huntington, Dr. Vedder and Mr. Paine (the brother-in-law of Captain Price) of the *Jamestown*. Our journey occupied the entire day as we laid by during the heat of the day at Omouri to which place I had sent Skaso with certain viands. Portman was to have joined us there. On my arrival I found he had opened a bottle of champagne and proceeded on his way. But he was sick on the road and arrived in Yokohama in a later hour than ourselves.

I feel sure this visit has caused you some anxiety and yet I did not think it right not to tell you of it because I felt it was not attended with any real danger and even if so attended it was better you should hear from me precisely what I proposed doing and what object I had in view, than from the public papers which, through foolish correspondents for sensation purposes, might magnify the danger or misrepresent the objects. I am now snugly settled down once more having been more successful than the whole body of organ grinders. I think the government would have yielded much more to get rid of me but I did not wish to be too severe. I succeeded also in getting a grant for a consulate of a portion of the old Commodore Perry Treaty ground. Sir Rutherford and myself first agreed, I having before that single-handed fought all the ministers and Mr. Fisher, all the consuls. The British and Americans take the front: the British where the boat house is and the U.S. where the government godown is. Ber can describe it to you, a fine location next to the Church lot.

⁴³⁸ William Endicott (1823-1892) was the commander of the *Ann Welsh*, Shanghai.

⁴³⁹ A. O. Gay, a clerk for Augustine Heard & Co., Shanghai.

⁴⁴⁰ Mr. B. Rodman Weld, a young man who was traveling for pleasure. C. W. Brooks sent RHP a letter of introduction for Weld dated February 15 1864, asking RHP to extend every kindness. (B3 F4).

⁴⁴¹ Count Friedrich Albert Eulenberg (1815-1881) negotiated the Prusso-Japanese Treaty of 1861.

⁴⁴² Ōmori 大森

We have had another arrival of troops nearly 200 of the 67th regiment and half a battery of artillery. On Friday evening the Dutch Consul General has a dance, etc., and so greatly has our population increased by the arrival of officers' wives and visitors that we will have about 30 ladies present. On the 15th the French minister gives a grand dinner and on the 28th a grand party in honor of the Napoleon Fete day. A good story by the way is told of his proposed dinner. The large number of high officials leaves little room for miscellaneous invitations. Portman says Mr. Roches notified the French residents he proposed inviting one of their number and he asked they should designate the favored one. They accordingly met and it first appeared that Sir Rutherford's French cook had the most voices, a French hair dresser however running him close. After several more jests of the same kind a ballot was had and the lot fell on an old silk inspector in the employ of a xxx house, who rose and modestly declined on the ground of having no suitable coat. I have not heard how it was finally arranged.

I forgot to say I gave a grand entertainment the night before I left Yedo, at which I had jugglers and top spinners. I had sent for them but they were unable to come that evening whereupon I gravely told a governor of foreign affairs who visited me that I was sorry as I wished to give the guard an exhibition and I should be obliged to stay another day. This brought the gentlemen quickly. I will tell Charlie what they did.

A few weeks ago two British ships⁴⁴³ were sent to Nagato carrying to the Daimio of that province two young Japanese,⁴⁴⁴ retainers of his who had been pursuing their studies in England, who came here by the last mail, supposing that they might restrain that prince from warring against foreigners. I sent down a memorandum by way of letter as did my colleagues. Yesterday the ships came back bringing a verbal message that he was acting under the orders of the Mikado, that if time were given those orders might be repealed, and that the Chosiu would so advise. The impression was strong however that his officers had greatly softened the message. In a few days decisive action will be taken and in a month I think Chosiu will find shells disturbing the equilibrium of his batteries. I have joined my colleagues in a memorandum formidable at any rate in length. And if proclamation and long papers can finish our friend Chosiu he is decidedly "a gone-er." As it does not freeze here we have not the advantage that the old Dutch *Trumpeter* had of having a full charge come out when a thaw set in. But we make up for that by repeated charges. I think the gun will go off this time. But the British admiral I

⁴⁴³ The *Barossa* and the *Cormorant*.

⁴⁴⁴ The two Japanese were Itō Hirobumi 伊藤博文 (1841-1909) and Inoue Kaoru 井上馨 (1836-1915). They were two of five men from Chōshū who travelled to England in 1863. The two stayed in England for six months, leaving in April 1864 when they heard of the conflict between Chōshū and Western powers in Japan. Itō later became the first Prime Minister, and Inoue became Minister of Foreign Affairs.

think does not love gunpowder much. He is the son of a Lutheran clergyman and Luther has died out in the breed.

As I have given you a French story I must not withhold an English jest. Lady Alcock never walks out without an orderly sergeant in attendance, so the middies having *Lady Audley's Secret* in mind have dubbed her "Lady Orderly."

I saw in *Galignani* a good anecdote told at the expense of us Americans which you may not have seen. A collection being taken, the clergyman, a stranger, had a hat passed round. When returned to the pulpit he upset it and found the collection, nil, whereupon with devout gratitude he clasped his hands and raising his eyes said, "I thank God I have got my hat back from this congregation."

The 20th regiment has lost 25 men by cholera or something like it. When it arrived many of the men were sick and they were managed badly. Kept closely on shipboard and much crowded till barracks were completed they were suffered to indulge too freely when landed and the result was three funerals a day. But now it has disappeared and deaths have ceased. They parade each week and their truly elegant band plays on the Bund each Saturday afternoon. I never heard better music of drums and fifes, the latter playing several parts, exquisitely beautiful.

On the 3rd your letters of May 10, 17th, and 21st were received. I am happy to hear you find Ber not entirely spoiled by my bachelor housekeeping. I of course set him a good example. I had a place for everything, though it was difficult sometimes to remember precisely where it was. I can well imagine he should talk intelligently and modestly, you know just where he gets that. But where his laziness comes from passes my comprehension. I feel very sure however if this poor body get home you will see a choice specimen of the same article done up in wholesale packages. When I got back from my last excursion to Yedo I felt completely wrung out. The patient Japanese governors who put no value on time are most magnificent clothes wringers. They put moisture in you and wring it out as if they were patent machines to the very center of your being.

You allude again to Ber's college. I am surprised that you see how utterly impossible it is to give my consent to his going anywhere else [but Rutgers]. If he do, you and he must take the responsibility and it must be understood I have nothing to do with it and protest against it. I am a trustee there and our institutions shall never receive so cruel a blow from my hands as would be inflicted by his going to another college. I hope some of his companions may be induced to go here also. What you say about his wishes being so fierce is all very true. But they happen to be just in the one direction I cannot gratify. Why not leave our Church also? It is a little Church, very insignificant in point of numbers. When will we have to stand up manfully for our own, our wives, families, people, colleges, Churches, anything and everything which is our own and not like the smallpox and itch shared with other people who take the lion's share especially of the

last.

Please say to Dr. Clark if I were home I would talk to him about his son being at Rutgers and would reverse the tables.

I have no recollection of the circumstances which shortened my letter of March 4th so greatly. You should receive letters every two weeks with an occasional stray package via California. The vessels between this port and San Francisco have been less frequent this year especially in this direction. While at Yedo I was informed by Fisher a ship was to sail at once and I postponed letters both for the government and yourself which are still here sealed up, but on heavy paper. Possibly a ship may sail for that port the present month, but it is uncertain.

2 p.m. [August] 12th

Captain Price has been with me for an hour having just left a conference of the naval and military commanders at which an immediate expedition to Simonoseki was resolved on, agreeably to the invitation of the ministers. We had determined to give the government 20 days' notice but will probably omit that. I regret we have no steamer and only hope one may arrive in time. The *Jamestown* will be left for the defense of this place with the *Conqueror*, an old 74 altered, and 3 gunboats. The 20th regiment 700 strong, about 200 of the 67th Regiment, and half a battery of artillery. 600 men more will come here from Shanghae at once consisting of another half battery, some more of the 67th Regiment and some of the Beloochees, a regiment of troops from India from the Hills.

9 British, 3 French, and 4 Dutch steam ships of war will compose [the expedition] with about 600 supernumerary marines who came out in the *Conqueror*. They will be able to land about 3,000 marines and sailors reserving enough to work their batteries. The Japanese government will not regret this expedition unless they are grossly deceiving us. Only one thing is sure. Some parties are being most outrageously cheated, either Chosiu or the foreign powers. But Chosiu will be the sufferer and the Japanese government will be for us and with us in the end. The strong hand will be on them. The boys used to say there were three Rs, reading, writing and arithmetic, all elegantly spelled with an R. But there are four powerful Cs which march hand and hand in the East: Cannon, Commerce, Civilization and Christianity, and the first appears to be the pioneer.

The mail was to have closed today. But because of this warlike meeting it has been delayed a day at the request of the British admiral and will not now leave till Sunday a.m., closing tomorrow evening. Tonight the affair of the Dutch Consul General comes off but unless those resolutions today necessitate another meeting of the ministers tomorrow I will be able to send a few pages more. The meeting is likely to be held however. It is now warm and the mosquitoes make it impossible to write in the evening and the heat difficult to do so at midday.

Howard Brown will probably leave here in a few days for New York in the British

ship *Brilliant*. I would send some boxes of curios but it is too hot and perhaps a little delay will be better. I would rather send by an American ship after the *Alabama* is disposed of.

13th August

I was at Mr. Van Polsbroek's till 2 a.m. We are not too far East to be fashionable. The company, that is the Lady portion of it, assembled and dancing began at 11 o'clock or a little after. At that time we made our appearance. There is great difficulty here, especially in a bachelor household, in providing for supper in the absence of those little delicacies so common at home. We had a little ice last evening and a little ice cream made, I presume, by Sir R[utherford]'s machine. The grounds which cover some acres were elegantly lighted by hundreds of gay and various colored paper lanterns and rockets, blue lights, roman candles and music served to give animation to the scene. We mustered seventeen ladies and there were fourteen in the place entitled to be so designated who from sickness or other causes were not there.

I am now considering the propriety of chartering an American steamer—merchant—now here so as to have our flag represented during the coming operations. But incline at present very much against it. I hear through Shanghae the *Saranac* is ordered here from San Francisco and would give much to see her here. It is mortifying we should be so helpless when even the Dutch have four steamers. But this is another of the evils of this terrible home war.

I hope you will have gone this summer to Saratoga, Sharon or some such place and incline to think Ber will have drawn you out if you were disinclined. I write this in the past as summer will long have been ended before these lines reach you.

Cousin Jane Anne's death was quite a surprise. I know of none of our relatives who gave more promise of a long life. I thought it quite safe judging from our standpoint to give her the same length of years as her father and mother. But I suppose she had many troubles which were upon her which few if any knew. Serenity of mind is very needful to a green old age. A few worry through even 80 years, but there is little left either of body or soul or mind when they have succeeded in creeping or pushing themselves so far.

I have this moment a message from my colleagues for a meeting which I hope and think will not occupy much time. So I will write again. My dispatches are all ready except one which I may be obliged to prepare after our meeting.



Business [August 11 1864]

Enclosed you will find seconds of a bill for £1,500 of Chartered Mercantile Bank of India, London and China on London Joint Stock Bank at 6 months. The first of the exchange you will see have gone to London for acceptance. This will not be sent you but will be handed to the holder of the bill when seconds are presented. You will thus be able to hold the bill as long as you choose and the 6 months will commence to run on the receipt by the bank of the 1st which of course will be in advance of the receipt of this. You will either have exchange low on its arrival by reason of our excesses or else high if the campaign shall have proved unsuccessful, which I most sincerely pray it may not have been. Whatever may be the case, you can take your time in dispersing of the bill and make the best use you can of the proceeds when it is sold.

Remember I should not be averse to sending another bill, should you be able to secure a good house. I should wish one as good as the Strong's or Barnard's. I mention this in consequence of what you said in your last letters received of Ber's opinions and as the war, when ended, may cause some to be thrown on the market. You will, with or without those which Brooks placed at your disposal, have ample means to make such purchase.

This bill I have been able to send you in consequence of this government settling the clauses for the destruction of the Legation.

I hope you were able to use the credit I gave you at Barings when exchange was at its highest point, though I really forget when I wrote the letter, my memory is now so treacherous.

I am glad your teas and preserves arrived. The next invoice will be much better. You will remember the Japanese tea is fine uncolored tea, it draws light and is much better without milk.

I see they have written Jane Ann in the bill. Sign your name that way and it will be all right. It is not worthwhile for me to go and have it altered. I will send thirds next mail.

I repeat it may be well, if good real estate on Broadway or North Pearl should be in the market cheap, to invest in that way spare funds, or in Central or Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati Rail Road. I would like some of that stock. Mr. Olcott will advise you. I again remind you about my stock in the Chicago and Northwestern Rail Road of which I had a large number of shares, which it would have been well at high prices to have sold. If, when this reaches you, prices have greatly declined, keep it. I may do better. Do not fail to remember also I wish 3 to 5,000 of Albany Insurance stock. Charlie will be sure to have chances to buy when the war closes. I would like even more of it if it is for sale. This is a special edict. Vermillion. I never expected my stock there would have been sold. But let that pass provided Groesbeeck sees I replace it. If I live to get home I will see to that, if it is not attended to before.

I hope the box containing the two tea caddies as I call them has not been lost. The

tea caddies are small black lacquered boxes with gilt ornaments, each containing two compartments with sliding metal covers. The boxes contain no tea but are filled I think with ivories. Many articles far more valuable than the caddies have vanished if they have miscarried.

I learn from Mr. Hogg that only about 30 of the bulbs I sent were of the large variety. I had supposed I had hundreds of them. But the Japanese value the calibrated pink one most, while we value most the kind that grows wild all over the country. Let Mr. Dingwall examine therefore all that flower whether given away or not so that we may have all the kinds multiplied. I will send more this autumn and more of the shrubs and trees if opportunity offer. The different kind of bulbs were separated by papers and marked and I therefore hope you have kept every variety for Mr. Dingwall.

I have no idea the flower seeds were of any value. They have some splendid varieties of morning glory, elegantly fringed with a broad white band and some double. I will secure seeds.

I am much pleased to hear the Works are doing so well. If it will not occasion Charlie too much trouble will he get, if it have not been delivered, the discharge which Ransom⁴⁴⁵ was to have given me for a debt of Low⁴⁴⁶ against Howard which I had assumed and for which Ransom received from me the assignment of a mortgage. Charles knows all about it as it was done for the Works.

You will remember the shot and shell are not for Rutgers College, only the box with the large 12 foot crab, and in that box I had some coral placed to be sent to you which I suppose you have received or will receive in application to Professor Cook.

The letter I enclose for Mr. Ten Eyck I wrote hastily. You may suppress it or say to him I wrote you that on reflection if he agree with me nothing need be said of what I therein propose. Bertie will be able to explain all about our currency and the precise nature and extent of the advantages engaged by reason of it, and you will see how much of pecuniary value is abandoned when this part is resigned. But we will have ample means for everything we wish and more than that. So we will dismiss this as far as possible from our thoughts. Still if compelled to stay it is pleasant, or rather while compelled to stay, to reflect that it is not a loss all around, social, family, pecuniary.

I am sorry you have the trouble of caring for business matters at home. Not that there is so much to do. But I know I would be troubled much with a little sewing. We always do with difficulty what we are unaccustomed to do. And so I presume you find it. But you must already be somewhat more confident and now Ber can help you by beginning to practice. It will do him much good. I would even wish Charlie put a trifle in his houses and teach him to keep an account. Give Ber a fixed income and let it be

⁴⁴⁵ Perhaps Samuel H. Ransom, a stove manufacturer in Albany.

⁴⁴⁶ Perhaps Warren S. Low, a clerk in the treasurer's office of New York Central Railroad.

liberal as he wants, only each year he must keep within it and have a small surplus. That must be an inexorable condition.



No. 23 Kanagawa, August 25 1864

My Beloved,

The mail leaves unexpectedly early as the steamer is to continue on to Hong Kong and requires extra time at Shanghai to take on freight. The steamer normally runs only to Shanghai and is delayed often so late as to be obliged to change passengers, freight and mails as it meets the Hong Kong steamer on its way out.

I had made a short business memorandum and proposed writing yesterday, but the morning was devoted to a conference between the foreign ministers and the Japanese officials which necessitated a meeting in the afternoon between ourselves, and protocol etc., etc.

Political affairs wear so melodramatic and comic an aspect that I must lift the veil for a few moments and give you an exhibition. In my last I informed you of an expedition to Simonoseki arranged by the Treaty Powers not only with the secret assent of the government but almost at its request and yet that government proposed to go through the form of asking that it be abandoned. A vice minister and others, it was arranged, should meet us for this purpose on the 19th and we were to say we would write to the government to say at once it must go and to send it off the following day. On the 19th the wind was very high and it had been so stormy for several days as to interrupt the preparations so that it was certain the fleet would be delayed till Monday. At 8 o'clock the mail steamer appeared with the Japanese flag at the fore which excited some surprise, preparing us to expect a part of the embassy. I was astonished however at the appearance of Matsuda to see me with the announcement that the entire embassy was on board. He said France had refused to close this port and it had returned and it was useless to go farther. We had our conference with the Vice Minister etc. at 10 o'clock at which all the forms were gone through. I told them their embassy had returned. They said it must be a mistake and could not believe it till I told them I had conversed with one of the interpreters whom I had met on the way to the Custom House. I did not dare tell them he had called on me as it would have possibly and probably subjected him to punishment to give such important information to me in advance.

The Japanese were evidently much troubled at this information and hastily dispatched officials to the Custom House. At the close of our meeting the mail gave us

information that they had made a treaty with France in which the ambassadors agreed that the Tycoon should open the straits within three months of their return, alone or with the assistance of France, an absurd agreement so far as Japan was concerned because it was absolutely impossible for them to do it. Politically they dared not even say they would do it and if they could their power was entirely insufficient. It was foolish so far as France was concerned. It isolated her from the Treaty Powers and the present force of France now here and in the East is not large enough to accomplish the task. However it was evident that for the present the expedition must be given up. France could not go with us and it was needless for the Treaty Powers to do what Japan said should be done for them in 3 months. All the naval orders were countermand, trunks unpacked and most unmitigated grumbling throughout the fleet. And the poor diplomatists were supposed to be wavering because the public did not understand the real obstacles.

The French Minister had to take it for granted the convention would be approved by the Tycoon. But I wrote that evening and the British and Dutch ministers the next morning and asked whether the Tycoon would ratify the convention. An answer was sent down and governors followed yesterday. We were told the Tycoon could not ratify the convention. He of course understood his envoys had committed him to perform an impossibility. Takemoto Kai no Kami, one of their shrewdest officers, the only one in office now of any rank who held office when I arrived, said the envoy had acted foolishly in making such an agreement and more so in coming back so soon when they knew the object in sending them was to gain time, that the Tycoon wished they had been drowned in coming back, that the only punishment they deserved now was to lose their heads. It was then arranged the expedition should go as soon as a letter was sent to us that the Tycoon refused to ratify the treaty. He said also that to keep the Daimios quiet while the expedition was away, the government would send off another embassy but would only let them go as far as Shanghae.

So we met in the afternoon and entered into another agreement calling upon the naval commanders to act. I finally chartered the steamer *Takiang* of which I wrote, a ship of 600 tons. Lieutenant Pearson⁴⁴⁷ of the *Jamestown* will command her. She has three guns, but the rifled parrot [gun] of the *Jamestown* will also be put on board. The *Jamestown* remains for the defense of this place. The steamer will not cost probably, coal and all, more than \$12,000 and my colleagues were very anxious our flag should be there as its absence might be misconstrued. I have no doubt the government will not only approve but would not have been pleased had I declined doing so. I hope this will so expedite and settle matters as to have me free to act under the permission to leave which, if I hear nothing more, I shall construe us having been given. Is not this a curious

⁴⁴⁷ Frederick Pearson (1842-1890). See <https://perma.cc/A8D7-V8VN>.

country? The government has great difficulties which we do not know. It may be the way they meet them is the best that can be devised, but they are quite original and very torturous. I suppose however that the Japanese are so constituted as to be unable to do anything straight forward.

I received by the last mail your letters of May 27 and June 4/7th and 14th and was glad to hear of your continued health, particularly of what Ber says of your appearance. I now begin to fear that I will be the one who will look old and wearied. I hope that nothing has prevented Townsend in coming out in the gunboat. We now know that there will be sufficient room for all who were desirous of coming and he will never have such a chance again as he would be able to return with me and if life and health are spared, I hope to avail myself everywhere to the fullest extent of my official position and hope to see more and under more favorable circumstances than any private gentleman can see. I suppose Captain Comstock will also return overland and we can therefore have a very pleasant party. With your letters, Sue's very welcome ones come with accustomed regularity. It is possible she may receive no other answer by this mail than her share in this letter. I shall have difficulty in sending you all I desire and it is easier to write on than to commence another letter and repetition is also avoided. I shall not send any dispatches by this mail, no time is allowed for preparing the necessary enclosures. Yet affairs are in so interesting and critical position that I cannot have Governor Seward without any letter. So for the first time I will write one private and unofficial which will take more time but the contrary course would make it impossible for Portman to get ready the papers necessary to accompany it if official. My dispatches are, you will readily believe, written with great rapidity and Ber will tell you few could read them. Portman partly from habit and partly because he understands the subject gets along very well with my scrawls only being obliged occasionally to leave a few blanks for me to enlighten him on.

In regard to letters via California, bear I mind we very rarely now have ships bound for San Francisco. Two are now spoken of as likely to go but it is still quite uncertain.

I do most sincerely wish, my dear wife, you and Sue could have come to me. I need not say this is a charming country, which is now every day becoming a safer and pleasanter residence for foreigners and my office, you will very easily see, has many attractions. You can easily calculate the pecuniary sacrifice its surrender will involve. There is also, it cannot be disguised, certain charm in the possession of power and position, and the ministers of the Treaty Powers are themselves a power in Japan. They mold and control the action of the government to a very great extent, uninherent monarchs possessing far more real power than many of the small potentates who lord it over many countries. I only speak of these advantages as of use when shared with, not absent from, my family. I shall surrender them very willingly. Yet I know very few could be found who would do so. As this office is really worth more in every way than

the missions to Denmark, Sweden, and Holland combined. But I have a sea sick wife instead of a Venus who rose from the sea and might therefore be expected to delight in it, and there is the end of it.

I do not expect Ber will take kindly to study. Would it not be a good idea for him at once to decide what profession he is disposed to follow and prepare for that? I have never asked him for his preference. But every young man, even though entirely independent, should be and do something.

While I approve most heartily of his having not only economical ideas but habits also, I am sorry he made you and Sue the objects of it and did not buy all you asked of him. Exchange made no difference to me as my funds at his command were in Europe and not intended to be transferred. The state of the currency in the United States therefore was of no consequence. And his economy in not ordering other clothes in place of those which failed to reach him was not well considered.

I notice what you say about the rebel crab. I would only suggest to Sue that though crabs are very good in season 1. There is little in one 2. They easily become stale 3. Their transition from black to red is startling and rather unaccountable 4. They have ugly claws 5. They are disposed to use them. 6. Their locomotion is sideways and indirect (side presentation to yourself instead of to the object) 7. Part of the year they are soft shelled. They are constantly changing homes. But I will not pursue this further except to say finally, lastly, in conclusion, Barnum of Crabs! Or does he calculate upon your being a widow. The rascal! I will punch his head when I get home unless he is protected by Sue's apron strings.

I am not so sure that it would be unsafe or unpleasant for you to meet me in Europe. You might indeed be homesick, I mean sea sick, most of the way but I should hope not. You could stay at some retired and pleasant place till I joined you. Indeed I might be able to inform you of my start in time for you to meet me in Italy. Think of it again.

Please say to Dr. Vanderpoel I shall send him tea by the first opportunity. A ship leaves for New York this week but I fear tea cannot be procured of such quality as I would wish in time to send but another ship, now that the *Alabama's* disposed of, will sail this fall.⁴⁴⁸

Ber is mistaken in saying I sent silk for curtains. What I bought was for Mrs. Fisher except two very heavy pieces only 4½ yards each, as samples of their very expensive silks. The silks which were spotted were doubtless all of them those which had been saved from the fire. I do not recollect that any of the striped white ones were damaged, but the rose colored were.

I am not surprised Ber should like extensive servants. I do not know as I can be

⁴⁴⁸ The C.S.S. *Alabama* was sunk by the U.S.S. *Kearsarge* on June 14 1864 off the coast of Cherbourg, France.

satisfied, unless compelled to be so, with any contracted garden, much less a small yard. Ellis Baker may wish to sell. If opportunity offer, buy!

The deaths this fearful war occasions and of old age and disease in our Church are alike fearful. May they soon be less frequent! Colonel Morris' is very sad. I am glad to hear of Frank's impunity from harm.⁴⁴⁹ But is it continued? The same mail which brought me Dr. Vanderpoel's letter speaking pleasantly of Colonel M[orris] and Frank, brought me your letter which spoke of the death and burial of the former.

I have completed a very hurried letter to Governor Seward and hope now to be undisturbed till the mail closes, which will give me an hour.

Say to my dear little Charlie this part of the letter is his. I cannot give him or Ber any more today. I am glad to see he is improving. His last letter was the best he has written and I shall look for further improvement, because there is still room for it. He must write slowly and carefully and weigh every word he says. A word written may live forever and so does a word spoken in the memory of God and the records of eternity.

Ber deserves a long letter in return for his. I shall try and make it up next mail.

We get our news as the sensation novel readers are supplied with their stories. The mail leaves us with some movement decided, some battle in progress, and we must wait two weeks for the result. Now we are waiting breathlessly for news from Grant and Sherman. May God in his mercy grant us success. We were delighted with the sinking of the *Alabama*. Nearly all here of English and other foreigners are in sympathy with the South, and it is hard to meet the covert sneer, the often expressed doubt of our success, the ill-disguised pleasure when a reverse is announced or even the sympathy and good wishes of those who are or affect to be friendly. During all my residence here I have constantly met with embarrassments growing out of our civil war. The Japanese understand all and though I never like to speak of our affairs and never do except in reply to questions addressed to me I have frequent occasion to see that we are injured by it. I should like to be here a few weeks while we have a country all our own.

I have a few minutes left for you, my darling, having dispatched Sue at a swinging pace. My boy, Skaso, has just come to take the letter to the post office but I have sent him away for a quarter of an hour. I have nothing special to say and of course little time for choice of subjects or phrases.

In Ber's letter he says he is waiting for his allowance not having heard from me. What does he mean? Get his views and arrange to suit him. The principal thing is to have him keep within the amount he fixes and have a surplus. So arrange liberally and do the same with little Charlie so he may keep an account in a small way.

I have just been called off by a message from Sir R[utherford] about the meeting at

⁴⁴⁹ Francis ("Frank") Pruyn (1845-1902) was RHP's nephew. He was the eldest son of RHP's younger brother, Francis Pruyn.

5 o'clock to sign another protocol etc., etc.

You will be pleased with me at my success in bringing our special business to a satisfactory close. I hope what we are now doing will be acknowledged necessary and wise and will add to the reputation of all concerned. I do not think I shall have failed to make some little of fame even out of these dry bones.

The mission has been one of great importance and responsibility, and the government of the U.S. has approved of my proceedings in the most unreserved and pleasant manner, and I feel so far much satisfied. It is very difficult however to act in such important affairs involving the question of peace or war without the possibility of getting instructions or even advice from home. I pray all may end as well as it has thus far progressed. The public will not understand the present movements until the papers are published. Till then some may be disposed to condemn. The great point now is we are really acting in harmony with the wishes and even the political necessities of the country and it is doubtful if the Tycoon can maintain himself on the throne if we do not so act. How few will understand that till the papers are all published.

I wish you would let Charlie read to Weed (not to be published unless what Governor Seward authorizes) that part of this letter which gives the political news about the embassy etc., etc. It will amuse and perhaps instruct even such a veteran politician. He will see we have good politicians in Japan.

I am glad to hear of C[ornelius] T[en] B[roeck]'s recovery and hope he will have no more such scrapes. Fortunately he has no other daughter ready for marriage. I have no doubt some of his old friends are instrumental in leading him on. Such is the world.

I now have my first boil in Japan. It is, I suppose, in compliment to the universal negro on that most delicate spot, the shin. I think it will have no successor. It does not look Job-like, but everyone here has some eruption. Everything grows so splendidly that even man buds and blossoms. This is a great country my dear, what have you not missed. The women do more than bud and blossom. Fruit and that abundantly is the rule not the exception there.

And now, my dear, I must close though I have reached an interesting subject well worth more ample illustration and discussion. I will reserve it for a special lecture when I get home. Females only to be admitted and none but handsome ones either. Remember the Crab!

You will therefore please remember me affectionately to all enquiring friends. I hope you have enjoyed yourselves this summer and you are probably now quietly settled home. Praying this may find you in all in excellent health and our country rejoicing in glorious successes, I am, my darling wife, with love to dear Ber and Charlie, to Charles, Abby and Townsend etc., etc., affectionately and ever your devoted husband,
Robt. H. Pruyn



No. 24 August 25 1864 11 p.m.

As I embrace the kind offer of Sir Rutherford Alcock to send a few lines to Governor Seward in the foreign letter bag I do not fail to send you, my dear wife, a line which will be written at the latest moment.

It is now arranged that the fleet shall leave on Monday, the Gorogio having this evening sent us a formal letter saying that the Tycoon cannot ratify the convention with France.

The government in this shows good faith and good sense to a greater extent than heretofore has marked their conduct and it is possible it may hereafter have less concealment especially if they see they are not compromised by our giving publicity to their conference with us. There can be no doubt the government is seriously embarrassed. It is now said the ambassador to Europe has been sentenced to 6 months confinement. I doubt if they get off so cheaply.

The chief envoy⁴⁵⁰ was grossly intoxicated at Shanghae on his way out. Sir R[utherford] A[cock] saw him at that place and says he had, when intoxicated, stuck his hand through a pane of glass.

He paid out money very freely in Paris for watches and it is pretty certain that on steamers and everywhere else they were not well behaved. I am inclined to think embassies will be at a discount here for some time at least. Officers of this government carry their lives in their hands and success is the sole proof of merit. The wines of Paris must have stolen the brains of these poor envoys.

When 30,000 was asked for Lt. Camus' family; they said they would give \$35,000 and they must have known they would not be sustained in all they undertook.

6½ a.m. August 26

The steamer always leaves the day after the closing of the mail. But the British Minister is not dependent on the mail box. He makes up a separate bag which is not disturbed even at Hong Kong. Once before I have availed myself of this mode of forwarding letters. But I fear to do so. Careless clerks in the foreign office London I doubt not abound. I wrote yesterday. There is little in this letter and I cast it off as a

⁴⁵⁰ Ikeda Nagaoki 池田長発 (1837-1879) was from Bitchū Province. He led the Japanese delegation of 34 men to Paris in an attempt to get France's support to close Yokohama as a trade port. The mission was a total failure, and once he returned to Japan Ikeda had his government stipend reduced by half and was put under house arrest.

waif which may be picked up by you. Still will be no great loss if it floats away.

We have as usual a beautiful morning. The sun's rays are now quite warm but the evenings are delightful. Ladies and gentlemen can sit in the open air without hats or shawls till a late hour of night with entire immunity from cold. Regularly every evening chairs are placed on the Bund in front of British Legation and there I was till 11 o'clock last evening having had occasion to go there for the purpose of comparing letters addressed to Sir R[utherford] and myself by the Japanese government

With the aid of the photographs Ber can give you a very fair account of this place and the idea of my precise location.

Ber writes me he wishes me to send swords. I have two pair ready to go by first good opportunity, also Daimio's dress which I will send, everything inclusive. Some of the Japanese dresses are very light and simple. A few days since a young beau I presume passed by in an exceedingly heavy rain clothed very neatly in a paper umbrella—innocent of all else. Is not this an Eden. Shortly after I saw a lady pass—she was a female, and where in our country at least is there a woman who is not styled Lady by some one? She trudged along manfully however and her dress somewhat in the Greek style. Diana in the chase was bared to the thigh. The side view I had unfortunately prevents me being more precise.

But I do assure you my dear that though every female is so candid and open here as to have the whole or most of her bosom to the world you actually feel that there is less real immodesty in it than in many of our low necked dresses which affect to conceal what they were carefully constructed to reveal. I am prepared to receive offers for a lecture on this subject from any society of respectable females, not too strong minded. I shall be delighted to aid the bloomer movement. It has not heretofore gone far enough. As we progress Edenward in virtue and the vine is now more extensively cultivated in our country, I favor the fig leaf. No need of agreements then to banish foreign silks. Each lady can sit not only under her own vine but in her own fig leaves, beauty unadorned, adorned the most. Should you think this a taking idea any of the monthlies can have some of my Japanese pictures to copy into their fashion plates. And for gentlemen I shall take care to bring a variety of umbrellas, so Ber shall have the choice of dresses.

You may think I cannot deliver an interesting lecture on this subject. But I could give you a spicy anecdote now did I not fear it might be shared with and the bloom taken off by some effeminate foreign office clerk.

Mr. Schoyer is to give a ball in a few evenings. It was to be fancy dress. Some ladies said to me what dress could we get. I said the choice might not be very large but it was quite evident they could not ignore the Japanese costume. I might have added in its almost naked simplicity. The garden of Eden was evidently located here, as we have remnants of it yet, small remnants it is true.

I hope you understand this branch of my discourse. You will with the aid of my Japanese paintings and drawings.

I shall run my pen over another sheet and then cast my writ on the waters.

I have about 10 minutes left and no more and I think I had better close as my letters must be sealed etc. This is enclosed in the one to Governor Seward.

You may be sure I do not expect you in the gunboat. I should not recommend that route. The overland would be the best. But I do hope Townsend is now on his way. Nor do I suppose Weed has been able to tear himself away from a Presidential election.

I do not see any acknowledgement of the last sum sent forward for sanitary and volunteer purposes. It was sent direct from Russell & Co. either direct to Charles or to Ransom, the former I am sure, at the same time the bill was sent which he did not credit me but placed to credit of ships. It was a little over 200. I sent a letter which was intended to accompany the bill.

But I must now close with my love to my boys and to Sue and kisses and abiding love for you, my darling,
Robt. H. Pruyn



No. 25 Kanagawa, September 1 1864

My Beloved Wife,

Yesterday the mail of July 10th arrived with two letters from you of the date of June 21 and 28, which I am enabled to answer via San Francisco. The bark *Delaware* has put in here from Shanghae, and not being able to find any cargo will leave early Saturday morning the 3rd and this I only learned a few minutes ago. I wish her departure were postponed a few days. It is quite difficult to write amid the whirl occasioned by the arrival of a mail, before you have had an opportunity to swallow even, much less digest, its news. And on this occasion the news is not exhilarating. Although I did not expect to hear... [damage] ...more decided prospects of eventual success both in that quarter and in northern Georgia. As it is we have Grant forth of the James River and having sustained a check. Our telegraphic news coming through hostile sources is always transmuted so as to be invariably worse than the details justify. But until the next mail arrives we are never sure what allowances can be safely made. The *Straits Times* with telegraphic news to July 7 has Grant beaten and Sherman on his way to or actually back to Chattanooga, whereas the papers actually received have him in the Chattahoochee. Then again the telegraph puts... [damage] ...that at best there has been no great reverse.

So we must wait and hope and pray.

It is quite singular considering the rank of Francis that you should have been so many days in the dark as to his condition. I hope he may be no worse off than a prisoner, though we little [k]now perhaps all that is involved on that word.

Every reverse we sustain, every death inflicted on officers or men, should unite the north more firmly together and move everyone to the point at which surrender of its resolute purpose to put down this... [damage]...miserable abject politicians we have in our state and city and everywhere north, unfit for freedom themselves and yet ambitious to govern.

Our wisdom may be worthless to enable us to discern where this will end. But above us all sits in serene majesty one who sees, regulates and governs all and His purposes, wise and beneficent, will be accomplished.

I hope the next mail will bring more hopeful news both in the family and the State. An arrival from Caligornia...grand... [damage]

Your ideas as to my return are quite liberal. Should I serve out my terms, I might remain of a quarter of a century, if my life should be so long spared. I suppose you think I am appointed for four years. That is a mistake. No time is fixed. And as Mr. Harris was not renewed by the Republicans I could count pretty securely on retaining my post even under Democrats, who are not likely now to get the control. Indeed such is the peculiar position of this country that each year of my stay could render it more necessary that a change should not be made. Still, not to alarm you too much, I think you may not without reason hope to [damage] coming year. I say this having the hope the gunboat will arrive in season and that the present expedition against Chosiu being successful will tend to keep affairs quiet here at least till I succeed in getting away. So also on my return you may expect the laces you want but they will have to come through me and from me so remember if you do not send a full memoranda I shall buy right and left. But for fear I may not buy enough, I shall execute your order also taking care to charge you largely for exchange. Gloves easy to remember. Yet repeat sizes in the letter about laces, also of shoes. Little Mrs. Sanford is a heroine. She knows a husband is not merely ornamental. She wishes to see him an admiral. But you... [damage] ...stand in the way of my political advancement and I therefore give up aspiring to the Presidency. I suppose on this I am singular and may subject myself to a commission of lunacy. What public man who has gone so far expects to stop short of the presidency and though for this I sent you all the silks for use in the East Room. I give it up, for domestic quiet and to escape a row.

I was much pleased to hear you had been at Williamstown and I need not say at this late period I should be pleased to hear you go for a few days to New Brunswick. I shall never consent to allow Ber to go to a New England College and should my life not be spared, I enjoin it on you that he goes to Rutgers College [damage]. But I have allowed myself to fly off on this subject of choice of a College on which I confess I have no

patience and am perfectly astounded there should be for a moment a question with you or him.

It is all nonsense about the quiet morality of the place, no liquor sold, ask Charlie.⁴⁵¹ He has often told me about that model college. There was more wine drunk there in a day than at Rutgers in a month. At New Brunswick no billiard tables or even bowling alleys are allowed, nor do they exist and when I was there it was a model place as much so as can be expected in this world. Go and see for yourself.

But this has nothing to do with your wish.

It gladdens my heart to hear of your running about and enjoying yourself and I should be famously disappointed if you do not enjoy yourself at some pleasant place of resort this summer. The charges at Pittsfield are extremely modest 3½ to \$4 a week! The price should be at least double. You must have made a mistake.

It is, as I said to Bertie, it would be. I knew he could not enter college till 1865 and he will require just application to be ready then. I suppose he must necessarily feel lazy now, because of the revival of the excitement he has been under for months. But if needful an effort energetically put forth will shake off a stupor which would soon paralyze the mind. Here he had little to do and ample time to do it in. I could not employ him except in reading. Portman could do all the copying. I only taxed Ber and Mr. Kip at rare intervals.

Do you not think I should have been unhappy had I supposed my stay could be so prolonged. If the promises which from time to time I made of a speedy return sustained you, do you not think they sustained and encouraged me? I see clearly, and I suppose you can, how impossible it was to leave and how it may be, may be hidden from us as much as it has been. I shall try. And positive assurances are out of the question at 15,000 miles' distance. The government cannot even advise me. Ber says truly my position is in many respects a grand one, equal in importance and responsibility now to half a dozen of these of the same grade. But I shall surrender it without a pang of sorrow, though not entirely without some regret. That regret will be that you could not have shared it with me. With my family here, with all its drawbacks, I could content myself here a few years longer. The climate is very equable and healthy. And the danger here not greater perhaps than in London or New York. It would be dangerous at some hours to visit portions of those cities and advisory caution only is needful here. Though there are some persons here always in alarm and I suppose they would anywhere be uneasy for some reason or other.

But Ber can give you in a few minutes a better idea of this country morally and physically in a few minutes than I could on a ream of paper.

I went down to the mouth of the Bay in the steamer *Takiang* a few days ago and

⁴⁵¹ Charles Bridgen Lansing graduated from Harvard in 1829.

beheld scenes which my eyes had not rested on since the day I sailed up the harbor on the *Ringleader*. This place had changed, the political situation of the country has changed. But these hills and valleys were as lovely and quiet and the same as in April 1862.

You will see how rapidly I write. You must therefore not expect a fine letter.

September 2nd

I have of course many interviews with the Japanese officials when the mail does not leave, but I am quite sure to have them when it does leave, so invariably is this the case as almost to give occasion to the suspicion that they scent it even afar off at Yedo. Yesterday afternoon I heard from a Vice Minister and their governor who came again to go through the farce of asking that the fleet should not sail. 1st a farce because the government actually wished it to sail. 2. Doubly so because it had already sailed Sunday and Monday. They had with them the usual staff of writers to take everything down. And as this was for domestic consumption I firmly answered: 1. As they were aware the fleet had sailed and it could not be reached by any messenger before it got at work 2. We were not disposed to recall it 3. We were glad, or rather I was, that the Prince to be chastised had acted so badly to the Tycoon and Mikado as to make the punishment he deserved and would receive subserve to the aid of the Tycoon, though sorry there was any Daimio who defied his authority.

They then informed me officially another embassy would be sent and asked very good officers for it when it reached Washington. As two of the governors were present who had told me it would only go as far as Shanghae and I know the old ambassador had been punished, I gravely asked, but I think those governors saw a slight twinkle in my eye, whether the late embassy would be sent back to which they responded, No a new embassy would be sent.

I should have said that since my letters left via Marseilles the news has come that the Gohara or Chief Officer of Chosiu went with a force to Keoto four days ago and had an encounter with the Prince of Aidzu,⁴⁵² the chief officer of the Tycoon charged with the defense of the Mikado. In the conflict a large portion of the city was burned. The Mikado is said to have effected his escape to a temple some distance from the city and has now ordered the Tycoon to proceed against the rebel. So the Prince [of Chōshū] has not only all the Treaty Powers arranged against him but the Tycoon and Mikado. The Tycoon has seized all his *yashikis*⁴⁵³ or palaces in Yedo and promises now to act with vigor, but that means something very indefinite in Japan. As with their ministers,

⁴⁵² Matsudaira Katamori.

⁴⁵³ Each Daimyō maintained residences (*yashiki*) in Edo. This is where the Daimyō's family resided permanently, and the Daimyō himself would reside half the time under the alternate attendance system.

so with their war. There is a vast deal of sham motions. I think the fleet will go through motions which will astonish him.

Everything remains quiet here. We told the government in writing that if any attacks were made here we would hold it responsible and retaliate at Yedo, Keoto and Macao. We said to the governors verbally there must be no running away of servants and merchants as before and all thus far is quiet. No stranger would suppose that war was actually in progress in any part of the country.

More troops have arrived. We have now one battalion of about 800 men of the 20th regiment, four companies of the 67th 260 men, 187 Beloochees, a battery of artillery, and about 50 men of the military train and marines, besides a number of marines left behind sick who will soon be convalescent. Besides we have nearly 100 French marines and the marines of the *Jamestown* and other ships in harbor, say nearly 300 who could be spared to act on shore if required.

Still I feel confident we will not be molested. The Japanese government has more than 2,500 men and 13 howitzers within a mile [damaged] place.

I sent my number 24 in the British Foreign letter bag and hope it will reach you safely though containing nothing special having been sent only to place in your hands one day later date. I presume this will reach you first. And as it is quite likely to do so. It may be well to say that last Sunday and Monday nine British, 4 Dutch, 3 French, and 1 American ship, the *Takiang*, sailed for the Inland Sea to destroy Chosiu's batteries at Simonoseki. I chartered the *Takiang* as it was greatly desired our flag should be there.

This place looks quite deserted though we have still 6 men of war and probably 15 merchant vessels left in port and Ber will tell you we have often seen only the old hulk *Nassau* lying here. But the streets and the Club House look deserted. The naval officers when ashore were in the habit of thronging all public places more than the officers of the land forces who remained closely in quarters except in the cooler part of the day.

I do not play bowls much now, it is too warm. I am content with having made the best score which has yet been made, 203, which although 67 less than I have made at home is excellent on poor alleys, such poor broken balls and miserable boys to set up the pins. The balls cannot be replaced here except from Hong Kong and we are obliged to be more economical in their use.

The weather is warm, mercury ranging each day from 80 to 89 in the shade. Has been at some places 90 but Mr. Hepburn puts it at 89. But then we have pleasant breezes in the evening. The sun is very forceful by 8 o'clock in the morning and burns till evening 5 o'clock. We never think of going without umbrellas and keep as quiet as possible.

You will have heard long before this will reach you of Mr. Bonney's death, and whether it be true that Catherine proposes to remain as we hear she does. A letter which reached us by last mail announced his death. I had heard of his sickness but it was at

the same time said he had recovered.

I have completed packing a box for you or rather a Chinese leather trunk and I have not a dry thread on me. Though I had Skaso and a Japanese merchant to assist me the question as to the best way of economizing room is a very delicate one and before everything was placed just where it is, each box was taken out many times and experiments repeatedly made.

I hope you will find the trunk itself very convenient especially for light summer dresses, it is so wide and roomy and light. I was sorry to spare it but can get another one. I had no time to have a box made.

The vase I send you will find superb. Look at the inner cover of the two boxes, shawl and writing, and then at the lower side of the bottom of the square tray.

Such work cannot be excelled. It is highly artistic and will last for ages and the older it gets the better.

You will have read by the two last mails the seconds and thirds of a bill on London for £1,500. You will see I have been paid for my furniture, which is far better for me than to be paid by Congress. I shall now pay Mr. Thompson his loss, also Portman and Ber will be pleased of course to have me take credit for a sum sufficient to cover his watch as well as clothing, etc., etc. As he proposed in one of his late letters we should call our accounts even, it will do. I do not yet see how his passage was paid except the bill drawn at Galle but suppose it will turn up in Russell & Co.'s account, if not in Barings.

I do most sincerely hope that Townsend has not been so economic as to forego the excellent opportunity he had to see the East especially connected as it was with a return with me overland, probably accompanied also by so good a traveler as Captain Comstock. I shall therefore expect to see him having little doubt of his having already known what sea sickness is. Do not call by that name the trifling nausea which you have had in railroad car and steamboat. Try the mighty deep. Get a regular outpouring, cleansing the whole system and then see how good you will feel when all the nasty stuff has made the ocean greener. Queer, has the color of the ocean any connection with sea sickness, I mean after it is over?

I think I have already told you I purchased sewing silk (a small lot) after the larger parcel had been placed in the trunk and the trunk locked. That I have enclosed in an envelope given to Dr. Simmons who goes in this ship. The pearl studs cost me 10 cents each at Canton and 1 *üzabu* for each stud putting in insets. You may say therefore \$1 each. You will see they are not trifles. You will please give Abby the toy toilet set of a Japanese Lady. It is more than a toilet set, evoking as it does drawers for clothing. You may say therefore it represents a complete outfit for her clothing and beautifying.

The balls you may distribute as you like. Please keep the coins. If spared to get home, I can make distribution. Some of these of which I have large numbers you may give

away. But many are very rare and costly.

You have now large numbers of *itzabus*, $\frac{1}{2}$ *itzabu* and $\frac{1}{4}$ *itzabu* and two large *obangs* of different sizes and value.

You will see how I jump from subject to subject, in writing at odd moments and repeatedly interrupted I scarcely am aware of what I have written. I should not be surprised if you found repetition.

I shall close this letter, my precious wife, and shall hope tomorrow morning to be able to send you a few pages more as the mail will not close before 9 o'clock.

Love to all friends and a brimmer for yourself from your

Robert



No. 26 U.S. Legation Japan September 3 1864

I rose, my beloved wife, at 6 o'clock and expected to have made some progress on a letter to you but am sorry to say it is now $\frac{1}{2}$ past 7 o'clock and I have only succeeded in writing a few lines to Ber and getting a pair of swords ready to be taken to him by Mr. Morris of New York, to whom I have written a note of instructions, etc.

And yet when I sat down to write I did not have an idea which I proposed to communicate, but expected something to flow forth with the ink.

I understand the next overland mail will not leave till the 13th. By that time we may have some information from the fleet. But of what trivial character and slight importance is our man in Japan compared with the gigantic conflict which has swept the United States and I fear is yet to be prolonged. It should never end in any other way than in the triumph of the Union. Peace on other terms would be a delusion and a snare.

If I expected to stay I should ask that in each mail pending, and to connect with the overland from Marseilles, two or three of the latest New York papers should be sent me. And it may be best to have this done till you hear definitely of my movements. Or it is quite possible that except so far as they may be controlled by events here, which I do not apprehend will be the case, you will be able to form a better calculation than I will as you will know all about the gunboat and also perhaps through Mr. Weed of the wishes of the government.

I wish you would ask Charles to say to Mr. Weed that I proposed to write but the unexpected departure of the vessel made it impossible, also that I have been sorry to trouble him with my little personal ambitions and wishes at a time of such terrible conflict, but I had hoped the letter containing them would have reached him, as I hope this may reach you at a more propitious time.

My health continues good as usual. The work of Dr. V[edder] about which you inquire is not on the same liberal scale as his own person. But I shall try by doctoring to make it answer, which may soon I regret to say be needful.

This is only one of hundreds of small annoyances and deprivations we are subjected to here which, if the balance were struck, would leave it doubtful if there would be sufficient assets to the credit of Japan to justify continuance here to any except for a fortune or for official necessity.

I shall no doubt speak highly of it, if permitted to reach home but I shall [damage] it with what I have seen [damage].

7½ o'clock

We have had breakfast and Mr. Fisher has gone to the office to close the mail, giving me an ½ hour to finish and send this to him, which I think I will not employ but rather close my letter and see Mr. Morris and give him some instructions as to swords which may ensure their arrival in better condition.

I do not know whether I wish that Howard Brown would remain here and see his brother. It was thought best they should not be separated so long as would necessarily be the case if they did not meet at this time. Many years have passed and they would scarce know each other if as many more were added to the sum.

I shall now, my darling wife, close this very hurried letter asking you to give my friends who may enquire for me my kind regards. I desire to embrace relatives on both sides of the house.

I do not know what you can do about my brother Ed. When I get home he shall have aid on two conditions. 1. He must show a disposition to aid himself. 2. He must go West. I will start him there on a farm. But he must show himself more of a man than he has yet. Meanwhile do not suffer his family to want but let him not have anything to waste.

With love to all my darling. I am yours as ever.

R.

I hope that inexorable Baby is now satisfied with sewing silks, as I have sent you nearly 2 pounds more of black. Let her then stitch away. I shall insist on her using it all up.

I may be able if this ship is detained to send a few lines by Mr. Morris after the mail has closed.



No. 27 Kanagawa, September 10 1864

My Beloved Wife,

I received your letters of June on the last day of August and had the opportunity to answer them by the bark *Delaware* which left for San Francisco on the 3rd instant.

Since then the political situation remains unchanged, though the policy of the government has taken a very sudden turn. The city Keoto where the Mikado resides has been the scene of bloodshed. The Prince of Chosiu with a large body of retainers, desirous probably of securing the person of the Mikado, attacked the Prince of Aidzu and other Daimios charged by the Tycoon with the defense of the Mikado and in the struggle which ensued, a very large portion of the city near his palace was burned. But the Mikado secured safety in a distant temple. Having ordered the Tycoon to punish Chosiu for this, the Daimios ordered to effect it desired that the fleet shall be recalled as they do not wish to appear as cooperating with foreigners in war upon a prince of the empire. We are now negotiating on this tack. Meanwhile the fleet is probably busy at work and sure to have finished it before the ship which we will probably send down gets there.

Today the government pays me the *Pembroke* indemnity \$11,200. So you will see I am steadily finishing my work. The receipt is signed by me and the money in the hands of my agents. Within a few days I expect to have the sole remaining matter disposed of, the claims for damages for injuries to some of our citizens here. My present written agreement refers those to the emperor of Russia, the time having passed within which the government was to settle with me. They say now they will prefer to answer it with me. So I give them two weeks to make the attempt, failing success in which it goes to Russia. They will settle it. Shall I not then have cause for rejoicing, having succeeded so well without ships of war and the necessity of threats and intimidation? Now for the gunboat, as other matters are in a fair train of settlement. I am weary and have the blues, extensively.

September 12

I have finished my government dispatch with its 9 enclosures,⁴⁵⁴ and my letters to Ber, Charlie and Sue and now I will see what remains, my darling, to say to you. I should never put much faith in what I hear from Japan. Such a mass of errors is sent forth to the world by those who, from their position you have a right to suppose well informed, and who when they speak from their high places and by authority, you conclude speak with caution and precision. An amazing instance is brought to my notice in the recent

⁴⁵⁴ <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1864p3/d499>

debates on Japan. The Duke of Somerset, first Lord of the Admiralty,⁴⁵⁵ thought the destruction of Kagosima did not injure the Japanese much. They build so rapidly. He had been informed that a large educational establishment for the young ladies at Yokohama had been destroyed by fire on Friday and rebuilt by the evening on Monday. The large educational establishment for young ladies was, and now that is rebuilt is, one of the most horrible places in the world.⁴⁵⁶ I have no such knowledge as will enable me to describe it if disposed. The Bishop of Victoria I believe did visit it and has described it in part in his work, "So Many Days in Japan," but I never have visited it.⁴⁵⁷ I went on the site with Ber and some others I think the day after the fire. The inmates are numbered by the hundred and disease in its most loathsome form stalks forth almost bodily and visibly from its polluted portals. Had Solomon been able to imagine such a spot, Proverbs would have been more trumpet tongued than it now is and a blast would have been sounded in the ears of the young and the old which would have sounded as loud as that of the last temple. But why should I speak with such emphasis of this place, the whole town is one vast house, with only here and there a household where the feet of the frail do not daily cross the threshold. Such is life in the East. Virtue is a rare flower in Japan. Married women may be chaste, the unmarried, never. It is not expected and now that I have gone so far, let me conclude by saying that in the evening it is a melancholy sight here to see young girls going about probably to houses where they are expected, under the escort of their mothers, as is quite evident from their resemblance to each other. Mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, know, approve, and share in the wages of this universal vice known to the entire community, to the government, as well as people. It prevents no marriage and probably would not interrupt one already agreed on. At all events, it would only delay it, till a more convenient season. I should not come to Japan if I belonged to the school who devised the doctrine of universal depravity for proofs to sustain my belief.

I have already sent the East is a dangerous place for young men especially freed from the restraining presence of parents and family. I suppose there is more wine, beer and spirits used here by foreigners in proportion to the population than anywhere else on earth. The Japanese would drink all these things freely if they could get it free. Much as they like champagne they will not buy it. I was told by a British officer who was on board the steamer which brought back the embassy that fifteen of the Japanese who

⁴⁵⁵ Edward Seymour (1804-1885), the Earl of St. Maur, and Duke of Somerset, was a British aristocrat and politician.

⁴⁵⁶ RHP is describing the licensed quarters in Miyozaki 港崎, where prostitution was legal and sanctioned by the government.

⁴⁵⁷ George Smith, the Bishop of Victoria, Hong Kong, published a book titled *Ten Weeks in Japan* in 1861.

composed it and their followers drank seventy-two dozen of soda water between Aden and Galilee. Brandy was invariably used with the soda. Nearly five dozen for each individual. They began by drinking before breakfast, gin and bitters, at breakfast, hot brandy, sugar, and water, brandy and soda during the day, and champagne and everything else at dinner. The chief ambassador appears to have always been the chief in intoxication but I was about saying there are dwellings here in which I have no doubt 3 to 4 dozen of wine and beer are daily consumed. Fast living is the rule in the East, moderation in anything the exception. Everyone keeps open house. Unbounded hospitality is the one thing in which all agree.

We are now daily expecting to hear from the fleet. We have no doubt of course of entire success and yet the place is a dangerous one, the current exceedingly rapid and the shores strongly fortified. I believe we did no less than was needful and just as firmly think we have done no worse.

By the *Delaware* I sent to the care of Mr. Brooks two swords for Bertie, also a Chinese trunk with articles for you. Two keys will be forwarded, the one an ordinary one for the lock covered by the brass band, the other Chinese. The key is now folded. You open it out from the center and place one end against the side of the Chinese lock and push on it. Ber probably knows how to open it. But if not already opened, let him take time and not open too hastily. The trunk contains articles of lacquer, ivory. These are the most elegant and costly I have sent home. You will please keep all of them. We can give away what we choose, but when we see all together and what can be but spared and presents the best collection. No doubt handsome duplicates will be found, which we can very easily spare. I invite your attention particularly to the magnificent carving of the dragon interrupting a convivial deportment. You'll see he is coming out of the bamboo from ashes, or rather has come out all but his tail. You'll see the teapot, teacup and tobacco pouch etc. upset beneath them. The carving is beautiful. Look at his scales, the articulation of his body. Examine it closely with a glass. The group surprised bathing is excellent. The big fish is not greatly exaggerated. It only differs from the real article in having what represents the nose slightly displaced. If I recollect right, it should be on the other side. Some are said to grow so large as to be dangerous. I've sent home a duplicate of the dragon carving, smaller and not so good, I think. I hope these will reach you safely.

I have bought all the lacquerware I shall purchase unless greatly tempted by some extraordinary specimen. Though the large box I have just sent you and which I send for you for November 9 1864⁴⁵⁸ with its small companion cannot be surpassed in all Japan. Examine the inside of the cases. They are perfect pictures and could be framed as such. I do not think you can fail to discover the great superiority of this lacquer, and to show

⁴⁵⁸ The Pruyns' wedding anniversary.

you the estimate the Japanese put on it, let me say the price charged for these boxes was 800 *itzabus* which would at this time proffer \$1,000 in the U.S. in currency. I do not think I would have got much abatement had I not bought it the day there was a slight panic owing to the departure of the fleet to chastise Chosiu.

I have directed half a dozen large rattan arm chairs to be sent you from Penang and a dozen rattan stools which I will give to the Church for Saturday evenings when full. The chairs will be sent direct from Singapore with an invoice to you by mail and the bill to me to be paid so you will only pay duty and freight. You will find them elegant and light for summer, good and roomy to take in half an acre of crinoline. If you do not wear this voluminously, some of your visitors do.

Now that the *Alabama* is gone your Manila wares will follow, though I think they had best first be sent to me. The handkerchiefs can be sent through the post office. I shall buy a few for presents and will order a \$40 one for you and Sue and Abby. That should suffice to keep your faces clean. What will Charlie say to that? Let me see, \$40 here is \$50 in gold. How much is \$50 in gold now? But stop, add duty, \$75 in gold? What extravagant investments wives and sisters in law are! I am naturally economical, vastly so. But what can a poor body do when surrounded by three witches not quite as xxx as those in Macbeth?

As Mrs. Governor Weller wished me to aid in making her the best dressed woman in San Francisco and I am forbidden to exercise my taste on that direction, I shall see that you are fairly provided. So, my darling, stand ready for the Manila fleece which will deluge you from the product of the Milky Coconut!

You have chosen to leave me all alone without any restraint and I am bound to exercise the privilege this gives me. I shall buy all along and come into the port of New York with a 74 loaded down with French bonnets, kid gloves, garters, balmorals, crinolines, laces and other heavy articles too numerous to mention.

I think I shall be able before the mail closes to fill this sheet but with what material I have not the least idea. When one has nothing to say he is not very choice in selection but naturally takes up the first piece of float wood that is swept towards him by the stream.

Last Tuesday we had the party of the season given by Mr. Schoyer on the birthday of his oldest son by a former Mrs. S[choyer]. I have spoken of Mr. S[choyer] before. He is an American born in Holland and a Jew at least by descent, though he attends our Church now again having gotten over his anger against Mr. Brown, and has promised me \$2,000 for the Church on certain contingencies which I now think will happen. When I arrived his note would have weighed light against \$1,000 silver. Now he has property here which yields 20 to 30,000 per annum. He was in a situation where he had everything to gain, nothing to lose, and he has gained. His son arrived here after Ber had left. We had the band of the 20th and really, for this place, an elegant entertainment,

much and agreeably to my disappointment as heretofore he has had all manner of abominable dishes which required more faith than I ever possessed. You remember my stomach was always remarkably weak. In faith those mince pies of your elegant and accomplished Aunt Girtey distract me at times even yet and I have difficulty in forgiving you for these declarations, "You know Robert how fond you are of them." This passed off well. Had there been any of these even to be avoided dishes I had no little or big wife to thrust them at me. We met at the very respectable home at 10 o'clock and came home at a slightly earlier hour.

I needn't have said I had very little to say. You would soon have found that out and I think I had better not express myself by mailing more.

I do not know that I noticed that part of your letter where you said Dr. Rogers had not called on you. Considering our relations and my absence this is decidedly shameful. But I am innocent of all knowledge of its cause. You have seen everything I have written and of course heard as much as he has all I have said. Perhaps he does not like you as well as I do, which is all right and I by no means object. I rather think you or Sue must be the Jonah. I should like to know only for curiosity however.

But I must now close this letter. I cannot continue on another sheet. I might discourse on certain subjects with Sue but you do not favor these abstract philosophical disquisitions. I shall therefore commence with the conclusions.

First, as usual, asking you to present my kind regards to all friends and my love to all those to whom you think you can spare any of that valuable commodity. If convinced that it increases by giving, give a large slice highly spiced as becomes an article coming from the East, which will sojourn for a day to be perfumed by Ceylon's spicy breezes and will pass for days along the shores of Araby the Blest.⁴⁵⁹ I suppose Ber needs no perfume and is no longer extravagant in that direction. He should be well soaked. There will be a good quarter to practice economy.

Mr. Portman is here for me to sign dispatches and take them and my letters to the mail.

With an additional store of love for Charles and Abby and family and with kisses for you, my darling wife, and dear Charlie, and dear Sue, and Big Bertie, and regards to General G[ansevoort] and Aunt Sue and Uncle J[acob] H. and all. Ever yours my dear wife,

Robt. H. Pruyn



No. 28 Kanagawa, September 29 1864

⁴⁵⁹ A reference to *Paradise Lost: The Fourth Book* by John Milton.

My Beloved Wife,

You will not receive by this mail a very large packet. The *Edith Rose* for San Francisco, daily expected here from Shanghai, will probably bear you a more acceptable one which will reach you probably as early, perhaps earlier than this. So I shall make less effort to overcome the lassitude which affects me, occasioned by a severe attack last Sabbath of a cold or colic pain similar to that which Ber will remember I had for a day or so in Yedo. On Monday I sent for Dr. Vedder of the *Jamestown* and a good mustard plaster on the pit of the stomach soon dispersed the pain, but I have dieted most atrociously and I feel weak even now though I have had two good nights' sleep and several fair meals. Sunday night I slept noon till 4 a.m. and the next night not a moment after 3 a.m. I think I will be all right tomorrow as I am very nearly so now. The cold appears to have served one useful purpose: it has swallowed up apparently my catarrhal affection and if this shall prove to have been its effect I shall think the remedy too severe. The weather has been dreadful for nearly two weeks. Rain has poured down in torrents and almost without interruption. It is said much suffering prevails in the interior, river swollen, houses and cattle carried away by the flood, dwellings submerged, people even drowned. Much loss will also be sustained by destruction in part of the rice crop which does not endure so much water so late in the season. The Japanese say they have not for years had so much rain fall at this time of the year in so short a time. We have had at the same time severe storms at sea and one vessel for London wrecked only one day out from this port. The typhoon season has not passed and we are yet exposed to those monsters any day. One steamer which arrived here a few days ago had all her lights put out and boats carried away. Another put back after being absent some days with her [damage] knocked from their beds. But a beautiful country like this should be defended by the winds and the wars. The last great invasion from China was scattered by a terrible storm which sent all the ships to the bottom or reeling away from these shores and Japan of course was protected by its divinities.⁴⁶⁰ The Chinese have never had courage to repeat the attempt. It no doubt in some seasons is an exceedingly dangerous coast. The currents are both rapid and treacherous and steamers alone can safely navigate those seas.

You can well believe this slight attack of sickness made me most dreadful homesick. I do not know but that was the worst part of my disease. At first I feared I would have that inflammation of the serous membrane you will remember I had some seven years ago. But the pain was not so spasmodic and I felt [damage] though it continued for many hours steady and severe.

Yesterday was pleasant and I walked out. Today the rain has reappeared and I have

⁴⁶⁰ RHP refers to the unsuccessful Mongol invasions of Japan in 1274 and 1281.

been housed again. I hope for a bright sky and warm sun tomorrow though I expect to stay in the house waiting till the mail closes at 4 o'clock.

I could not muster courage to write till this evening and I fear you will scarcely be able to read this. I shall add a page or two on business tonight and hope I shall be able to more than fulfill my expectations tomorrow.

Meanwhile good night, my darling, with love to the dear children and all at home from husband, father, and brother,
Robt. H. Pruyn



No. 28 Continued Kanagawa, September 30 1864

My Beloved,

It is a dismal day again. Rain, rain, rain, in torrents and without cessation. I had a good night's rest and think a fair day would have made Robert himself again. But it is enough to make a well man sick. The dampness is so thorough and penetrating in Japan. Leather is often mildewed in one night so as to be unrecognizable. Everything is damp. The bed you lie in, the clothes you have on, the very chairs on which you sit. The moisture sticks to the sides of the houses and shows itself driven fairly through the side to which the wind blows on the inner surface of the walls in the shape of huge patches of wet plaster.

A part of the fleet is back from Chosiu's dominions, having destroyed his batteries, thrown into the sea his shot and shell, blown up his magazines and carried away his guns. I hope to be able to send details in a few days. I now know the extent of liability for charter of *Takiang*, a little less than \$11,400. I had agreed in case of loss that the government would pay for her \$75,000 Mexicans here. She has been sold to the Japanese for \$108,000 and \$3,000 paid, the balance to be paid when delivered up.⁴⁶¹ This will prove I did not make a very hard bargain for the government. She did well under the command of Lieutenant Pearson of the *Jamestown*. The Parrott gun put on board from the *Jamestown* was so admirably handled as to excite universal admiration and Lieutenant Pearson received the special written thanks of the admiral. My two small wars have been conducted with economy and have ended in glory. I hope now to be a man of peace!

Could you see all the documents you would see for yourself how necessary my action has been. It will be thoroughly approved by the President. The last mail brought the

⁴⁶¹ See <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1864p3/d503>

British Minister orders not to use navy against the Tycoon or any princes. These orders were based on a letter from myself to Sir R[utherford] A[cock]. My views were most fully endorsed and Earl Russell said the British government adopted as its policy the views so moderately and ably expressed by the American Minister, and yet to show how unwise it is to fetter in the slightest degree a minister at this distance, my views as then expressed are in entire harmony with our recent action. I mentioned it was our duty to be moderate, forbearing etc., and to sustain the Tycoon. And that is what we have done. I believe he would have been hurled from power if we had not crushed the hostile party. We have had conferences with the government since the affair and it is highly gratified. The Tycoon and 21 Daimios are now to proceed against Chosiu. We have 70 of his big guns, some weighing 7 tons and 11 with bore and he may be beaten and yet I think, attacked in his own territories, he will fight the Japanese bravely in their peculiar style. His defense against the combined fleet was very weak. He could not bring his guns to heave on the light squadron which flanked his batteries. His men fought those who were landed with rifles, match lock guns and even bows and arrows, but their resistance was feeble. The *Takiang* had a large 32 pounder bronze gun assigned her, now on the *Jamestown* to be taken home (weighing nearly 3 tons).

I have some of Chosiu's paper money for my dear Charlie, some payable in money, some in money or rice, which will go by *Edith Rose*. Chosiu agreed to pay all the expenses of the expedition to be priced by the ministers and to pay such indemnities as they might prescribe, never to rebuild his batteries or remount his guns and that the Straits should always remain open to foreign ships. We have given the Tycoon the alternative of paying these for Chosiu or to give us a port at that place for trade. We all expect to go to Yedo in a few days with the fleet as soon as admiral Kuper gets here with his squadron. None of his ships but the one first sent up have made their appearance yet.

I am sorry to have to say the *Jamestown* has several cases of smallpox. One man has died. We have the sick ashore on the U.S. Naval lot.

The last mail brought orders to the British Minister to discontinue receiving *itzabus* in exchange for dollars according to agreement made by the Japanese government with him and Mr. Harris. Let Ber take his pencil and show what that involves. He knows what was allowed each legation and can give you the figures. I have received no orders as yet. But as Earl Russell's decision will probably be made known to all the governments we all expect the same orders. Then there will be trouble. Prices for all articles of consumption have advanced largely and this mission will not be a very lucrative one, if the dollar is largely depreciated and prices still advance. The merchants shared to a large extent in the same privilege, they paying rents and duties at the same rate. It was only when the large fleet arrived and became stationary that the amount allowed officials weight for weight was in excess of the dollars paid by merchants at the rate. This will not affect me much as I expect exchange will be made for me yearly as

long as I stay. I may possibly lose a few months and perhaps not any. My letters do not come so rapidly. They are not sent via Marseilles.

The large water color painting which was sent via San Francisco was placed at the bottom of the box amongst the paper, of which a number of sheets and perhaps newspapers etc. were placed over it to keep the boxes from rubbing it. This is my recollection. And I now repeat once for all you will have to examine very minutely before throwing away what appears only waste matter or some valuable articles will disappear. I always have tried to make available every place. So inside of different articles surrounded by cotton and paper to secure them I have stowed away a large number of articles, mostly small ones.

I will send you about 3 pounds of sewing silk, nearly all black. I fear I sent some of an inferior quality last time. I did not examine the pound last brought to me but packed it at once. Mrs. Fisher however thinks it was all first quality. This is. I hope the voracious Baby will now be satisfied. I shall now stop the supplies. I hope also to send some more lily bulbs and plants if we can get them in such order as to be likely to go safe so early in the fall. This long continued rain may not have allowed the bulbs to dry. I hope you had an opportunity of seeing some of the first varieties. My grape vines from China will come along later in the fall, perhaps not till January. I suppose my order will be executed as Mr. Meadows the British Consul promised to see to it.

I think I told you in my last letter that I had been paid for the *Pembroke* affair \$11,200. I think I shall within 20 days be paid the only remaining claim, which is unadjusted \$20,000 for the outrages committed here. Then all will be smooth sailing, only Chosiu's matters left. I have reason to be very grateful for my success, unsupported as I have been by squadrons and guns. The *Jamestown* is scarcely to be named. She can scarcely move on the seas. Has been aground once and when she left here at the time the *Alabama* was said to be at Amoy. She was nearly wrecked, being almost unmanageable and in a strong current. I pray God may give me wisdom and strength to close up well. The approval of my own government has been generous and full and when Earl Russell's dispatches are published the ministers here will open their eyes. Sir R[utherford] shared them to me confidentially saying I told you my government would like your letter. I continue on excellent terms with all my colleagues. We are in entire harmony both personally and in political action which is both pleasant and safe. And I can see nothing likely to arise which will mar my comfort or usefulness until I may be enabled, life and health permitting, to leave this place and turn gladly homewards. Even such a trifling touch of sickness as I have now had makes me thoroughly homesick.

I have only one dispatch⁴⁶² by this mail as Portman is also under the weather, literally so, having a severe cold. He has now left and will in a few minutes see this and the

⁴⁶² See <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1864p3/d500>

dispatch mailed. Ber, Sue, and Charlie will wait for their letters by *Edith Rose* which left Shanghae the 22nd and should be here shortly. I cannot do more than fill this sheet without the risk of losing the mail and I have nothing special to say which will not equally interest all. I love now to think of the gunboat on the way here. I told some of the governors of Japan on Wednesday I expected to go home on leave of absence as soon as it arrives. They were much worried and hoped I was not intending to leave as I now understood Japan so well. Perhaps it is better for them, according to the ideas of some, that I should not understand it so well. I think however they will regret my leaving and will hope for my return which will depend on you and on myself. We will at present only think of the return home. The subsequent banishment can wait many months.

I hope you all continue in good health, that both Ber and Charlie are vigorously engaged in study and that you are snugly heated with a prospect of early peace and restoration of order. I see there is a special income tax to pay. All right. The government must be sustained if it takes half or all we have. We cannot have a divided country and the Union must and will triumph.

I suppose the Works must be doing well and give Charles all the money he wants, whatever he needs for his individual aid he must take. If he have any left he must pay it. If needful, let him draw from the Works or from my own funds. See how largely I have been able to meet payments from the mere increase on remittances, and have been highly favored in this respect, but reverse this state of things and pay debts and see what loss will arise. Therefore it is I say to Charles use my funds if you owe anything, do not risk being called on when the war closes. I suppose however he has nothing which can possibly annoy him on his property and suppose he has nothing whatever to meet. I did not know but what he owed for the Hudson St. property he had improved. I suppose he has paid for the Hudson Park House. If not let him do it from me, if he cannot spare his share.

And now, my darling, I will close this letter. I suppose you will not receive it as early as those I hope to send via San Francisco. I am keeping all my dispatches with quarterly accounts etc. for that route. It costs the government so much less and will reach probably as soon. I suppose even nearly by the time you will have seen telegrams sent forward by the *Delaware* which left September 3, as the government may publish them. At all events you will have been satisfied that in a few days I was then safe and well.

You will please give my love to Charles and Abby and family and with kisses and love to yourself and Sue and big Ber and little Charlie a good share of love and for yourself an overflowing measure.

I hope to be able to send some photographs of Chosiu's traitors. Beato is on the flagship which cannot be absent much longer.

Our Church is still favored. Two sailors wish to join on Sabbath if their ship remains in port.

My writing is getting worse and I am afraid illegible.

I shall therefore close with regards and love to all from your dear husband, my precious wife, may God bless and keep you all.

Robt. H. Pruyn



No. 29 Kanagawa, October 10 1864

My Beloved Wife,

The steamer *Rona* arrived here last evening from Hakodate and will leave tomorrow for Shanghae connecting with the French mail, affording an opportunity scarce ever presented as no steamer has yet been employed to connect with the French line which will terminate at Shanghae till next summer.

I am happy to say my cold has disappeared. Notwithstanding the severe pain which accompanied it for a few hours, it has not proved an unwelcome visitor, as it induced my catarrh to depart with it. And my nose is now in a peaceful condition, its tissues being restored apparently to a healthful condition and the neighborhood is no longer disturbed by the sonorous blasts with which I was wont at not infrequent intervals to awaken its echoes. This is sufficiently poetical for a nasty cold in the head.

Last Wednesday morning we went up to Yedo, four ministers and 11 ships of war. The *Jamestown*, being in quarantine in consequence of smallpox on board, did not go. So the British steamer *Argus* was very kindly placed at my disposal by the British admiral. We remained till Saturday afternoon, only the Dutch Consul General going on shore to live, the other ministers living on ship. Our meeting the first day with the Gorogio was only preliminary as they did not wish to discuss the subjects we presented in the presence of all the governors with them. So it was arranged that the British minister and myself should meet them next day at 12 o'clock and have a confidential interview with them and such few high officers as they might select, the other ministers to come at the close of our conference for the purpose of introducing the naval and other officers who accompanied us to Yedo. I never saw the Gorogio so pleasant nor so animated. They promised all we asked. We have a written agreement by which they engage to assume and pay all indemnities which we may ask of Chosiu as they propose to deprive him of his territories. If the amount agreed on in Paris is to be taken as the standard, this will give the U.S. say \$150,000 for indemnities and for expenses say \$20,000. They also undertake to try and get from the Mikado the ratification of the treaties. This is precisely what I advised our government two years ago was essential to peace and quiet in Japan. Of course we claim that our treaties are rightfully made, but we insist on this so as to

reserve all pretense for disturbances and to prevent the authority of the Mikado from being brought in conflict with that of the Tycoon. This is no small triumph for me. Great Britain then declined asking it. But all the ministers now occupy my ground. Commissioners are to meet up at the end of the week to agree on all details. This will give me a busy week as the *Edith Rose* leaves for San Francisco on the 15th and the British mail on the 18th. It is impossible to say now how much I will be able to write as we must have conferences with each other before meeting the Japanese commissioners and all the papers connected with our recent conferences must be prepared for our respective governments and copies of some of them exchanged with each other, which we have already begun to do. I have received since I began this sheet a copy of a letter addressed by Sir Rutherford to the Tycoon and drafted letters to him and the French minister to accompany copies of my letter to the Tycoon. I omitted to say we each prepared a letter giving him good and strong advice and handed same to the Gorogio for presentation to him. A very unusual course which we thought justified by the grave situation of affairs. The prospect of such heavy work makes me more anxious to get a few lines off by this opportunity.

Sir Rutherford has given me a copy of that part of the dispatch of Earl Russell referring to my letter. It reads thus, "There is another course of policy which [appears] preferable either to precipitating hostilities, or to abandonment of the rights we have acquired by our treaties. This course of policy appears to be in conformity with the views so moderately and carefully expressed by the Minister of the United States. This policy consists in 1. Giving every encouragement and support to such of the Tycoon's ministers and such of the Daimios as are favorable to foreign trade and thus lead to the ultimate weakening of the feudal system and the protectionist theory of Japan etc., etc., etc., etc."⁴⁶³

I think, my darling, things are rapidly assuming such shape as will enable me very shortly, before spring, to leave Japan, with everything settled and as much honor gained as if I stayed many years more. I have reason to hope there will be a season of comparative repose, for some four years at least. The hostile Daimios, with Chosiu's fate before them, will scarcely dare run the risk of destruction. We passed the site of Chosiu's chief *yashiki* in Yedo. It is levelled with the ground and not a piece of timber as large even as a cane remained on it. Twenty one Daimios are ordered to march against him and now that he is down numbers will be found ready to kick him. He has shown more courage than disaction. Had he succeeded he would have been a hero and been actually worshipped as a God. But now he is a common enemy and will, unless he beats off the Tycoon and his numerous followers, soon be landless and homeless.

The ships which were left at the straits returned last evening and this morning and

⁴⁶³ See <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1864p3/d501>

on one of the them I have now read a note saying the *Gokaro*⁴⁶⁴ or Chief Officer of Chosiu has come up to confer with the ministers. We can safely do nothing in his favor. We have no alternative but to stand by the government and the government will crush him if they can. No doubt the government, when it can do so safely, obstructs trade and would drive us away if they could. But we are here by virtue of treaties made with this government and to sustain our position we must stand by them as long as they preserve such a decent exterior as will enable us to do so.

This is miserable paper but it is the best I can get that will not be too heavy.

I think I have written as much of a political character as you will care to read. You will be able to judge now of our position.

I note what you say as to the poor choice of linen at Hong Kong. A dozen shirts like these at home sold for \$56 per dozen. Could be bought there for \$20, but not as well made. But what then if gold is as now? The \$20 could buy a bill for £5 ⅓ which would net in currency in the U.S. more than \$60. By the way, I see you must have made large preparations for paying taxes. Have you reflected that what I have sent home has already paid the tax? On any income over \$600 I have paid the requisite tax and it is this surplus I send. In estimating your receipts therefore you must bear this in mind. It appears to me our currency must be more depreciated if the war continue much longer and I fear its result particularly on the ship money. I think we individually have enough in government stocks, and when you draw it appears the safest way would be that of scattering investments and putting more in Central Railroad and other dividend paying roads. Banks may be great losers by bankruptcy of merchants etc. and by continued depreciation of currency. Do not understand me as not wishing to have even more than our full share in sustaining the government. I mean it may not be judicious to have all those and if I understand rightly, you have for us a very heavy sum invested in government securities. I pray my fears may prove unreasonable and that by vigorous taxation and continued success the crisis may be arrested. Should Grant and Sherman succeed we may reasonably expect a speedy close of this dreadful war. How much you now know, that is concealed from us, and will not reach us for two long tedious months.

On the 3rd instant I received your letters of July 17 and 24th bringing me the enclosure and glad news of your continued health and pictures of great home life.

I was very glad to receive the photograph of the gunboat so long delayed as to make the Japanese government I fear think it is a myth. I feel now very anxious to leave, more today than ever, and I hope the advent of the thing itself will not be much longer delayed. I know of nothing now which can then delay my return.

Of course when extraordinary causes growing out of the war unite with those

⁴⁶⁴ Gokarō 御家老. A Daimyō would have two *gokarō*—one in Edo, and one in the home domain.

ordinarily at work, great changes and sorrows must fill each semimonthly sheet. Frank's imprisonment,⁴⁶⁵ Mr. Herrick's death,⁴⁶⁶ and those of our old people following thick and fast around you are not pleasant subjects to send off on a long journey to one so far distant and so long absent. It hope he will survive his imprisonment which, hard as it may be, can scarcely be as dangerous as continued exposure on the front of Grant's army. So we will believe all is for the best.

It certainly does not follow, should Mr. Lincoln not be reelected, that my mission in Japan must of necessity close. Still whether elected or not, and I conclude there is no doubt of his success, it will be by my act and not by that of the government it will close. The idea that I will stay as long as I can, entertained by some, is not well founded as you know. My mission does not close with the going out of the administration. No time whatever is fixed in my commission.

Still you are mistaken in supposing I could have got away much earlier had the commission for the ships not been undertaken. It has so happened though I did not expect any such thing, that the political situation would have prevented it. Had my trunk

⁴⁶⁵ In her letters of July 1864, JALP reports that RHP's brother Frank has been taken prisoner by the Confederacy. For two months she wrote that they did not have word of where he was being held, then on September 12 1864 she wrote, "Just as we were going to dinner our doorbell rang and I was standing in the hall. When the servant opened the door I saw Gus and went forward as a person was with him who proved to be Frank. But so changed dear Robert I should not have recognized him had he been alone. He looked to me like a worn out man of seventy. After resting a short time he went to Mrs. Kirk's and again to New York in the evening to meet his wife for whom he had telegraphed from New York to come from Washington. He has had a hard experience of Southern hospitality. I wrote you he had been taken prisoner the day Lewis Morris was killed. He says he was taken down to Georgia where he was confined with some hundreds in the jail yard with no shelter but that made by their blankets and afterwards taken to Charleston where he has been confined until he was sent to the hospital with fearful dysentery. The diet was so poor that he ran down each day and he says being conscious he could not live long as he was, he would make an effort to secure a parole if not an exchange. The physician of the hospital was willing to see his petition presented although giving him no hope exchange. Unexpectedly a few days afterwards he received his parole to come North for one month, and then if he could effect an exchange with a Major of the Rebel Army who is confined on Johnson Island he would be free, if not he should report himself at Charleston on the 1st day of October. This will explain to you dear Robert why he came up to Albany instead of going to see his wife. Time was so precious to him and he had so much to accomplish in thirty days withal so feeble. He saw Judge Harris, Mr. Weed, Governor Seymour and Dr. Vanderpoel. I have just sent to him Dr. V's strong letter to the President. He was Frank's family physician. I feel, dear Robert, if he is not successful with this aid I shall be tempted to make a personal appeal myself to Mr. Seward for aid." RHP Papers, B2F5.

⁴⁶⁶ Edmund Scudder Herrick died July 22 1864.

been packed ready for my start, I must have remained or returned without having it in my power to say affairs were in such condition as to make it proper for me to leave. I had no reason to anticipate such a condition of our relations. And I can now for the first time venture to hope that a few weeks will suffice to place affairs on as stable and friendly a basis as is possible in such a country as this.

I am trying to get the double deutzia but it is difficult. I hope I shall succeed. Mr. Hogg last year obtained two but has tried without avail this year. He asks me if he succeed in getting some for me not to have them put in market to compete with his. I shall send the small yellow lilies and the large mountain species. I suppose by this time you have seen some specimens. I am glad the grape vines succeed.

You need not be careful in preserving your Chinese sweetmeats. More must already be on their way. They were to have left in May or June.

I shall bear in mind your order for bussells [*sic*]⁴⁶⁷ and for gloves.

I do not think I will find those elegant small boxes serviceable to any great extent as presents. They are far too costly. I dare not say how much till I see you. They charged for one of the very small ones 270 *itzabus* which would yield over \$300 home, though I did not then know it.

Charlie's letter to which you refer giving statement of taxes etc. has not reached me, nor has a copy of *Littell's* for more than a month. I am therefore without a copy of his reply to "Brief." I see Ber thinks he entered too much into particulars. As a general rule it is safe to write as little as possible.

We have very beautiful weather now, far more seasonable than the dark cold gloomy days which ushered in the month. The air is now balmy and the skies bright, much such a day as we often have in April or May, which impression is heightened by the fact that it looks here like continual spring. Everything is so fresh and green.

Trade has been very dull. Large quantities of tea, more than is wanted, are in the market but of silk, which constitutes the great bulk in value of export, only some 700 bales have come in where last year we had 7,000. The Gorogio has promised the restrictions should be reversed. Should they act with good faith there will be a very heavy business as the silk crop of Italy has failed. I succeeded in getting an order for the delivery of many sheets of eggs of the silk worm, 30,000 sheets with 100,000 eggs to each sheet. These are much wanted in Italy by the government as the Japanese worm is the only one imported which will thrive there. It is late in the season but I hope they will reach Italy in good order. The price is as high as \$1 each sheet.

I shall only fill this sheet. Perhaps after all, the letter may go on in the British mail which will carry what I hope to write at the close of the week in addition to what I send via California. Nor shall I write either to Ber, Charlie, or Sue. Their letters will not be

⁴⁶⁷ Perhaps RHP meant "bustles."

far from this and may even reach Albany first. I meet Sir Rutherford in half an hour to compare and sign the memorandum of what took place at our conference. One account says the steamer will be detained till 12 o'clock but it is not worthwhile with two opportunities so near at hand to run any risk. I shall therefore enclose it at once to Russell & Co. to forward.

I really was not aware my letters were any shorter than when I was in Yedo. Still here I am more frequently interrupted and for longer time. There, my guests if needful went out riding with Kip or Ber etc. and I was left to go on with my business or correspondence. Here I am sure of no hour. I see those who call and excuse myself when necessary as soon as I can. My servants cannot always say who wishes to see me and I find it safer to receive the call however vexatious it may prove to be and though exceedingly ill timed.

I am much pleased to hear the Church debt is provided for and most heartily pleased at the thoughtful provision for Dr. Wyckoff, which it could have been shameful not to have done. I hope our Church has not forgotten the propriety of doing the same for Dr. Clark. Those living on fixed salaries must be cramped if paid in a currency so greatly depreciated. At least \$1,000 extra should be paid to Dr. C[lark] and yet I suppose many of our people not in business can ill afford it. Those in business and not dependent on incomes charge for what they make or sell prices to meet the changes in the currency. I do not like a specie currency here. Imagine making a deposit here of \$25,000. It requires a cart and half dozen coolies, a China man walking behind to guard the 6 huge boxes of Mexican dollars. 220 *itzabus* now buy \$100 Mexican and the dollar is expected to go down more. If it do, it will make a large difference to me, even for the four months which I only expect to draw. I hope to be under way at least as early as February. And yet inconvenient as is a metallic currency what a blessing it would be if our country had it! Give us peace however and we will soon recover, so great is the elasticity of our people and so boundless our resources.

I am surprised Ber has not taken a horseback ride. I supposed he would not only have done so but persuaded you and Sue to see whether you had forgotten my valuable lessons.

I cannot bear the idea that you stayed at home this entire summer and hope you had a few weeks' country air. I wish you had selected Sharon.

You will bear in mind all I have written on business matters, giving advice and making suggestions, is based upon what I know at the time of writing and of course subject to be greatly modified by the changed condition of the currency when my letters reach you. You must be the judge therefore whether it is best to draw or not and of the best investments when drawn. I only make suggestions for your consideration to be decided in the light of your better knowledge. This is particularly true of what I wrote by the two last mails.

And now, my dear wife, I must close. I should be very willing to continue but do hope I shall be able to give you even this week's letters which will fully satisfy you, though this may fail to do so.

To all who remember me I always desire kindly to be remembered. And as usual my love to Charles and Abby and family, also to Townsend and Betsy.

For yourself and Sue and Ber and Charlie most ample love and flowing kisses. I cannot tell you how I long to give them in person. At times I wish to be off at once, then again I sober down and go on discharging the usual routine of duty, but yet counting months and weeks and even days. The time of my continued residence I hope is rapidly closing up. Nearly a year has passed since Ber left. It appears as yesterday and yet at times like an age.

Adieu dear wife and children and friends. God preserve and keep you and me and grant us an early reunion of father, mother, children, sisters, brothers, friends.

Robt. H. Pruyn



No. 30 Kanagawa, October 11 1864

I send off, my beloved wife, this day a letter which I hope will reach the French mail and thus be in your hands as early as this which will at the close of the week circle the earth in an opposite direction.

Yesterday afternoon I had in company with the British minister a conference with two envoys who had been brought here by the vessels of the fleet left for a season to guard the Straits. I enclose as a curiosity Chosiu's letter to me signed with his own hand and sealed with his own seal. They came to beg off paying the indemnities promised. This is thorough Japanese. It was easy to promise while the fleet was on the spot and the purpose was even then formed to beg off [damage] answer, which though now satisfactory to his envoys may involve measures which will result in his total ruin. The Tycoon's government has assumed their payment. We look to him indifferent though anxious spectators of what he may do. We have no hostility now against your Prince. We wish him no harm. But all that is to be done or omitted rests with the Tycoon. If his course shall be lenient he will deserve your praise, if otherwise we are not subject to your censure. We have no responsibility or share in the matter.

This Prince may be able to withstand and defeat the force sent against him by the Tycoon. If not, his ruin is quite certain.

An edict has been [damaged] by the Mikado, equivalent to the bulls of excommunication issued in ancient times by the Popes, absolving his subjects from their

allegiance, rendering void all his treaties and alliances with his fellows, depriving him of honor and lands and even of his name and saying he may go where he pleases. Probably the effect here is the same as then, to excommunicate and disgrace all who adhere to him in his fallen fortunes, placing all under the ban of a power which if sustained by the Daimios is as pitiless and hard as that under which John of England succumbed which interposed a ban to baptism and marriage, made the Churches deserted and left the dead unburied in consecrate ground.

[damage] I wrote you that the Tycoon had agreed to pay all indemnities and expenses we might claim of Chosiu, the government expecting to repay itself by confiscation of his estates. Commissioners will meet us early next week to agree on the several amounts. If the sum agreed to be paid to France by the embassy is to be the standard, the U.S. will receive upwards of \$150,000. When we left Yedo, Mr. Van Polsbroek remained, intending to stay there till some repairs in his house at this place are completed. Intelligence reaches us this afternoon, but no letters as yet from him, that his legation was attacked last night. None of the inmates or foreign guards were injured. Two of the assailants are said to have been killed and six of the Tycoon's guard wounded, of whom one is expected to die. It is of no political consequence. Probably some drunken two-sworded men, who would have attacked Japanese had no foreigner been in Yedo.

As an offset some sailors were riding previously through the town this evening and one of the horses kicked and killed a Japanese woman. I am happy to say they were not from the *Jamestown*. Fisher says none of her men were on leave today. It is a great mercy we have so few accidents of this kind. The sailors come on shore by turns after days of confinement on ship board and they become wild with liquor. Those who take a fancy to a ride of course ride furiously, endangering not only life and limb of themselves but of all who chance to be in their vicinity. I heard on good authority that one small liquor store made on one day last week \$250 profit. [damage] is only a sample of what at least a dozen similar establishments do. We have 52 ships in harbor of probably 6,000 or 7,000 seamen and soldiers and they afford a rich harvest to the rum sellers. Half of the 20th and 67th regiments are Irish. The marines are generally English.

No new cases of smallpox have occurred on the *Jamestown*. Three of those who had it have died, but the fatal cases are generally complicated with other diseases. Sailors expose themselves very much and are very regardless of health. And many are so weakened and shattered as to give way to an ordinary attack which those who are more prudent would escape with care and safety.

The weather continues unusually fine. And the fields are [damage] and green as with us in early spring. The bay was as smooth and placid last evening as you ever saw our river and the moonlight resting lovingly on it made it resplendent as burnished silver.

[October] 18th

The band is passing at the head of the 20th regiment and such a band. 57 pieces in all in the fifes and drums. The brass and reed instruments number 30 and the drums and fifes 21. It is a very superior band. Their marching music is grand and their operative music on Saturdays is very fine. We had none last Saturday as the regiment is in mourning for Captain Vereker.⁴⁶⁸ The bands of the *Euryalus* and *Sémiramis* are very inferior to this of the 20th and do not often make their appearance ashore now. We thought them very excellent till this arrived. [damaged] is the way of the world we do not think much of things that have had their day.

I am glad to hear the Church debt is entirely paid. It is none too soon. With the termination of the war we must expect that our people will for a season at least be very careful in money matters.

Could not the General get Barnard's house for you? Kidd might be a good one to approach Mr. Baker. He may possibly regret his bargain or perhaps think he sees a better one. Let Kidd by all means sound him, or one of the Strongs. It may be well to keep track of those houses. Sometimes you do not know of the intention of selling till the sale is announced. I should be willing to pay Mr. B[aker] in advance.

I send by the *Edith Rose* to Mr. Brooks for shipment to you a box containing sundry articles of which I will send a list as soon as I know what I succeed in making room for, also a box containing almost two hundred bulbs of the *Lilium auratum* (which Mr. Hogg thinks is what Dingwall meant by what you call the *Lilium amea*.) It is the large mountain lily, white with yellow spots and very fragrant, of which I feared I had by mistake only sent a few bulbs last year, also about 50 bulbs of the large white I think, 50 of the small yellow lily and 50 more of a small variety. These Mr. H[ogg] has been obliged to pack in earth as no buckwheat chaff can now be found. I may, unless Mr. H[ogg] says it is unnecessary, ask Brooks to have them repacked as the earth weighs heavy. But if the box were [damaged] the cost would be nearly as much as the freight would be charged by measurement. I have a variegated honeysuckle and other plants and may have a double deutzia if the man gets back in time from Yedo and if we have moss to pack them in which is difficult. We hope another vessel may offer if we fail in getting these ready for this ship. I will make a short memorandum of what I shall finally succeed in getting on board. The Japan articles I hope will reach you seasonably for New Year's and I shall try and provide so you may give a small remembrance at least to any small friends. I will have a large and beautiful bamboo house for my dear boy Charlie, also some thirty figures all well dressed, such as should have them wearing two swords, showing the dresses of different [damage] brides, doctors, priests, barbers, carpenters,

⁴⁶⁸ Adolphus Edward Prendergast Vereker (1833-1864), 2nd Battalion, 20th Regiment of Foot, died of smallpox on October 12.

the blind ⁴⁶⁹ who go about with staff ready to shampoo those who wish a delightful friction, which I have been so exceedingly delicate as not to be able to bring myself to submit to. I hope also to send an elegant porcelain vase, perhaps two or three of the half dozen on hand and yet unpacked, some ivories, more balls, flowers, etc., etc.

Perhaps two or three dresses for you and Sue and last but not least 3 pounds of sewing silk, or 3½, I forget which. Let Baby rejoice!

I enclose two diagrams showing the position of the ships at Simonoseki and expect to send a few photographs taken by Beato who accompanied the fleet for that [damage]⁴⁷⁰ These will make a fine addition to your Japanese views. I will also send in the box three specimens of lead ore from Yesso,⁴⁷¹ which you can divide or send entire to Professor Cook for the Natural History Society. I see, by the way, he did not describe rightly the coral I sent of which I hope he sent you a share as desired by me. It is like spun glass, but is genuine coral.

There are a few excellent carvings in ivory which I have purchased since the *Delaware* sailed. I have now so many (a couple hundred yet boxed up in Walsh, Hall & Co.'s godown) that I shall hereafter only purchase occasionally a choice one. Perhaps prices may fall now that the fleet (British) and Minister etc. will draw no more *itzabus*. Prices were kept up by the foolish purchases, always hurried, made by naval officers and seamen.

October [damage]

Yesterday afternoon, at the very hour the mail for Europe was closing, the mail of August 26th arrived bringing me your letters of July 27 and August 3. You may be quite sure that with two outgoing mails on my hands at the same time and the papers and letters by *Ida D. Rogers* as well as this last arrival I have been far from idle. I rarely sleep well the night after the arrival of a mail. Last evening I was employed till 11 o'clock in writing to Mr. Brooks and I was wide awake before daylight, though so thoroughly tired that I did not rise till near 7 o'clock.

Then as usual yesterday two governors arrived from Yedo who have engaged to meet me at 10 o'clock. From the enclosed letter of Sir Rutherford [damage] see he invites a meeting of the ministers at 11 o'clock preparatory to a meeting fixed at 2 o'clock with commissioners who have come down from Yedo to arrange what amount

⁴⁶⁹ RHP left a blank space here, as if he meant to fill it in later with the Japanese term, but he never did.

⁴⁷⁰ See <https://perma.cc/MH45-JUQX>

⁴⁷¹ Yesso is an alternate name for Hokkaidō. Mining for gold and silver in Hokkaidō peaked in the late 19th century. The lead ore that RHP mentions here likely had veins of one of those precious metals.

of indemnity etc. shall be paid. Then also a box arrived from Canton which contains sundry Chinese articles I may be able to send by *Edith Rose* if I can get them from the steamer this morning and find time to make up a parcel. As the mail closes this afternoon you will see I require a clear head today and more hours than an ordinary day possesses.

You will see from Sir Rutherford's letter that he is called home to give information about this country which means in plain English he is [damage] leaving the question what shall we do with him open until he can give explanations. The government became alarmed at the tenor of his dispatches. They were afraid of the Peace Party as a general election is approaching and so he will be home ready for the meeting of Parliament and to be offered as a sacrifice if needful.

I feel sure however a great triumph awaits him. There is nothing so successful as success and the ministry will be obliged by public sentiment to make ample atonement to one who has aided so much in gratifying the national pride and also in the improvement of business. Silk is a great want now in Europe and we have let it out from Japan.

[damage] enclose the extra of the [*Japan*] *Commercial News* giving an account of the actions at Simonoseki. I think our government and people will approve of my share in this. It would have been a great shame if our flag had not been there. I have agreed to pay (Captain Price, signing contract with me) \$9,500 in gold for charter and I have already paid besides over \$1,800 Mexican here for coal. I also agreed to pay \$75,000 Mexican here if the vessel was destroyed. It has since been sold for \$108,000 to the Japanese. I think it will prove I made a careful contract and one which will hold water and stand fine. I feel I have done right so let anyone fire away who chooses and thinks he can get any sport or profit by this pastime.

I was saying we have let silk out. From July [damage] to September 13 only 631 bales of silk had been exported. The government had kept it back. We are now getting as many bales as that often in one day. The steamer this day took 1,700 bales, worth nearly one million and I estimate we will have over 7,000 bales by December 1, perhaps many more.

Sir Rutherford expects to leave here the last of November. Consul Winchester, a very excellent man, will act as *charge d'affaires* until Colonel Neale, the secretary who is sick, arrives, which will probably be long after I leave, which I by no means regret. (By the way among the photographs I send you will find one of the ministers' secretaries and consuls. See how much like Mr. Willets, Consul Lindau of Switzerland, just above Colonel Neale, looks.)

4 o'clock p.m.

Have now returned from the meeting with my colleagues and the Japanese consulate.

We have agreed on a convention⁴⁷² to be prepared for signatures by which the Japanese government agree to pay the 4 powers the U.S., Great Britain, France and the Netherlands \$3,000,000 in 6 equal payments for indemnities for outrages by Chosiu on the flag of the U.S., France and the Netherlands and for the expenses of the four powers, the four powers to have the option of taking in lieu of money another port on the Inland Sea and if money is paid to divide the same as they shall agree at home. This will give the U.S. over \$400,000 perhaps \$500,000 unless the Tycoon and the above governments agree to the opening of a port instead of the money. Do you not think I can afford to leave others together in Japan whatever of honor may be left? [damage] Tycoon chooses to pay money let him pay liberally.

I fear I shall not be able to send by this ship any of the contents of my Canton box as I have not been able to get it from the ship. If I do, I will send it by Mr. Hammond of Salem Massachusetts who will take for me the package of photographs. If I shall get it before the mail closes I will add a line and send overland his full address.

I feel quite tired and have no time to write to Abby or Charles as I proposed to do. The *Ida D. Rogers* will leave within a month perhaps earlier. I have [damage] Mr. Brooks to telegraph you on the arrival of the *I[da D.] R[ogers]* in my name telling you of my good health.

I would again advise you open my box very carefully. You will find enough toys and silk to satisfy you. If you have any left I may get up a Christmas tree when I get home. But use them freely. They are sent for that purpose.

I have called your attention in my last letter to you via Marseilles to some of the elegant articles in it. Look at the three lacquer saucers with fish ornaments. I send a few finger bowls and plates lacquered as a sample. Others will go forward hereafter more beautiful still. There is a box (chow chow) presented to me by Chosiu and some very handsome curios, three elegant porcelain vases, the blue one superb, bamboo houses for Charlie and Abby, eggs in large numbers, caps with braided bamboo, 100 fans which roll up and when are, notch round a center and keep in shape by the cross frame and then are fastened by the silk cord wound round the handles, dresses for you and Sue to be selected by you, a piece of crepe and some silk embroidered scarves for you, Sue and Abby etc., etc. Some lining silk white, 2 pieces of goods made [damage] paper, these are [damage] faintly striped blue flowers by the peck. I fear the box is too large to go over the isthmus at any decent price. I also send some lily bulbs and plants, two of the famous double deutzias which you will bear in mind are not to come in competition with Mr. Hogg's brother. The yellow lily you describe as coming out [in the garden in Albany in July] is common here and I fear you were much disappointed. These I send now will all be handsome, no common ones in the parcel. But I hope you have had already an

⁴⁷² See <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1864p3/d504>

opportunity of seeing the choice ones, especially the large white one spotted with yellow, very elegant.

But, my dear wife, I will now close and seal up these packages and get all ready for the mail which Mr. Fisher has agreed to bring up here in a few minutes and close. Should the ship be detained I can add a few lines by Mr. Hammond.

I have been obliged to prepare two additional dispatches since 4 o'clock but I am able to send with less hurry than usual. I hope this and the boxes will reach you by Christmas or New Year's in hope of which I wish you, my precious wife, and my darling children and dear Sue and Charles and Abby and [damage] Townsend and all a Happy New Year. May I be permitted to wish all of you in person a Happy New Year when 1866 shall come in its infant strength.

May God bless and keep you all is the prayer of your loving husband,
Robt. H. Pruyn



No. 31 Kanagawa, October 15 1864

My Beloved Wife,

Owing to the detention of the *Edith Rose*, as is usual with vessels bound to San Francisco, this letter will leave this port before my package numbered 30, though it may not reach you quite as early.

We have our usual variety. You may hear exaggerated accounts of an attack on the Dutch Legation at Yedo. When we left Mr. Van Polsbroek remained behind. His house here was undergoing repairs and he wished to give some of his friends an opportunity to see the city. One of the guards having taken offence against one of his officers, made an attack on him as he was going the rounds, an affray ensued in which one was killed and six wounded, two dangerously, all Japanese. Polsbroek of course thinks the object was to reach him. He had some marines. Not one participated in the fight, either because it was far from the building or because the Dutch were asleep or at all events slow. And none of the ministers are inclined to attach any political importance to the affair.

Then again some British and French sailors had a row yesterday, in which a British merchant who interfered received a sound flogging. Others came to the rescue and arrested the aggressors and took them to the French Consul who very summarily refused to entertain the case on the ground it was a drunken frolic. As one of the complainants was the head of the principal banking firm here this was a highhanded decision, but the French Consul in point either of ability or character is not much.

Still another, some officers of the *Jamestown* had employed a Japanese boat to take them to the ship and placed on it our flag. While they were absent some British naval officers with more wine than wit in their possession arrived and demanded of the Japanese boatmen to be taken on board the *Perseus*. On their insisting they pulled down the flag and took violent possession. Three officers of the *Jamestown* immediately went to the *Perseus* and left their cards, saying no course was open but an ample apology or a meeting. The result was fine. British officers went the next day to the *Jamestown* and apologized saying they were groggy and were not aware of what they were doing.

This is enough for one week in a quiet, out of the way place.

I was to have dined with the officers of the 20th regiment on Wednesday, but the dinner which is for the ministers and admirals has been postponed one week in consequence of the death from smallpox of the Honorable Captain Vereker as he was called, one of the popular officers of the regiment. I am not aware I even saw him. He had the ophthalmia when he first came and I believe has had a variety of other diseases of which delirium tremens is said to have had a share. Lady Alcock's cards are out for a reception on Thursday, which I wish was over. Her rooms are small with unusually low ceilings, the lowest of any in town as the building was not designed to be used as a dwelling house and of course with so many officers feeling bound to be present there will be a jam.

17th October

It is now 11 o'clock and though I rose at 7 I have been unable till now to resume writing. Every hour except for breakfast and family worship has been taken up by the large box which will go on board the ship tomorrow bound for California. Though I have had Skaso and a merchant to do the labor I find that they look on while I work. Their idea of what will answer is so vague. Everything is handled carefully in Japan and as boxes are only carried and not subjected to the hard usage of the ship, railroad, and cartage I fear to touch their work. The box is much larger than I had wished, but it will contain hundreds of toys, which I will more particularly notice in my letter by the *Edith Rose*. As this may probably reach you first I advise that you unpack very carefully as some of the boxes have loose covers, so that it must be unpacked slowly piece by piece. You have no idea how much time and labor it has cost me. As it will probably reach you before New Year you will have a vast number of trifles for children which will be sufficient almost for a Christmas tree for the Sabbath School if you wish. You may distribute freely. There are numbers of the eggs you admire. So much. Frogs that float on water, fish with blunt magnetic hooks, boxes of square charcoal looking substance which held in a flame and becoming a live coal show on one side flowers and figures of various colors. Be careful some may possibly be not very decent, though I have seen none such. Nearly 100 cups, bamboo coverings, two elegant bamboo houses, one for

my dear Charlie for New Year and one for Little Abby or Eddie as you and Aunt Abby see best. Then in thirty pieces the Daimios, brides, doctors, priests etc., etc., in full dress are represented. A dress for you and Sue and Happy New Year, and one surplus one. I tried to get one for Abby but could not in time. Will next time. Two pieces of goods, white with a pale blue stripe, are made entirely of paper and as such are curiosities. Coins for Charlie some 150 years old, all marked, and a big bundle of Chinese medals, charms, some 50 silver *itzabus*, old and better made than those now issued. Some pieces of lead ore for National History Society, Rutgers College, a large quantity of Japanese paper money brought me from the Inland Sea by Mr. Van Reed⁴⁷³ who went in the *Takiang*, a box containing three of the most perfect lacquer saucers, with fish on, which I wish kept. Some elegant ivory carvings also to be kept. One piece white crepe. Several of lining silk, a few specimens of vases most perfect, old, very rare, and of colors which cannot now be made. Also a large sum of Japanese toys and hundreds of packages of the flowers which open in water. I could not get, as there was none in town, any of the large flowers, birds, etc. and only send what I had on hand. Then there are some fans which roll up and when you wish to use them the paper is reversed in its frame, so as to have the frame run crosswise, the silk cord is wound once round the handle and you have a fan, 100 hundred of those. It would take a sheet to give you a list. Suffice it to say I put in what I had on hand of suitable size and I hope to fill the box. I also have sent some notes and letters addressed to me, I scarcely know what, some of which I may destroy and some keep. I had no time to select, but sent all that was on my table in the envelopes to get them out of the way. I had a good supply of umbrellas but could not find room for them. I send for Ber a lot of spears etc. which will serve to show what Daimios have carved before them, some one distinguishing shape, some another. The embroideries are for you and Sue and one for Abby for New Year. They can be used for screens or for cushions for sofa. There are 7 in all. You may give one to Aunt Sue and Anna and Alida and Mary, either or all, or keep what you think best. There are a few nuts marked not good to eat of an elegant tree known in science as the *salisburia*, called by the Japanese *eesbo*.⁴⁷⁴ I have succeeded in getting through Mr. Hogg two of the double deutzia which will be in a box with some other shrubs, a variegated honeysuckle, also a box containing lily bulbs, the mountain or *lilium auratum*, the pure white and the small yellow. So there will be three boxes to go forward. You will have to excuse the appearance of the letter I shall send this day as my hand is not steadier by reason of my morning employ. I hope you will be able to decipher it.

⁴⁷³ Eugene Van Reed (183-1873) was an American who arrived in Japan in 1859. He worked a number of jobs, including clerk in the American Consulate and representative for Augustine Heard & Co.

⁴⁷⁴ This is the ginko tree, or in Japanese *icbo* 銀杏.

We had an elegant day yesterday and just 50 present at our service at the consulate, 11 ladies and one little girl and we had some good hearty singing, the best we have yet had and a fair sermon by Mr. Thompson on the mere excellent name of the savior.

In the morning at 8 o'clock the *Ida D. Rogers* made its appearance, having left San Francisco August 24 and bringing therefore as late news from home as we shall have by next mail overland. The news of Farragut passing Fort Morgan, Mobile,⁴⁷⁵ came by this, nothing more from Sherman or from Grant of any special interest. I had only a letter press copy of Charles' [Lansing] letter of March from the attaché side and one from Messrs. C. W. Brooks & Co. of a business nature and announcing that the boxes sent by that vessel in July had been sent forward to you August 8th. It appears the *Emily Banning* had not arrived when she left though 46 days out. I hope the ship is safe. She carried letters from me but I really forget what else I sent. I did not charge my mind with it as my memory is failing.

I will also send a package of photographs.

My letters will be, I fear, all in a jumble, one mail closing this afternoon, the other tomorrow afternoon and I scarcely remember what I have written and none of the packages. Sue's and Ber's are sealed and I forgot to say there is very handsome box sent me by Chosiu and a letter accrediting his envoys to me which I have appropriated as worth keeping. I sent his ambassador an opera glass and a large pocket book for paper etc. Ber will know how the bamboo houses go together. They are three storied. I also send a few porcelain toilet articles.

I have now attended to the nailing up of the box and should be no [sic] tormented to examine small boxes which I have sent far right and left so as to have as little waste room as possible. A Japanese foot is three inches more than ours. Consequently my already too liberal box has assumed proportions which will I fear make the freight via Panama rather heavy. But it must if possible reach you by Christmas. And in anticipation of it I am thinking Charlie at least will have big eyes as one after another its wonders meet his eyes.

I send the government one monster dispatch tomorrow containing 12 large enclosures.⁴⁷⁶ I suppose it could cost via Marseilles over 150 dollars postage besides from other dispatches. I have sent Brooks for investment over \$3,000 subject to your orders as is all he has. I submit to you the whole matter of investment, only saying it appears to me New York Central and other railroad stocks are desirable if currency continue so depreciated and New York Central is at 135 and Cleveland, Columbus and

⁴⁷⁵ This was the Battle of Mobile Bay, fought on August 5 184. The victorious Union fleet was commanded by Rear Admiral David G. Farragut, whose order of "Damn the torpedoes! Full speed ahead!" became famous.

⁴⁷⁶ See <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1864p3/d501>.

Cincinnati 160 or thereabouts. Perhaps 3rd Avenue might now be got at a rate which could stand me in payable in gold not much over 100 or at farthest 120.

But I have written so much of late under the head of business that I fear you will think I trouble myself too much with it. My object however is to relieve you and Charles as much as possible from responsibility and consequent uneasiness by indicating in what direction from the lights I now possess I shall be satisfied with your disposal of any surplus funds, not but what I will approve most heartily, whatever you may do and whatever may be the result, as we are in a position where sailing without chart we may land we know not where. If the war terminate soon, or later, provided taxes are made heavy and we do not roll up an unmanageable debt, all will end well. You will have a very large sum in currency at your disposal and you will have an opportunity perhaps to get some choice real estate. I should like a good store on Broadway or State Street. Don't lose sight of your old residence opposite the Delavan. That for xxx sake I particularly covet, for you. But enough of this.

And yet getting the mind fixed on so inexhaustible a subject is hard to scratch off in a moment.

Trade is improving. Since our operation at Simonoseki more silk has come in than in the previous four months. When you bear in mind that it is worth some \$550 a parcel of 133 pounds, you will see it foots up heavily. The government before that prevented its coming in, as it now admits. This was a sop to the hostile party. The policy was to say we cannot drive foreigners away. But to show we sympathize with you in your hostility, we do all we can we prohibit trade.

I do not know as I have told you Chosiu's palaces at Yedo are levelled to the ground. This was done after the result at the Straits could have been known overland at Yedo. Since then the Tycoon has found himself strong enough to order the Daimios once more to reside half the year at Yedo and he and the Mikado have deprived Chosiu of his names and titles. Matsudaira (Everlasting) Daizen no Daiboo he is no longer but he is excommunicated, his followers realigned from their allegiance and if they can they will take away his territories unless in the end his brother Daimios shall relent and not wish his destruction. It is difficult to say what will take place here and we have no genuine prophets in the 19th century.

The fleet will soon scatter. One of the British and one Dutch ships have already gone and now the British admiral gets no more *itzabus*. I imagine he will not care to lie idle another year in port. He has reaped a good harvest, probably more than saved his entire pay. The French admiral is daily expecting his successor. Sir Rutherford says he wishes to be relieved now. The French minister is rheumatic and has been sick much of the time he has been here, though he has not as yet said he wished to return, though it is so reported.

You must be in the midst of exciting times at home unless our armies have met with

very decided success. Then of course Lincoln will walk over the course. But we are dreadful party critters in New York particularly and I suppose Albany is of course as usual Democratic. I am glad I am absent from that part of the excitement though I would like particularly, if it be favorable, to know all you do of this war. This weary waiting is dreadful, though we are not distressed by so many false reports as must keep our home circles on the alarm or elevate their hopes only to strike them down.

Here we believe nothing about the thousand and one threats we hear and so we do not feel disturbed. The papers are a nuisance and entitled to no credit whatever and they receive the credence they deserve.

Sometimes I fear that the government, fearing some pirate like the *Tallahassee*, may wish the gunboat, though I should be pained to think of her anywhere else than Japanwards and I hope with Townsend on board. I hope also our affairs will all be settled before January. I hope to get not only payment for the *Takiang* but a good round sum for the affair of the *Wyoming* and *Monitor* at least \$100,000 perhaps \$150,000. Then I think I shall have done enough for the United States in Japan.

I wish however before I leave if possible to go to Nagasaki and Hakodate but fear I shall not as no steamer appears to be ordered here and the *Jamestown* is worthless except to lie still, float our flag and defend this place.

You must bear in mind when you receive this how busily I have been engaged at Yedo and here and that I am providing for two mails at once and when you see the box I think you will count it as a good letter. My mind is on every part of its contents and it should suffice for the mail without my letter. It will speak for itself as well as for me.

You will receive as many worthless articles as you can dispose and may set up a toy shop as well as a dry goods store with former packages. All that I keep is a blood blister on my hand caused by excessive industry and a hammer unfortunately harder than my finger.

Captain Price praises the coffee at Manila so much that I have ordered two or three bags sent you direct. So eat, drink, and be merry till I get home, then we will commence a sober prosaic life.

I think I may as well close this letter particularly as the mail will close in half an hour and whatever I can add to my San Francisco letter which I hope will reach you first I shall not fail to write.

In that and in this all I wish you and Sue and my boys a Happy New Year as well as Baby and Charles and Abby and Townsend and the little ones of that family and of the other families and the general and Aunt Sue and Augustus and Mary, Alida and all my other relatives and friends a Happy thrice Happy New Year marked by the return of peace and the restoration of the Union, my return home, by health prosperity and the favor of God.

May all those blessings and many more come this year, and may our reunion find us

all in good health ready for a life of happiness because of usefulness and of love to our Father in Heaven.

May God bless you my dear wife children sisters and brothers, and friends is the prayer of
Robt. H. Pruyn

I have to see Portman about dispatch.



No. 32 Kanagawa, October 29 1864

My Beloved,

Each successive mail causes me to count more anxiously the shortened days which I venture to remember as the mission of my sojourn in this country, which delightful as it is in many respects, lacks the one essential, home. Lady Alcock regrets her departure. Her husband probably has the same feeling, though he does not express it. Probably if you were here, as I am under no necessity as he is to return, we might conclude to remain. I feel no disposition to do so, though by no means insensible to the pecuniary sacrifice involved. The more time rolls by, the less weight does this consideration have, as fortunately we are in a situation which renders it unnecessary for us to be controlled by any such consideration. So I shall hope and patiently visit the happy moment when homeward bound Fusiyama shall hide its beautiful summit below the horizon.

As I have already advised you, the condition of affairs in Japan will probably interpose no obstacle to my leaving and I can imagine no difficulty which can arise, health and life permitting. This morning early I woke with the impression that I distinctly heard you calling twice "Robert, Robert!" So you see even in my dreams, which by the way are infrequent, home is not lost sight of. I feel more nervous now as the time draws near. Before this I have felt it to be my duty to put thoughts which could only annoy and wishes which I knew could not be realized aside. Now I delight to invite them because I hope their realization is at hand.

The dinner of the 20th regiment given to the ministers and admirals which was delayed in consequence of the death of Captain Vereker of that regiment came off last Wednesday. It was very pleasant and very quiet. The last was particularly noticeable. No toasts and of course no noisy ones, no speeches. Everything was conducted as it would have been at any gentleman's private table. The dinner was handsomely served, no hard drinking, no urging to take wine. The decanters were quietly passed and each guest left to do as he pleased. At the close of the dinner the officer of the evening said "the Queen"

which was repeated at the other end of the table and that was all. No one filled his glass or raised a glass to his lips, nor did it receive any notice whatever.

The next evening Lady Alcock had a reception. I did not go. It was dark and rained a little but before the few who were there left the rain fell in torrents and the wind blew as it can blow in Japan. Only 5 ladies were present whereas thirty could probably have been there on a pleasant evening. We counted of all grades about forty in Yokohama. When we arrived in 1862 there were less than five. But the place is rapidly growing in population and improving in appearance. All the buildings are made of stone or plaster and are fireproof and some have pretensions even to architectural beauty.

Lady Alcock, when their return was first announced, told me she was delighted. But she has either changed her mind or occasionally conceals her true feelings. Since then she tells Mrs. Fisher she regrets it much and such has been her language to others. I can well believe this is her honest feeling. Her husband, if he can get a better place, may be benefitted. But it is quite as likely he may be sent back here or unemployed. At home she sinks into comparative obscurity. Here she is the only minister's wife. And she has been quite a Queen, holding levees, dining nowhere but at home and in all respects aping royalty. Will you come and take her place or shall the throne be left vacant? At no other place could she be so elevated and if she return she will have all the trouble over again of getting her house in order. She is quite agreeable but far from popular with most persons. I do not know whether the British use soft soap on others. They obviously like it when applied to themselves. It is now determined that Sir Rutherford will leave December 17th, though his departure may possibly be postponed till the next mail. When he before left he was at war with all the merchants. He is more fortunate now having acted more in their interest.

I have finished my letters to Sue, Ber, and Charlie, which I hope this nasty paper will permit of your reading and now on this last day of the month having already finished my second sheet to you I return to this vacant page.

I hope you will forgive my reference in the last page of my letter to Sue and that your feelings of regret at the loss of so brilliant a mission may not prove too intolerable. Fortunately the weather will be cool when it arrives and you may be invigorated to sustain the reminiscences it will call up. I consider myself fortunate however to be away. So your wrath must descend on Baby, the sly one, who could not resist black eyes, white teeth, flowing hair, a brilliant smile and elegant figure by moonlight. I shall never forgive her for not putting her scissors in him. Then Gail and Judith might have had an Albanian Counterpart and the daughters of Israel down on South Pearl Street might have sung her praises in good high Dutch if innocent of all knowledge of Hebrew.

There I have filled this page. Now after reading my 2nd sheet you may jump over to what follows.

October 30

This is a beautiful Sabbath day. I was awoken at 6 o'clock, the band of the 20th while yet in the distance aroused me. As the regiment came from morning prayers I was out and commenced my walk on the Bund. This is about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile long and I walked over its length ten times yesterday, besides rolling three games of bowls. This morning before breakfast I passed over it four times and again going to and returning from Church. Mr. Brown gave us as good a sermon as I have ever heard on the text which asserts that he who is faithful in that which is least will be so in that which is much. It would have been pronounced a scholarly and elegant sermon in any pulpit. In the adjoining room old Mr. Horton, one of our members, was lying very dangerously sick of inflammation of the lungs. He is an old sailor and had been indulging too freely for several days. This and his age of 84 years makes Dr. Vedder fear he will not recover. We had a congregation of 50. Every American lady except Mrs. Hepburn present. She fraternizes with our English friends. She is too much of a Presbyterian to attend a Dutch Church and so habitually worships in the established Church and prays for the Queen and the royal family instead of the President which is all right as she sympathizes with secession. If, as I believe, this is correct we have two of that stripe here as Mrs. Ballagh is an avowed secessionist and of course a very foolish one. While she may have a right to her opinions, she would show wisdom in keeping them to herself.

Last Sabbath morning I rose at 6 o'clock and went to the British chapel to attend the service held for the 20th regiment. The consular chaplain there read. Mr. Bailey officiated, reading the passages in regular sing song fashion with very little appearance of devotion and afterwards reading a sermon of about 15 minutes from a printed book, of this I am quite sure. The chapel was quite full, at least half of the battalion being in attendance and part of the 67th regiment, the company of artillery and engineers. The other half of the battalion and the majority of the 67th are Catholics and attend service at 10 o'clock. The Protestants of the marines attend at the chapel in another hour. The music was good, instrumental, parts of the band and some of the men and quite a number of the drummer boys singing quite well. The Catholic Church must be crowded several times each day as there are over 1,200 French soldiers and sailors and I should think more than that number of Catholics in the English fleet and army here. While the British rules allow of Catholics attending their own services, all Protestants must attend the Church service on ship board. There are now four Catholic priests here including the fat one of the *Sémiramis*. The others do not by their looks speak well of Japanese good living. There is still another priest, the Abbe Cachon Mermet,⁴⁷⁷ who does not

⁴⁷⁷ Eugène-Emmanuel Mermet-Cachon (10 September 1828 – 14 March 1889), was a French priest and Roman Catholic missionary in Bakumatsu period Japan, who served as interpreter for

officiate but is attached to the legation as interpreter. He is a splendid Japanese scholar and also is the head of the Catholic mission here, the Abbe Gerard. I am told by the Abbe Mermet that it is true that a small Catholic village still exists near Yedo. But he adds to what I had already heard, the extraordinary statement that they are sent from town into the country as decoys to hunt out others and are compelled to preserve Catholic sites for that purpose. I suppose therefore they cannot be very good Catholics and their ceremonies may be different. Still as there is such a wonderful agreement between Catholics and Buddhists in dress, altars, ceremonies, incense, candles, bells, images, nuns, mendicant friars, beads, shaven heads, flowers on the altars, separate shrines in the same temple and numerous other things they may after all, if they are really Catholics here, lost little of their original rites and ceremonies.

[October] 31st

As the mail closes today I hesitated this morning to take my morning walk, but finally concluded I would probably be able to write more even in less time than I should if I omitted my exercise. So after a good cold water bath I was on the Bund before 7 o'clock. It is now 8 o'clock and I have added a few lines to my last dispatch. The day is before me subject to its usual contingencies though I am not aware of any business I shall have except to compare and sign my dispatches and enclosures.

I am not sure whether I was able, in my No. 30 which left for San Francisco this day after No. 31 went westward, I was able to give you the contents of the convention concluded with the Japanese government in settlement of the Simonoseki affair. It commences by reciting that the hostile acts of Nagato were assuming such formidable proportions as to make it impossible for the Tycoon faithfully to observe the treaties. This was inserted on my suggestion. And you will see such a solemn declaration by the Tycoon's government fully vindicates the action of the Treaty Powers, corroborating as it does our opinion that we would have had no governor in Japan had we not fortified the crumbling power of the Tycoon. We had described Nagato by his full name and titles Matsudaira Daizen no Daiboo Prince of Nagato and Suwo. The first and last names Matsudaira and Daiboo conferred by the Mikado and Tycoon have been taken away. So Matsudaira which means "everlasting" and "Daiboo" which means something equally significant⁴⁷⁸ were struck out and our friend left with diminished names. His

and advisor to French diplomatic missions, playing crucial role in the development of a special relationship between the French government and the Tokugawa shogunate.

⁴⁷⁸ The title Matsudaira Daizen no Daibu is written 松平大膳大夫. RHP is confused about the meanings. The surname name Matsudaira did not mean "everlasting," but it was conferred by (and subsequently taken away by) the Tokugawa Shogunate. "Daibu" indicates a noble rank in the imperial court, and can be translated as "lord steward."

titles cannot be taken away I presume till they get possession of his provinces. The amount agreed to be paid is \$3,000,000. If paid, the larger portion must of course go to Great Britain by which power the work was principally done. Sir Rutherford Alcock and myself had agreed on two millions as the sum to be divided among the powers as follows: Great Britain one million dollars, France \$440,000, Holland \$290,000, the United States \$270,000. The French minister descried this, raised to three millions, and the division left to our governments. I assented to this, provided a memorandum⁴⁷⁹ which I drew was executed showing the basis on which we had made our convention, which was that at least 140,000 should be paid the U.S., France and Holland for indemnities before anything was paid for expenses. This was done. The French Minister thought that the moral support given should be taken into the account. As we had given more of this article than of material support I could not interpose any objection to the principle. So in case the Tycoon does not choose to offer a port as a material compensation, our governments will divide the large sum of \$3,000,000. If he make such offer the governors are at liberty to accept it or insist on payment of the money. Or they may take the port and part of the money. As Sir Rutherford Alcock will be home to act for his government it is possible I may be called on to act on behalf of our government on my return. I give you a copy of the returns annexed to our memorandum showing the entire force of each country.

United States at Simonoseki <i>Takiang</i>	4 guns	58 men
United States at Yokohama <i>Jamestown</i>	21 guns	208 men
[Total]	25 guns	266 men
Great Britain at Yokohama	65	955
Great Britain at Yokohama Land force	14	1295
Simonoseki	164	2850
[Total]	243	5100
France at Simonoseki	64	1155
France at Yokohama		70
		1225
Netherlands at Simonoseki	56	951
Total	388 guns	7542 men

⁴⁷⁹ See <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1864p3/d504>

In answer to the very important query about Miss Mann's dress, I answer I did secure it and it was quite elegant. Has Ber made you believe she herself is elegant? If he has made himself believe it, I can excuse him. You will remember I have told you that I, an inexperienced boy, once thought Hetty something quite a beauty. Forgive me ye Graces! She (not Hetty) and her husband are now living with Mr. and Mrs. Allmand. As I am not inquisitive I do not ask why their room is vacant, but suppose it may be from pecuniary considerations. I am determined never to be inquisitive especially on subjects which do not particularly concern me or mine.

I regret General G[ansevoort] did not join you as he intended at Lebanon. Can you not write with Kitty in persuading him to cross the Atlantic and then accompany him? You and Sue and Ber and Charlie? That would be grand. Could I meet you there. Perhaps the government may wish me as I return to settle on its behalf all the questions which may arise under the Japanese convention, divide the money if that is to be paid, or determine on accepting a part if that shall be thought best. Sir Rutherford will be home to act for his government and it would probably be best I should act for ours. At all events I shall hope you will be there. After the receipt of this you had better enclose all letters to Messrs. Barings London. They will forward me. As soon as I reach the telegraph I will advise them of my movements and your letters will not pass me as I journey hence. They will continue sending to Japan till directed by me to send elsewhere. This plan strikes me as best, if you think so, please adopt it.

I am glad the Church debt is paid. I believe I said so via San Francisco but I continue glad. Perhaps I might have had cross looks when I returned had a mortgage plaster remained on the Church. This must have distressed each Sabbath some of the occupants of our neighboring pews.

You should have received letters between the dates of April 14 and May 14, as I have not failed to write by each mail, twice each month. But as my letters are all numbered you will detect any missing ones.

I write without much effort cheerful and hopeful letters as I rarely feel otherwise. It takes much to make me despond and fortunate it is that this is so, as there is often much which would overwhelm one given to despondency.

What sad breaches have been made in our Church. I certainly did not anticipate so sudden a close of the life of either Mr. [Edmund S.] Herrick or Mr. A[ndrew] D. L[ansing]. The former did not appear very vigorous, but his habits and equable temper were in his favor. Mr. Lansing I thought would live to a ripe old age. I suppose C[harles] V[an] Z[andt] will take his place. The effort he will be called on to make will do him much good.

When I get home I will do something for Edward on condition he goes West. I will give his wife and family a good place to live in where he will have no idlers to use, no harsher word to keep him company. Frank's imprisonment may as you say prove less

dangerous than freedom and action before Richmond. I hope that hot bed of rebellion may now be ours.

With regard to those black thin dresses, you have not overlooked I suppose the white material which you can easily have colored. But I will order a few more black dresses before I leave here.

I shall be obliged to take this letter to the office myself and attach the stamps. Portman has taken my dispatches. We have a scales and he will arrange hereafter so that we can weigh at his house, attach the stamps and send to the office. But in less than an hour the mail closes and I shall be unable to write more than this.

Did you receive a letter written a few weeks ago via Washington? I enclosed one to Governor Seward which was sent forward in the British foreign office bag after the mail closed. I think I referred to this in my letter by the succeeding mail.

I hope I shall be able to secure some better paper before the next mail. It is quite a labor to write on this. Such great care is required and I cannot write with ease or pleasure.

We are expecting a mail in two or three days. A steamer comes in at noon from Shanghai, but brings no news, only letters from that place.

I hope, my darling, this will find you all enjoying more than usual good health. Perhaps in 6 mails I may be able to date from here announcing my day of departure. I hope so. I am now fixing on January or the latest in February. It is a comfort to do so. May it be realized.

Till then I must content myself the best I can.

Meanwhile I send love and good wishes. I do not say Happy New Year. 1865 will be days perhaps weeks old before this reaches.

Love to Charles, Abby, Townsend (who I hope is on the sea) Alida, Mary, Augustus and all, not forgetting Baby against whom I bear no malice for her successful achievement in former years, and with kisses for yourself my dear loving wife.

I am Yours,

Robt. H. Pruyn



No. 33 Kanagawa, November 4 1864

My Beloved Wife,

My last letter left here on the *Nepaul* on the 1st and in the afternoon that steamer was back again in the harbor, having struck on a rock near Plymouth Rock opposite Uraga near the entrance of the bay, on what is known as Ingersoll Patch, a prolongation I believe of the former ledge. This Plymouth Rock I believe has no connection geological

or historical that I know of with our celebrated blarney stone, but is so called because discovered and made known to the shipping world by our sloop of war *Plymouth* of Commodore Perry's squadron. Yedo Bay has been in this manner quite Americanized. We have Plymouth Rock, Saratoga Spit—these are the most dangerous points in the bay—Susquehanna Bay, Perry Island, Webster Island, Goldsborough Inlet, Fillmore Point, Mississippi Bay etc., etc. One of these is named almost daily in my hearing and will always and irrevocably associate our country with this. As the Japanese themselves will and they have already commenced to do so, give these names instead of their own, to these prominent localities.

The *Nepaul* arrived here in a sinking condition and is now beached and divers are at work to repair her sufficiently to reach Shanghae as there are no proper facilities here for such work. Of the 1760 bales of silk worth more than a million dollars only 116 were damaged. The *Island Queen* steamer was fortunately near at hand and aided in getting the ship off the rock. Mail, passengers, and goods were transferred to the *Australian* which left early yesterday and it is hoped will reach Shanghae in time for the mail. It is possible I may be able to get this letter to the French mail as I understand a steamer will leave perhaps tomorrow for Hong Kong with that view though it may be a false report. But it will in that event not be lost as it will be so much prepared for the next regular mail.

November 5

I made little progress yesterday, as you will see, with my letter as I found the report of the sailing of the ship was incorrect, but I now have heard that one of the French war steamers will leave on Friday and will be likely to reach the mail, so that I may after all be able to send a short letter in advance of the regular mail, but I cannot say whether it will be likely to reach you much in advance of the letters I may be able to send by that conveyance. We had a few minutes ago (9 p.m.) a report which has proved incorrect that the mail of September 10th had arrived. It is now due and may arrive as the mail most frequently does on Sunday. It is blowing fearfully and it is one of the nights you feel glad to be ashore. In your inland situation you have little idea of the peaks of the wind. You need to hear its shrill whistling accompanied by the heavy beating of the waves and associated with the ideas of struggling ships and sailors to realize its fearful power. It is by no means a pleasant sound on this dangerous coast and I shall never get accustomed to it.

We have nothing new except that the government has ratified our convention and holds out hopes that the Mikado will ratify the treaties or do some equivalent act as it is impossible for him to take the back track suddenly and unequivocally. He is infallible, and more than that, divine, and he must show no such weakness. I think I told you that the money to be paid under one convention is left to be divided by our governments

and I have written that I could not object to the principle suggested by the French minister that moral support is to be taken into account as we furnished more of that than of material aid. You see I have had the good fortune to make and finish two wars within little over a year. This and the *Wyoming* war have proved what McClellan said he would make his campaign on the peninsula: short, sharp, and decisive. And the Japanese will pay a good round price for both if our governments insist on it, as I suppose they will at least in part.

I hope your letters will arrive before this leaves. It is difficult to find anything now worth writing about. The country is pretty well exhausted. A dull monotony characterizes life and the very vanity of the country is calculated to impart an idea of sameness to the landscape. The camellia is now gradually coming in bloom, the single common variety leading. But as I have before said we have perpetual verdure and flowers. The chrysanthemums are beautiful. There are several varieties which Mr. Hogg says are unknown at home. They grow very large because they pull off all the buds save the one at the end of the stalk. I shall try and send some of these and of other plants by the *Ida D. Rogers* which is expected now to leave at the end of the month. I wish I could send some of their pheasants, gold, silver and copper, the most beautiful birds you ever saw.

I will try and get some more of the black gauze silk, but you have many pieces of the white silk which you can have colored. Silk is increasing very largely in price, some varieties have fully doubled. And this is not a fictitious advance. The Japanese themselves are forced to pay the advance, perhaps not so large an advance however as we pay. The country must grow rich with foreign trade as the imports are very much less than the exports and the balance is of course paid in silver or gold, mostly in silver, though the Japanese are purchasing bar gold perhaps to hoard away as it is less bulky. They have no stocks, railroad or government to invest in but must lay by this solid coin.

I should be delighted if you and Sue could muster courage to meet me in Europe. You of course will see exchange need not frighten you as you will have friends there. You will be able to keep posted and will be able to learn at an early day should I be able to leave as contemplated whether the government will wish me to delay there to settle Japanese matters and if it does it will of course give us a chance for a longer sojourn, though for that matter, that could be arranged so as to suit your convenience and pleasure. I am not entirely selfish in this, as I should be much pleased to have you see Europe. You will therefore bear in mind how short the passage is, a week or ten days, you surely could stand that especially with so much of enjoyment to look forward to, could you not? So I shall not entirely despair of hearing you have succeeded in mustering courage.

At this moment you must be in a state of excitement at home. It appears strange that a presidential election should be in progress and I not even an interested witness

of it. We shall not know who is nominated against President Lincoln till you shall have known the result of the election. Unless something extraordinary has occurred since August I cannot doubt the result. It appears that President Lincoln must be reelected by an almost unanimous vote.⁴⁸⁰ But we will know all this in January or February and meanwhile we must patiently wait, since news comes fast enough. Our last has been of an armistice or peace which I cannot credit, as I could see in former news no indication of that.

November 7

I have time to write a few lines before the mail closes. The day is beautiful and yet cold for Japan. You would scarcely think it so, as we have no frost even at night, though last evening it looked threatening.

Yesterday was our Communion Sabbath. We had only 18 present at that service which was held an hour before the usual time in the afternoon. For this reason and because of some change for a time in the leave of absence granted in the fleet, we had no sailors present, only two officers who are members. Those sailors who were ashore were at Mr. Brown's house but not understanding Japanese, could not learn that we were at Mr. Fisher's house. We had no additions to the Church this time. With the approaching winter and the decreasing interest in political affairs we hope and pray greater seriousness and attention to religion may prevail in the fleet.

This afternoon there is to be a game of cricket, military against civilians, which I propose to attend as I have never seen a game play through, though I have seen a little play occasionally as I chanced to pass the ground. There is a great difference between the English and Americans in this respect. All kinds of sport are contrived by the former. Saturday they are to have had what they call a paper hunt. Provided with a bag containing small shreds of paper, one of the party starts on a tramp or race, across ditches, fences, hedges, etc., wherever he goes and drops papers, those who follow must go. Whenever one of the party gets in advance he drops the paper scraps and the one who comes in first is the victor. They are dressed with leggings, boots etc. so as to be ready for anything and I suppose some of them, the most unambitious, must at times find themselves to go where they would gladly excuse themselves from going. I have not seen one of these races. The one on Saturday did not come off, as the weather was unfavorable but they have had several. I suppose the parties are rewarded by some laughable scenes.

The mail is not yet in. I had hoped I might be able today to acknowledge and answer letters to the middle of August and have news by telegraph up to September. It is now

⁴⁸⁰ Abraham Lincoln carried 22 states out of 25 in the election of 1864. He won 55% of the popular vote.

three weeks since the arrival of the last mail. The one was hastened—this is delayed because the monsoons have changed. It is gratifying to know that the prevalence of the easterly monsoons will hasten your letters and you will probably have less cause for complaint because of delay.

My health continues good, though. I am more subject to slight colds than when exposed to the severe climate of Albany. Whether this is because I am getting older or more careless or because there is necessarily more exposure here I cannot say. My colds are however the old fashioned ones, in the head, and this is welcome because it assumes the old fashioned form, ending in a fever sore, which though beautifying the nose bids fair to leave me without the catarrhal affliction of which I have written as before, this occasionally and at times for weeks in succession, troubling me.

My letters of October exhausted nearly all I had worth noticing and I have filled these pages for no other reason than because an opportunity to send a letter has been given, which I embrace simply to advise you of continued health. This evening we dine with Mr. and Mrs. [William] Marshall, who live presumptuously as your learned nurse Mrs. [Catharine] Goewey once declared you did. Only Mrs. M[arshall] very unselfishly gives an opportunity to many others to live with her in like manner. Ber can tell you all about her. Her husband and sister were with Richardson when killed and Mr. M[arshall] has received £5,000 to heal the wounds then received by harm.

At this time Mr. Portman came in with the announcement that the French mail would not close till Wednesday. So I laid aside my pen as it was a most lovely day and entertained a game of cricket between the military and civilians, which will be completed tomorrow. The military won the first innings by one, but their success was more the result of several accidents or chances than of superior play. Then three games of bowls or nine pins. Then dressed for dinner and now that I am ready write a few lines. Next week we are to have games or foot races principally for the men, with small prizes. Though I suppose some of the officers will have races for themselves or perhaps in some compete with the men. I described these races last year. Some are quite amusing, all unlike any we have. We are far beyond our English friends in all manly sports. We are too engrossed in making money. It would have been far better for us in very many respects had we encouraged such sports. Our baseball clubs have been a good commencement. But that is only one of many ways which our neighbors have of improving the physical system and encouraging sociability. All these sports are characterized by unbroken good nature. The mail is not yet in. And I probably shall add little to this letter as the regular mail will follow so soon. It is probable also business will intervene as I have a meeting tomorrow which will necessitate some dispatches for our consul at Nagasaki. There is some little trouble there about batteries which are supposed to be designed rather to threaten than for the defense of the place. It may be that ignorance more than design has led to their erection, but we are under the necessity of

exercising good vigilance.

I wish you could now have a glimpse of this country. It is gorgeous with flowers. The camellia fringes with scarlet every hill top and gleams from every green valley covert. The dark green leaves form a massive and shining background which fairly reflects the sunlight. No one would call Ireland the green isle after seeing this land. Japan will bear off the pallor of victory from any competition this side of Eden. There is one drawback. You see no beautiful cattle or sheep dotting the landscape. All is still, and dead though beautiful. This a fit emblem of the people. On the surface all looks quiet and pleasant, but moral death is the heritage of the race. The people are children of a large growth. Their amusements and occupations are the veriest trifles, when you pass the boundary of providing food for the body. And even children you know can be cruel by education or nature. So these people are children also in war as well as peace and like the Chinese consider fierce looks and loud noises as engines of war.

When and how the revolution in reserve for them will come is yet a mystery. It may be long pent up and when it breaks spread death and destruction before its accumulated wrath or it may be silent and noiseless and peaceful. But if the latter will be the first of the kind. Generally down trodden races are fierce when the day of retribution comes. And sanguinary struggles may attend the birth of civilization and Christianity here as elsewhere. I see no reason for concluding that this land will have any special exemption from the agencies which have worked elsewhere. If the emblem of Christianity is a cross it has also a sword and one which is not always that of the spirit. Our savior said he did not bring peace but a sword and as God works by human instrumentality, he leaves his instruments the use of their instruments and the harvest is often reaped by the sword instead of the sickle.

Before I wrote this last page the mail arrived (yesterday a.m. the 8th), and I will add now a few more pages as the *Duplex* mail closes this p.m.

November 9

The anniversary of our marriage which you will not fail to remember. Little did we think we should be separated these successive returns of this day. There is the comfort of the prospect that its next return will find us united. May our Heavenly Father grant it.

By the mail yesterday morning your letters to August 23 were received. I am sorry you did not take a carriage with you to Lebanon. My recollection of it is pleasant but you need horses to enjoy that fine country, otherwise you are shut up.

Governor Seward's letter is very satisfactory. I intended to act on that interpretation of his former official letter but it is better to have his own construction especially when of so favorable a character. Now for the gunboat. And then life and health permitting even in this very doubtful country I think I can calculate with tolerable certainty on a

flight for Egypt and I shall not hanker after the flesh pots unless you insist on hearing the mess or a part of it.

You must have had pleasant company at Lebanon. Why could you not content yourselves there longer? You scarcely get generally settled before you are again in flight. I am afraid you are of a less quiet and satisfied disposition than myself. When I get home we will anchor occasionally.

At this time, 11 o'clock a.m., it is 10 o'clock Tuesday evening Albany and you are in the full excitement of presidential returns and perhaps can already tell who is to be President. Or victory may have been so secure for Lincoln by success in battles won as to have enabled him to walk over the course. I shall not trouble myself about this since that all will turn out well. God reigns and he will control wisely and well.

We had later dates yesterday via San Francisco and Shanghae than by the European mail and now learn of Sherman's occupation of Atlanta and have also Stanton's report of a subsequent battle of which we have no details but only the statement that he is said to have cut Hood's army in two. I wish he had bagged it. Grant appears to hold on well and we hope on. It is all we can do. But it is weary waiting.

I will add little more to this as the regular mail will leave so soon.

I suppose Ber and Charlie are now at school. Don't think of sending Charlie to a boarding school. I have had enough of that experience and do not wish to see it repeated. The [Albany] Academy is the place for him and our home.

I thank Sue for her pleasant letters and Ber. They will have a full return next week. Ber will never kill himself by much writing. If he talks as little, he might be able to find occupation as a teacher of women, in silence, provided he does not encounter amatory old maids.

I am sorry Frank is yet a prisoner, but agree with you his exposure would be much greater if won before Richmond.

These anniversaries would be pleasant at home. Here they produce a feeling of loneliness and pointing so steadily homewards stir up one uncomfortably. It is like holding out the cup to Tantalus. I am bound to this rock bound island for a season yet and it is uncomfortable at times even to remember.

I will however bear in mind your commissions in Europe. I propose also leaving table and other linen here and getting a good supply in England. Give me in one of your letters a list of what would be best especially table cloths sizes, etc., etc.

This will be cheaper than to send these home and what I get will be entered free of duty.

And now, very precious wife, farewell. We did not sit so far away how many years ago this day? Kiss my boys for me and Sue and let them reciprocate as I cannot in person.

With love and kind remembrances to all.

I am Yours Ever,
Robt. H. Pruyn



No. 34 Kanagawa, November 16 1864

My Beloved Wife,

I sent you my last short letter by the French mail which it is said has made arrangements to extend its line regularly to this port and will consequently give us 3 mails each month. I shall also have an opportunity to send you another letter by the *Ida D. Rogers* on Saturday which is likely to reach you in advance of this and will therefore receive the preference.

I have nothing of political importance to communicate. When affairs are entirely peaceful, they necessarily must be dull, as we have not the means ordinarily made use of to stir up the public. We have no elections and changes of ministry, excite no notice because we are rarely made acquainted with the causes which have produced the change, however serious may be their character or great their magnitude.

I may be mistaken, but I feel quite sure this government will pay the demands I have made for injuries to Americans at this place, though I have received many letters rephrasing this in more or less driest terms and only ten days ago one accepting the arbitration of the Emperor of Russia as proposed by me in the last resort. I succeeded in obtaining another interview on Saturday which ended in a direct offer to pay the money if I would receive it as if paid for medicine etc. and not as indemnity. This of course was out of the question, but finally it was said, as I had told them, Robertson [who had been wounded in the attack on foreigners in May 1863] had gone home sick, they thought they might pay for his support etc. and that they would see me once more when they thought they should finally arrange it. There is a big spring back of this. They look to my influencing the postponement of the opening of Yedo. I think I will have the control of these slippery gentlemen as long as I remain here. It is now understood that when I leave the Tycoon shall decide whether he will offer another port and it is desired I shall be authorized to meet for the government in Europe. I have not written on this subject officially, but may in a few days and when I do will advise you of the form and extent of the plan. I only allude to it now for the purpose of habituating you to the idea of meeting me. One or two months will suffice to arrange all business matters and we may stay as long as you wish. Charles will no doubt be willing to spare me for such a purpose and you and Sue will have a grand chance of seeing Europe as I will be commissioned specially to England, France, Holland and perhaps for other purposes to

the other Treaty Powers, which will suffice if my position as a minister to Japan shall not do so to attain for us all needful facilities for seeing and enjoying. So put your sea armor on, summon up your fortitude and bring all the family along. Try and induce the General and Aunt Sue to come and bring Kitty and Anna. We will marry them to some Baron Blowingonesoff or Marquis Strongcheese you know. The only difficulty I can foresee is in reference to Ber. You could not of course dispense with his large experience. He would have to act as *pater familias* of course but we might give him daily lessons and he might stay in and study and only act as advisor on grand state occasions or in particular and grand emergencies.

Socially we have the usual round of amusements with very little variety. On Monday I gave a grand entertainment to about 300 people at 2 o'clock p.m. in a large building recently built by Mr. Benson, very handsomely furnished and still unoccupied, room 60 x 40. I had my Yedo top spinners and butterfly man and the band of the 20th regiment stationed outside. The top spinning I have described. But on this occasion a large number of new tricks were performed such as spinning a top on the point of an egg. I was about getting the egg as many supposed it was marble when perhaps intentionally it was suffered to fall and doubts were solved. A top was also set going and placed on the handle of a fan and caused to move till it reached the end when the fan was raised upright and while the top was spinning on the corner the fan was opened and the top made to move till it reached the center, resting on the paper edge alone and moving along that narrow causeway. Then again while the performer was fanning himself a top was spinning on the corner of the fan nearest to him. A top was placed which spinning on a tea cup filled with water and a fountain played up through the spindle. Another top was tied up in a cotton cloth and made to spin 7 minutes by the watch, by moving a fan a few times. Five tops were placed on the corners and center of a small board held in the hand and perfectly at rest and then successively in the order he pointed each was made to spin while the others were at rest. Try and move any object in the center of a board and keep these at the corners from moving and you will be able to understand the difficulty of this. The way in which they invisibly spin the top is to throw it quickly and sharply from the person and following it back catch it in the hand. This they do with very large tops. They spun one top and raised it from the floor on the hand which weighed fifty pounds.

I have left writing for breakfast and since that very needful employment have purchased an ivory cabinet for a little over 100 *itzabus*. It is the only way I have of returning the numberless invitations. Both Sir Rutherford and Lady Alcock have been very polite. It was only last evening I received a note from Sir Rutherford asking me if I were engaged for Friday and if not her ladyship wished to make a party of eight French ministers and myself etc. but for what I am as yet ignorant. I wish to be under no very great obligations without a return and so I sent these words. It was for this reason I

gave my exhibition which cost me about \$100. And I have now sent \$20 for prizes for the soldiers' sports tomorrow. I can fortunately afford to be generous as well as just in this way. My expenses are comparatively light and with all my extravagant purchases of Japanese curios, which I do not deny I am guilty of, I think I may safely say with the razor strop man I shall have something over. But you would laugh if you could see what an endless string of articles is brought to me and what strange ones. Some which are swaddled in silk and handled as tenderly as an unweaned child when disclosed to the view are monstrosities, offending the taste and destitute even of the charm which usefulness might invest them with. I always feel quite sure when this parade is made that it will end this way. Their ideas are so different from ours. But this country beats all others for strange shapes and useless articles. They have no furniture and no ornaments but these trifles which have been treasured for centuries and which now seek the market tempted by the high prices which foreigners pay. But generally the articles purchased by visitors are the cheap ones hastily made for them and which will soon fall to pieces. With few exceptions mine have been selected from the old stock which improve by age. This you will understand better when my large collection reaches you. It will interest you and we will hand it down as an heirloom. I hope the reputation I may have acquired and will yet acquire may be a better order.

I had an opportunity by the French mail to acknowledge the receipt of your letters from Lebanon. It will be full a week before the arrival of the mail of 26 September which will probably bring letters from you till the 16th and October 7th. I wish you could have remained at Lebanon at least two weeks longer. If my life is spared, I shall regulate you when away from home, leaving you as usual in full swing at home. What task masters I will have with Sue to put down her heavy foot on yours when you set yours down!

You will have heard that Georgie Fisher is to proceed to England to enter school. His father and mother did not like to have the family so much separated and that he would be better with his sister. Mr. F[isher] thinks the English schools more thorough. Mary has made marvelous progress. I wish our Charlie could see how far behind he has been left in penmanship and letter writing, which their first specimens were about alike. The secret is Mary labors on each letter as if she were preparing it for exhibition and that is the secret of her success. Not secret either, it is too plain to have that name applied to it though it's usual to do so. Now Charlie must be more careful in what he sends me to Europe unless indeed you and he come and present your bodies' living epistles, which would be far better.

I suppose had it not been for the squabble about the Belgian mission, this would have been increased in rank though not in pay. That I did not care for. Supposing this possible I wrote the government as you state. The contingency has not arisen and when

it does it will be too late for my profit. But it is as well. Few know the difference. And it is of course of more consequence here than in traveling except when at Court.

I have had a very handsome letter from the Swiss minister since he reached home inviting me to visit him as I return. This is a very gratifying termination of a correspondence which in some hands with hotter head than mine, might have been far from pleasant. "All's well that ends well." I am far from being a Job. But I had resolved to keep my temper and I was enabled to do so. I will show you copies of all these letters. They will serve for light reading. I suppose at best two will be published by the British government as Earl Russell has announced here and at Washington that he has adopted my views as his basis for action and Sir Rutherford laughingly says he hopes he will be as much pleased with my last letter. Whether he be or not, the British government will be obliged to rely greatly upon it for its defense and therefore that would be published also in their blue book. I suppose our government will not object either to my letters or my action. Though Governor Seward has written that the President has come to the same conclusion founded on my letter which both governments will before this reaches you, would have seen is perfectly consistent with our apparently inconsistent warlike nation. I think I have written you that the convention made with our governments by the Tycoon, and which has now been ratified by him, sets out with the declaration that the hostile acts of Chosiu would make it impossible for the Tycoon faithfully to observe the treaties. If then our opinions may not be regarded as entitled to weight, the declarations of the Tycoon himself must be received as conclusive, more particularly when embodied in a convention to be read of all men and handed down in history as his solemn testimony in favor of our action.

You see I switch off occasionally on the public road. It is all I have to think of here.

I am happy to hear Ber has not been entirely spoiled by his seclusion with me. And hope, now that he is in the butterfly state having broken the shell in which he was immersed, he will not scorch his (pinions as the *Post* would say) (I say) wings.

I am quite sure that no duty will be charged on what I send home from here of furniture etc. and the same will prove true of all my purchases in Europe which can be put in trunks and no one can be considered unreasonably encumbered with baggage who has traveled around the world and ends with anything under a dozen trunks. I may limit myself to half that number and you will have no occasion ever more to buy anything especially if you conclude to return to Japan with me. Now that all is to be so peaceful here, we are getting quite civilized indeed. Only think of two of my lady acquaintances invited to my exhibition sending excuses that an indisposition (trifling I suppose) prevented their acceptance, etc. But the trifles weighed in the neighborhood of nine pounds each. Small shoes are getting to be in demand here.

In looking over your letter I notice you suggest I might prefer to be at home first and then return with you. As you have Ber for your escort it would save time and travel

if you met me unless the government should first desire me home to receive verbal instructions. This will depend on them and when I write definitively I will ask Governor Seward to advise you of my probable movements.

You will have ample funds without buying exchange. Should you have exhausted your credit with Barings, you can use funds with Mr. Brooks, or you might advise Barings you wished a letter of credit, and they would send you one or give it to you in London. Charles can arrange this for you. I would not be surprised however in this event of the government wishing me to act for it in Europe in Japanese affairs that the President should desire first to see me and give special instructions after having more complete explanations than can be given in a letter, or even many letters.

You are not alone in surprise at our prolonged separation. It has been well for both of us that we did not anticipate it when we separated. How I wish you had come with me!

Unless the white lily spotted with yellow has bloomed you have not yet seen the most beautiful star one, though that which you described is elegant and the one most valued by the Japanese. The one we prize most is the wild variety. I suppose however that somewhere you will have seen all the varieties I sent in bloom.

My silk not only reached you in good time, so far as duty was concerned, but was purchased here just before a very large advance was established. All goods have gone up now very high, both of crepe and silk and probably will advance yet higher. The crepes I sent are all Japanese and are much better than the Chinese crepes. I shall purchase no more except a few thin gauzes, like those you value so much.

I am not sure that I have done so, therefore now acknowledge the receipt of the two photographs of the gunboat, one of which has gone to Yedo and gives great satisfaction. It is all they have as yet to show for a very large sum of money.

You should have thought of taking horses to Lebanon or at least a single family wagon. Then Ber could have had a saddle horse also. You may think my ideas not as moderate as your own. I shall never run in debt but outside of that you must not deny yourself any reasonable and proper justification.

I suppose when you say you sent your "note" to Alfred Van Nostrand for the Church debt you meant to write "check." I take it for granted you would not incur a debt to relieve a debt, especially when it was needless. You are now a business woman and probably always have spare funds for any emergency. You should have them.

There is no sum which I would not pay another than have Ber go in the army. You might rather take him to some English or German university. Do not forget this. He would be allowed to come abroad as attached to my legation and to join me. I will say no more on this point but do not fail to act in advance. And get a substitute before one is needed. Indeed do so now. I shall be pleased to have you do so.

The idea of Charlie in love! His father never was till you took him to play whilst with old Mrs. Stanton and then when the old lady went at him with hammer and tongs you saw what an inexhaustible font of good temper he had and the thing was done. You said I was docile and tame and fit for a domestic menagerie. When I get home we will go and play a great game with her if she is still in the land of the living, unless indeed you are so tired of your bargain that it will stir up painful reminiscences. But I do not wish either Ber or Charlie to want as long as I did. They may not fare as well. You and I would have done better if we had foreseen that morning, when your father insisted on my breakfasting with you in the old house near Maiden Lane, what was in store for us. Had you been gifted with second sight I might have had you in with the breakfast. But you wished to flirt a few years more and the golden opportunity was lost. Had you come down that morning (and I think your face was a little red with towelings) and when you took me by the hand (I am sure I did not take yours) the thing could have been finished. I am sure I could no more have resisted than I was able to refuse taking breakfast. Though I believe I thought I was in love at that time with Maria Gansevoort.⁴⁸¹ But I am sure I was entirely unencumbered and a great bargain. I know as I felt I could have been had cheaper. I think you must have been insensible to modest merit or you would have then and there fallen in love with me. I am sure you did. I think you poured out tea for me and made it extra sweet. Was not your hair in papers? And declarations of love written all over them?

I shall not write more as I prefer to send by the *Ida D. Rogers* and this is only intended to fill the small gap which would be left if I waited till the next mail. If you see the number of lines I crowd in a page you will see my letters are longer than yours. And if you saw the huge folios I am compelled to write or approve you would not be surprised if I was thoroughly tired of the pen. I do not know as I will be fit for anything when I get home.

I am glad to hear what Jane Knower says of Mr. Weed and think it may prove, at least in past tense. He deserves it. He is very charitable. Few give away as much as he does. I know this to be true. I shall be glad to see him again. He has been a true friend of mine and in acts as well as words has proved it. And I shall never forget him. While I feel he is wasting great talents in a manner he will regret and that he is too worldly, great allowance must be made for early habits. I will not say education for he had none. He is wonderfully sagacious and I believe a true lover of his country. I wish there were many more just like him.

⁴⁸¹ There was a Maria Gansevoort (1791-1872) who eventually married Allan Melville (1782-1832), although she was a generation before RHP so it is unclear if this is the same Maria to which he refers here.

My boys and Sue shall have letters by the way of San Francisco, doubtless in advance of this. I begin to count days now and hope I may be able to leave in January. I am ready at a short notice and unless I am subjected to delay by the government could leave in two weeks after the gunboat arrives, earlier if needful. I hope it left in September. Next mail will possibly resolve all doubts. Nothing has been said of its armament but I hope that is all right. I will hope on and I think I will meet with no difficulties.

As usual I desire kind regards to be given to all who remember me. I hope the circle of my friends will not have more breaches made in it. It is unnecessary to particularize outside of our family. I particularly value the remembrance of General G[ansevoort] and should be pleased to have many a social evening with him and Aunt Sue. I hope Henry is safe. I have no fear that he will fail to distinguish himself. I believe in blood. I do not mean in shedding it. I suppose Joseph Parker was the candidate for governor but hope the Republicans have succeeded.⁴⁸² Not that I have great party feeling but the success of the Democratic party would I fear be misunderstood. No patched up peace will endure. The best way is to fight it out now and forever.

With love and kisses, my darling, for you and Sue and my dear boys and with love to Charles, Abby, Townsend, Baby etc., etc. I am yours my beloved, and may God bless you for ever and ever.

Robt. H. Pruyn

This paper cuts through frequently—can you read this letter?



No. 35

Ida D. Rogers

Kanagawa, November 19 1864

My Beloved Wife:

My last letter of the date of the 16th will probably arrive no earlier than this. I then acknowledged the receipt of your letter from Lebanon and one written immediately after your return home. It is probable others of a later date will reach me before the *Ida D. Rogers* leaves, although the time of its departure is as yet uncertain. The captain's fixing the 23rd as the day at one time and then the 26th. And the mail of the 26th of

⁴⁸² The Democratic candidate for governor in the 1864 New York state election was Horatio Seymour, not Joseph Parker. Seymour lost to the Republican (Union) candidate, Reuben E. Fenton.

September is expected at this place not before the first of those days.

I think I shall not give myself much trouble for a few days with official correspondence as Portman unfortunately has the smallpox and his case will probably be a severe one. It only made itself known on the 17th and its course has not as yet attained its height. But Dr. Vedder says he is likely to have it severely. Another case has appeared on the *Jamestown* and it would be very remarkable if others did not follow, although the man was immediately provided for on shore. We have had no frost yet, indeed we never have any which is not drawn out of the ground before noon and the smallpox is a disease which is never absent from Japan.

I of course feel much relief from the fact that I have had the varioloid though aware it is by no means impossible to have it twice or even thrice. Mr. and Mrs. Brown and Reverend Fisher have been vaccinated again. I have no alarm however as I have never failed to be in close proximity to the disease every week I have been in Japan. You jostle it in the streets and find yourself seated beside it, in the stores. The Japanese never think of such a thing as secluding themselves in their houses when sick with it.

One of the ministers has returned from Keoto with the information that the Mikado is now in accord with the Tycoon in his foreign policy, approves of the treaties with foreigners and repeals the ancient laws forbidding them entering Japan and decreeing death as the penalty for such entrance. Though, being still surrounded by the hostile party, he does not make the edicts public until the measures on progress against those shall have terminated successfully. This is not all we desire but it is a step in advance gained and though the Mikado may change his [mind] it will make it more difficult for the Tycoon to go back to the policy of exclusion. It commits him more inevitably to a liberal course.

By the steamer of the middle of December Sir Rutherford will return and before that time we will have a written declaration from the Gorogio of the Mikado's change of views.

The explanation given is perfectly Japanese. The Mikado was never seriously opposed to foreigners and did not contemplate their exclusion and thought the Tycoon would understand his decisions only issued for effect at home and not to be acted. And the Tycoon unfortunately not comprehending this, but believing the Mikado in earnest, felt himself obliged to carry out his orders though fully sensible that he would fail in his effort. What can you do with such a government?

November 20

We have had a very pleasant Sabbath day though part of the time the wind was quite high. Blowing as it did from the south it was not uncomfortable. Looking from my windows I can now see, as indeed can be seen all winter, large trees filled with camellias. The sun is warm as well as bright in the middle of the day and we have little to remind

of approaching and when winter does come it comes as a gentle lamb rather than as a roaring lion.

Mr. Brown preached a very excellent sermon from the text “He Went About Doing Good.” We had our usual congregation, rarely under forty or over 50. This evening, Mr. Fisher not being very well, I have done what he has for several Sabbath evenings: read aloud. He has been reading “Barnes on the Revelations.”⁴⁸³ I have read this evening two sermons preached by Mr. Hobson⁴⁸⁴ at Shanghae, the British chaplain who succeeded Mr. Lowder,⁴⁸⁵ the first husband of Lady Alcock. The volume of sermons was presented by Mr. H[obson] to Mr. Harris. One sermon read by me was of Thanksgiving “Oh that man would praise etc.” The other “Strive to enter in etc.,” the answer to the Jews. This was marked by Mr. Harris as read by him in Yedo in 1859.

Mrs. Brower informed me today that she and Mr. B[rower] may go to San Francisco in the [*Ida D.*] *Rogers*. It is quite a sudden determination. They had thought of going to England in the spring. Now they will, if they embrace this opportunity, return that way. She is not well. Dr. Vedder thinks her blood has been poisoned by the too free use of aloes given by Dr. Simmons. Should they go I will try and send a few articles by them. I shall envy her the privilege of seeing you before I can do so.

But it is a comfort to think that my enjoyment of that happiness may be very little longer postponed. Perhaps I may do as Ber did, find it impossible to stay away as long as I contemplate, though not having, as he has, the prospects of many visits, if he wishes, to Europe. My years will prevent this, and if they do not you are too poor a sailor to expect to accompany me and I shall need good attendance. But first let me get started. I shall leave Hankow and that region behind me and read Ber’s journal. So let him make it very full and very descriptive.

I should like to see Jerusalem but will be guided by health and circumstance. Good traveling companions offering might determine me. But I have no fixed resolve nor shall I have, till the time for turning off arrives. Such a visit should not be made alone. And it is scarce possible suitable companionship will appear at the right moment.

I hope the coming mail will fix the time of the sailing of the ship. Then I may begin to cipher and calculate. I take it for granted it will not go around Cape Horn and it should reach me in one hundred days. I hope they will use coal freely, and come out under full steam and show what she can do. Yet I do not expect she will have left much before October. That I could endure though rather hard to bear, but beyond that will require the exercise of more patience than I can easily command, as it will make me

⁴⁸³ Albert Barnes, *Notes on the New Testament: Explanatory and Practical. Vol. XI: Revelation*, 1851.

⁴⁸⁴ Benjamin Hobson (1816-1873) served with the London Missionary Society in China 1839-1859.

⁴⁸⁵ John Lowder (1811-1849) was an Episcopal Chaplain in Shanghai, China.

have unpleasant weather, hot, when we sail over Pharaoh's chariot wheels, if any of them have made their way down to so low a point in the Red Sea. Still I hope.

Tomorrow I am invited to dine with the wardroom officers of the *Jamestown*. On Tuesday we are to have a grand "Spiritual Concert" at the Catholic Church which the ladies in true French style have been invited "to embellish with their gracious presence." Tuesday evening Sir Rutherford and Lady Alcock, the French minister, and others dine here. Wednesday a grand cricket match. Friday evening a dinner here to several ladies and gentlemen. So you see a very fair provision has been made for enjoyment for the coming week if life and health permit.

November 21

Walking on the Bund this morning I met Mr. [Francis] Hall and was informed by him that the [*Ida D.*] *Rogers* would not leave till the beginning of next week. This morning was beautiful. Fusi-yama covered with its stainless mantle of snow looked so near as to tempt you to walk out to breakfast there. No one measure of its distance would have pronounced it more than three miles distant and yet it is all of seventy. At breakfast we talked of your letter and Ber's about the *Osborne* and cannot understand it as the papers announced the arrival of the *Osborne* (*Hermit* perhaps) on the 23rd or 24 July. I hope you have not lost your tea as there was China as well as Japan tea on board. I shall expect all is right till I hear to the contrary. Ber says the *Osborne* from San Francisco. I do not know of course whether he thinks it sailed from that port or whether it is a slip of his pen. Your bills of loading show she sailed from this port.

Thursday we had garrison sports which I will describe to Charlie and a breakfast and the *dansante* at 5 o'clock, at which I was a looker on. I have an excellent excuse for not dancing. There are no lady wall flowers here on whom you are obliged to be polite. I can easily get off saying I must not stand in the way of the young gentlemen who are crazy for a dance. So I secure the thanks certainly of one side and at times of both. Ladies are partitioned now, giving half a dance and at times even a third to successive partners. Come out here ye sighing damsels, who find none to see, acknowledge and yield to your charms!

I might have been a matchless dancer had I continued the splendid dancing which you witnessed when I was your partner (for one evening) at Mrs. J. T[en] B[roek] Van Vechten's party. I am afraid I have led you many a worse dance since. Never mind we will try and make all that up! I have been a great gander but my feathers are not full now. I need not have my wings cut and my feet will prove tender.

I expect this week to have all questions which particularly affect our country settled with the Japanese government. Those in which we have a common interest are in fair progress and I cannot see how a political storm can gather before I see the shores of Japan sink below the horizon. Peace is now pretty sure to last say three years. When the

time arrives for the opening of the other ports fresh agitation may arise perhaps encouraged by the government to excite sympathy and extract fresh concessions. But those I can philosophize on at a distance if my life be spared.

November 28

You will see, my beloved, the ship is not yet off. I now learn it will go on Thursday and the overland mail leaves the same day. I will therefore only send a few lines that way to preserve the continuity of correspondence.

Assuming that the long delayed gunboat is on its way and will make good speed, I am now preparing to meet at Hong Kong the French steamer *Tigre* to leave that port March 26th, which Mr. Delano⁴⁸⁶ recommends. It is so uncertain that I could possibly be ready before that, that I think it best to fix a day which will probably need no postponement especially as Mr. Delano writes it will be the best season and the best steamer I could take.

Before the arrival of your letter of September 6th I had determined to send home all your linen. It will enter free of duty in all probability. But that is no consideration. I would prefer paying duty to leaving your name here when some day it might figure in some saloon or low tavern. You will please send me to London a list of the sizes you would prefer for table cloths and pillow cases, napkins, etc. as I will bring a good supply. As no duties will be payable, they being introduced instead of those of Mr. Harris which I purchased and will leave behind, I shall bring a good supply. And as beyond question I shall, if my life be spared, bring a large quantity of useless things it may be wise for you to give me a bit of useful ones, otherwise you will be responsible for all my short comings and for all my useless expenditures and must forever hold your peace. I shall also send by Mr. and Mrs. Brower, who I think I wrote some days ago propose leaving in the *Ida D. Rogers* for a visit home, all your and my silver, which I hope will reach you safely. The other articles I shall send will probably explain themselves, except a certain skin or fur, which know ye is called "newborn lambskin." How it is obtained I know not, whether by the Cesarean operation or some other only known to the celestials. I have seen some white ones but a learned Chinese pundit informs me that which I send you is the court color and commands double the price of the white. I believe mine is from some kind of camel or Astrakhan goat or some other rare animal with wool on it. I expect to be swaddled and bundled and furred when I get back to a country acquainted with zoos. And so I am preparing for it. If you have therefore no use for this interesting skin of an animal which never had the sad fate to open its eyes in this dreary world, reserve it for me and you will see how an original aboriginal native of Greenland looks in full continental dress. And please lay in a good supply of blubber and tallow candles

⁴⁸⁶ W. Delano Jr. was a partner in Russell & Co., and lived in Hong Kong.

to enable me to keep up the animal heat.

29th November

Yesterday as usual as a mail is about to close I had a long visit from the governors of Foreign Affairs from Yedo. Their object was to see whether we could not settle the claims made for outrages here without the arbitration of the Emperor of Russia. They finally proposed paying one thousand dollars, which offer they afterwards said was entirely wrong, they should and would give more, but on my saying I would not make any abatement from the sum of twenty thousand dollars, they said they would return to Yedo and report and then would see me again prepared to pay the money or hand me their statement to be laid before the Emperor. It is impossible to say what they will do. But it is most likely they will pay.

A witness has been examined by the British Consul, a boy of twelve years of age, who evidently speaks the truth, though it was at first difficult to make him speak at all.⁴⁸⁷ He says being sent to purchase some oil he was met by two *samurai* (two-sworded men) who asked them the way to Enosima, which he pointed out. On his return he found them sitting in a shed of a tea house at the junction of the road from Daiboote (the great copper image), and that to Kamakura. They had their hands on their swords and warned him away as there was danger. He immediately passed two foreigners, one riding some feet in advance of the other. The men walked out and assaulted the first, cutting him with their swords. This was Lieutenant [John] Bird, who was first cut on the knee by a blow severing the knee joint. He fell partly from his horse which rushed ahead. They then attacked Major B[aldwin]. The boy, frightened, hid away in a thick copse and did not see what followed and afterwards saw the samurai making their way to Enosima, from which place they have been traced to Yedo, but are not yet arrested. When the Vice Minister was down I was present at his interview with Sir Rutherford. I had told Sir Rutherford that I had been informed while living at Yedo that the chief of the *ronins* had been murdered by one of his followers, and that all Yedo knew he had murdered Heusken, though the government professed to be ignorant of it and were promising vigorous search should be made. The governors of Foreign Affairs then told me they were unable to identify him as his head was gone, which was false. This excuse they had forgotten and they now told Sir Rutherford they had suspected him but were unable to procure the proof which is equally untrue as they can get testimony when they wish it, always.

⁴⁸⁷ What follows is an account of the “Kamakura Incident” of November 21 1864, in which two British naval officers were killed by two *ronin*. It is unusual that RHP did not write more about this to JALP; perhaps he did but the letter was lost. RHP’s dispatch to Seward about the event is at <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1865p3/d236>.

I am somewhat doubtful as to the contents of the preceding four sheets, but will not stop to make the investigation. I propose noticing your last letters now as I shall not have time to do much more, more particularly as I propose sending a few lines tomorrow via Marseilles.

Perhaps more, but I may forget it altogether, I had better say the few iron heads in the box are made to operate by placing them in water face upwards, where they will fill. You then place one on live coals, steam is made and blows quite briskly from the mouth. They will almost kindle a small fire. The other articles you will understand or Ber can explain. The toys I send may be serviceable for some industrial or other fair.

I enclose a letter from Catherine [Bonney] which will explain itself, though it may not be remiss to say that I feared she might have trouble in realizing funds as Mr. Bonney's signature as that of her executor might be needful and I thought it possible she might wish to go home and as I could do so without inconvenience I offered any needful funds and gave her an order in Russell & Co. whom I instructed to honor her calls.

I have sent the duplicate of miniature home by Mrs. Brower and shall try what can be done to improve one when I reach Canton and can personally give instructions. I will get no case, reserving it for the one you have.

You will see by Mr. Delano's letter your tea and sweetmeats have been provided. I hope they will reach you in good season and order.

I finished an unofficial letter to Governor Seward after having prepared two dispatches⁴⁸⁸ for him and one for Collector at San Francisco. I was so exceedingly slovenly that I wrote it over again with a slight improvement. I forgot to ask him to inform you if he sent any special instructions to me in Europe. I shall try and recollect to do so next mail. But Mr. Weed can easily learn.

I send a telegram saying I am well and hope the line will be in good working order.

It appears to me you might venture on ten days on a steamer. I have no doubt you would suffer much but you would without question be vastly better for it. It is possible, should the President wish me to act for the U.S. in Europe on Japanese questions, he may first wish to see me in person. If so you might accompany me as in that event I should make but a short stay in Europe.

I send you by the [*Ida D.*] *Rogers* a small box of plants, a dozen varieties of splendid chrysanthemums, another pink deutzia, a couple cumquat trees. These last Mr. Hogg is doubtful about. If they can be preserved Dingwall will know how to do it. Mr. Hogg has just sent me some seeds but my trunks are locked and shipped. Perhaps Mrs. B[rower] may find room for them. I send by her a couple of heart pins for Ber etc., etc.

⁴⁸⁸ See <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1864p3/d505> and <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1864p3/d506>.

By the way I send in the packages of letters the keys of the two trunks. The one with the larger cord on you will unlock with the Chinese and Japanese key, which has only one ordinary key. The two keys and Chinese key are for the trunk which has the thinner cord.

The trunks I have preferred to boxes as they will cost so much less via Panama and will be very serviceable at home. They are excellent ladies' trunks.

I am glad you do not dare charge so much for the heavy silks I sent as I wish none sold.

I have ordered some of the gauze silks.

I presented Lady Alcock an ivory cabinet with open shelves somewhat like that I send you.

I send you another assortment of scarfs which you need not be too free with. Ber will show you they are for gentleman's wear as well as ladies. Those articles which you wish me to buy at Hong Kong I will procure as I understand you and probably Sue wish to wear them. I use them now of flannel. We have had now our first front. Thermometer about 40 now at sunrise, 60 and upwards during day.

The Japanese crepes are heavier and better than any from China.

I could get no finer sewing silk though I sent to Yedo for it. The Japanese use heavy silk as they sew taking long stitches. I send you nearly 4 pounds. Keep it for yourself. Don't part with any unless you give it away. Silk has advanced heavily, \$18 per 1½ pounds in gold will not pay for it. I have received no *Littell's Living Age* for more than a month and have not therefore seen the scrap you say you sent relating to the affair at the Bank.

I have told you I think that the *Osborne* reached New York in July. I hope your tea is safe and that you have received it by this time. How could you have overlooked it?

Those boxes of puzzles cost \$20 to 25 each at Hong Kong. I will get at least another and we can then determine what to give Tip. We will have a good assortment from which to select.

It will give me much pleasure to learn you have given Alice DeWitt a silk dress. You need not fear anything which Joe Paige says about taxation will distress me. Only put down the rebellion. Perhaps we will see better to having good men in office when we have a government which costs something. I am not one of the skary-dumpy-grumbling-growling kind who try to keep on the housetop waiting for squalls because a little cloud shows itself and perhaps most disappointed and unhappy because their predictions of evil are not realized. I shall never die of apprehension.

If you have sent to C[harles] V[an] B[enthuyzen], well. If not, I can make the best choice and that before the year 1900.

I noticed in your picture the fullness in the face and suggested an alteration in the 2nd one but fear you will find no improvement in that respect. So also as to eyes. As to

the hat, that and the gloves must stay on. The Chinese are servile copyists and that is all. It is well you had no patches on or they would have been faithfully reproduced.

With reference to the linen I fear some of the table cloths are missing. Takiso had charge of them and he is at Yedo now having left here Saturday. But I send all I had and all the linen except some either not worth sending or still in use by me.

Mr. Fisher asks whether I have nearly finished. I answer probably. I have written all I really have to say. I am writing under some difficulty in the library as there is as yet no stove in my room. I asked it should not be put up till these things had been sent from my room. Little Jennie Pruyn Fisher is occasionally making herself agreeable to me as she thinks, first having a part of my letter, then one of my pens.

It is now near 6 o'clock and then dinner. At 9 o'clock we expect to go on board the [Ida D.] Rogers with Mr. and Mrs. B[rower]. How strange it is the *Ringleader* brought twelve passengers to this place (besides Rice etc. for Hakodate). Of these in March only Mr. and Mrs. Fisher and Mrs. Allmand will probably remain. Ayton Mann expects to leave direct for England in the ship *Pembrokeshire* at the end of the year, but will return. And then if I shall succeed in getting off the three named will be all who are left. Say to Ber Ayton expects to make some business arrangements in England and procure some agencies I believe. As Mr. and Mrs. B[rower] will be here at dinner I think I may now conclude having given you a good instalment and if I find I have omitted anything or have an idea left I can send a short letter by Mr. Brower.

I think I shall bring you a good ladies English traveling trunk as when I get home you will be ever on the wing. Try and think of all you want so as to save me the trouble of thinking and always bear in mind you will so best guard against useless purchases.

How about stockings? For you and Sue, silk or other. If you want anything bring your legs or send me sizes, first much the best and surest.

And now, my darling precious wife, with love and kisses for yourself and Sue and the boys and kind wishes and regards to Baby and all friends and enquirers I say good night with prayers for your and each of yours' welfare. May God ever watch over and be merciful to you and spare us all to meet.

Robt. H. Pruyn



Business⁴⁸⁹

I did not expect to place this ominous word at the head of a sheet this time as I wrote more than was pleasant by the last mail.

⁴⁸⁹ This letter has no date. It is possible that it belongs elsewhere chronologically.

But you speak of the Chapel St. House as mine, and I do not know how. If given to you, it is not mine, I mean it does not stand in my name. Then again how was it given to you? If specifically, well. If as part of the residency, it should and I suppose has been given at the price for which I actually transferred it to your father. But it matters not. If my life is spared, I shall sometime know this and other things now all dark, and if not shared, it is of no consequence. The lease is all right and so is the sale to Gladding as it is concluded. Though they get it at half price, having only paid for it now. Business matters would not annoy me if I knew anything about them. It is only being so much in the dark that is annoying. Understand I know the Works are progressing well. I know the situation of my accounts as rendered by Charles. I do not speak of these therefore.

I see that New York Central is only 131. If you have drawn what I placed to your credit with Barings I think I would place 20,000 therein in Cleveland & Columbus Railroad. I do not fear for government stocks, unless demagogues finally make war on them. And you have enough of those stocks. If you have realized the large June premium on exchange as is probable both those Railroad stocks will stand you in a moderate cut.

I cannot now call to my mind all the particulars about the missing box which I hope will turn up. I shall try to send a box this time by Dr. Simmons who returns here again. He and his wife left after my arrival and he sold his property here. Had she been a contented woman he would have held his property till now. The advance would have made him rich. But they were determined to leave. He has now abandoned his business once more saying he will not return. But I think he will before a year has elapsed.

His wife has been quite costly. And he cannot afford such an expensive luxury. Ber can describe her, though perhaps not an accurate observer as myself of womankind.

I think I will close my business department.

Upon reflection I am not so sure what government stocks will be the best investment or excellent real estate. You must judge. As my letter from London of June 25 says that B[arings Brothers] & Co. had already written to you I think you have realized in currency an unusually large premium.

List of articles sent in a Chinese trunk via San Francisco care of C. W. Brooks Esquire:

1. Large lacquer shawl box with sundry small boxes in same, also gold and silver coins. One large *obang*, one *gorio bang* and a lot of studs, pearl and insects, etc., etc.
2. Small lacquer box to accompany same. This is a writing box. The stone which belongs to it being heavy I placed in a small box with 50 *itzabus* of the old issue.
3. Large handkerchief box or glove box. This also contains sundry articles.
4. Small [damage]

5. Small red cabinet containing sundry ivories
6. Boxes with most elegant ivories, a few of the best sent home
7. & 8. Containing small bags, elegant
9. Box toy complete ladies inlet set
10. Lot of fans
11. Lot of castings elegant
12. Lot of balls
13. 1½ pounds or more of sewing silk!!!! With sundry small articles too numerous to mention.

[damage] water color painting [damage] and presented by General Burgeoine. This is at the bottom among the paper.

This lot of lacquer and what I have sent before cannot be excelled in Japan. So all of ivories and all you will please keep.

I send also in a letter care of Dr. Simmons a small lot [damage] sewing silk which came in after I had closed trunk which by the way Ber can I suppose unlock. You will find a common key attached to Chinese key. After opening the Chinese lock which is done by thrusting the brass key in the end of the brass lock you must use the ordinary [damage]

In unlocking, you will see groove cut in one side of Chinese key. Be careful.



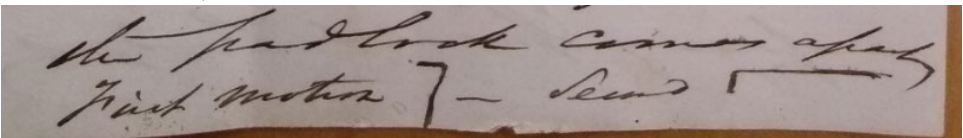
Kanagawa, November 29 1864
8 p.m.

My Beloved,

The mail has closed but this note will be taken by Mrs. Brower.

I would not have written more had it not occurred to me you might be unable to manage the Chinese locks. You move the part which enters the lock from the part which moves on a hinge and place it in the lock first letting the part enter marked A > Then place it in the position as above drawn and push it. The opposite end of the padlock will be shoved out. Take it out altogether and the padlock comes apart.

First motion Second.



You will have no difficulty. Perhaps Ber is already parted. The only lock I saw before he left was sent me without a key and I had no knowledge of their structure.

It is barely possible the vessel may not leave early in the morning. If not may add a few lines. It would be well for Ber to go down as soon as you receive this letter and hear of Mrs. B's arrival or else at all events at once send an invitation to her and her husband to come up which will probably be as well and not interfere with Ber's studies.

I do not think you can with justice complain of my present budget. 12 sheets and a half besides two via Marseilles whatever you may say of quality.

What I have written has been with constant interruptions and with little knowledge of what I have said, except that I have exhausted my head and the town.

I have given Mrs. Brower a small package addressed to you containing two small carvings for Ber and Charlie as watch charms, very chaste, and a heart pin for Ber and one which you can have a pin placed in for yourself or Charlie. They are for scarfs or shawls.

I will try to recollect about the card case you suggest I should get at Hong Kong.

I will now close. A gentleman is sitting near me who has called on Mrs. B[rower] and is talking vigorously which troubles, such a silent man as I have become. Mrs. B[rower] says she can give you a certificate on this point but I do not think she knows what silence is. Perhaps sea sickness may take the starch out of her tongue and make it difficult for her to use it.

Once more adieu and good night with loving wishes from your
Robt. H. Pruyn



No. 36 Kanagawa, November 29⁴⁹⁰ 1864

My Beloved Wife,

As the mail for California leaves in a few hours in advance of the overland mail I write this more for the purpose of guarding against a long interruption in the receipt of letters than with the expectation of giving you my usual half monthly mail. Anything I have to say of any interest should rather go by the conveyance which will probably enable you to read it two weeks at least in advance of what I am now writing.

⁴⁹⁰ In his next letter, RHP notes that he mistakenly dated this letter November 29 when it should have been November 30.

I think you will admire the small ivory cabinets I sent in the trunks (2) by Mr. Brower on the *Ida D. Rogers* and the other ivory work and also the bronzes which I hope will reach you safely. I packed them as carefully as I could and I think they cannot be broken. One set of the small inlaid bronzes is for Mrs. Alden or Mrs. Weed, whoever they were intended for. Please send them to Mrs. Weed with my respects. The other things we will make disposition of in joint Council of War. Baby will of course rejoice in the sewing silk. It costs now however 28 *itsabus* for $1\frac{1}{3}$ pounds and as an *itsabu* is now worth 47 cents you see it is near \$14 For $1\frac{1}{3}$ pounds which sent to England would realize in gold say \$17.50. So you see it costs high but I suppose Baby must be kept in good humor.

The bronze where the leaves appear broken are made so purposely, true to nature. The chessmen I purchased to aid a servant of General Burgeoine who is about commencing business and who had, while at Yedo, been very serviceable in aiding in the care of my guests. He is a Bombay Man and an excellent cook and waiter.

The other articles I think I have fully described in my letter via San Francisco. I had supposed I would have had more time to write. But try to pack the trunks with the bronzes which I did this a.m. and the chessmen and see what time it will occupy. I had to try many experiments before I could satisfy myself.

I have directed Mr. Brooks to insure the trunks for \$1,000.

The instalment of linen [damage] etc. which I send will doubtless prove most welcome because indication of an intention to start very early on my return. I have enough bed linen for my own use while I remain but I shall be puzzled if obliged to postpone my departure to accommodate any guest. You will find some of which I purchased from Mr. Harris. I had neither time nor inspiration to separate them.

Do not forget to send descriptions of sizes of table cloth and napkins and toweling etc., etc., to London. I had better bring a full supply of all needful articles. It will terrify me perhaps from investing too heavily in what is merely ornamental, so you see it is true economy.

I have directed Messrs. Brooks & Co. to send me no more business letters but to advise with you and take your direction. I cannot of course know what would be best when this reaches. But the time has been when it would have been judicious to have purchased some of the best railroad stock such as Central etc., etc. Keep your eyes on that house adjacent Aunt Sue's. I wish that had been purchased. Can you not manage to get it now? Let Kidd try. Don't stand about 2 or 3 thousand dollars. \$20,000 in gold could have purchased Stanton's house, would it not? If so now, buy. You have the means at your disposal without disturbing any investments. When prices tumble bear in mind I want the insurance stock. Don't fail in this. Perhaps a good supply may make me more amiable in that quarter.

If Townsend has not come out on the gunboat he has made a huge mistake. I hope he is on board. Could you not have trunked my dear little Charlie on board. Would that

I had thought of it. It might have greatly strengthened him and made him nine nearly. A sure opportunity has escaped us. But I think my presence would have been necessary to have cut him from your apron strings.

This mail closes four hours earlier than the one via San Francisco, but as dinner must be subtracted from that time and I have a letter to Governor Seward to prepare, your budget that way will not amount to more than two of sheets like this. But that will be a good supply. Abby must appropriate a portion of the letters to herself. I had intended to address a page or two to her specially, but it is after all a mere form, as I know you read all good bad and indifferent to her.

I have had an unusual number of letters this mail to send to Shanghae and Hong Kong which I could not postpone and Portman's sickness is a great annoyance at this juncture. Mr. Fisher said yesterday Captain Price is sure to come in and before half an hour had expired, lo there he was and stayed two hours and now he has been here again. But I had an unusual fit of industry before which he vanished.

And now, my beloved, I will close this letter written almost without object and every moment grudgingly appropriated because borrowed perhaps unwisely from the time allotted to my letters to go eastward.

Let them have a trial of speed and whether the rising or the setting sun has the victory both will carry warm and deathless love to beloved wife, children, sisters and friends from your

Robt. H. Pruyn



No. 37 Kanagawa, Japan December 10 1864

My Beloved,

The mail due here the 7th has not arrived and it is now expected we will not receive letters until a steamer shall arrive in connection with the French mail. The *Nepaul*, belonging to the P[eninsular] & O[riental] Company, you will recollect struck a rock a month ago on this bay and was disabled. Recently a terrible typhoon at Calcutta deprived the same company of their steamers and it is now believed that by reason of these events, the company will be unable to supply the steamers necessary at this time to keep up the service. Should this prove correct the interruption will be overcome for the due delivery of the next mail. The mail will leave here on the 18th should a steamer arrive or other provision be made. But as a steamer will leave here in time to reach the French mail and it is announced a mail will be made up on the 12th I will send you a few

lines. The evening agreements now pressing on me will not admit of more. The British minister will leave in a few days and very much will be done before his departure, as we use that to overcome the habitual tardiness of the Japanese government, and as invariably happens on mail day I have an interview on Monday (the day the mail closes) with two Japanese governors of Foreign Affairs, and I fear the day will be so thoroughly occupied as to leave little time to you.

The day is dark and gloomy and though it is only 2 p.m. it is not sufficiently light to make writing easy.

Nothing of importance has occurred since my letters No. 35 and 36 by the way of Marseilles and California except that there has been a row between some drunken sailors and Japanese coolies in which one of the former was beaten to death and another has since died of his wounds. Five Japanese badly wounded will survive. It appears the French had been worshipping, by imbibing copious libations, a patron saint of the artillery, St. Barbase or St. Barbe, perhaps the latter is only an abbreviation, and while in the height of their devotion attacked some Japanese houses and spoiled the Philistines. The latter, disliking the process or its manner, resisted and we have two more martyrs, who in due season may be canonized. You will see Yedo is much safer than this place, if results are to be taken as proof. Though I do not doubt but that the same excess of piety would have been crowned with martyrdom even in the xxx city of Yedo. But we are now engaged in measures to enlarge the cemetery and room will be made for a cross of martyrs though it is to be hoped the supply will be afforded as in this case and not as in that of Major [Robert] Baldwin and Lieutenant [John] Bird, which will be a beneficial result if the old adage prove true here "the greater the sinner the greater the saint."

No indications exist of the probable arrest of the murderers of the British officers and I do not anticipate anything will be done, perhaps because the government cannot find them, perhaps because it will be more convenient not to find them.

We have made very fair arrangements for the enlargement of this town and for roads leading to and from the Mississippi Bay, for grounds for the Consulate etc., etc. The government has given us official notice of its purpose not to send the new embassy threatened, which you will remember they never designed to send, only appointing it to keep up the appearance of proposing to ask for the abandonment of this post. These measures therefore in progress and the one abandoned may be taken as proof that the government feels strong enough to act freely and openly in favor of the observance of the treaties.

By the way, in the volume of diplomatic correspondence published by Congress you will find 115 pages devoted to Japan letters of 1862-63. That published this year will contain much more I should think. Please write to Governor Seward for a copy and you will see by what is published how much must have been done. You will be interested

though the letters will not prove as rich as those of 1863 and 1864, and '64 and '65, nor as voluminous, and yet my correspondence exceeds that of some 17 ministers combined, and even twice that of China. I have had no sinecure and I think you will see, though my letters bear marks of having been hastily written, they will bear reading. I could not have been more careful. My time, the uncertain departure of the mails, and my long formed habit of rapid composition made it impossible for me to do better than I have done. Every letter struck off at one beat, had I attempted to rewrite all, would have been new.

I hope you will receive safely the two trunks I sent in care of Mr. Brower containing linen, silver and sundry Japanese articles. I directed Mr. Brooks to effect an insurance on them for \$1,000, so that if lost between San Francisco and home you will see to this. I also told Mr. Brooks to receive from you alone instructions on business matters and not with further business letters to me in Japan.

You will find the book of my household expenses at Yedo of what was purchased from the Japanese, which may interest you. You will no doubt conclude Ber was a great consumer of eggs, oysters, etc., etc. Mr. Brower will have charges which must be refunded him for freight from San Francisco. That from this place to that city has been provided for and Mr. Brooks was to attend to all Custom House claims. I suppose the sewing silk can be made use of. Baby will see to that.

You will, by the time this reaches you, you will have seen Ber's great favorite, "'Tis distance etc., etc., etc."

How about meeting me in Europe? I fear to send you any remittance in January. For safety's sake perhaps I had better send Messrs. C. W. Brooks & Co. But then Charles can attend to it. I will have a few hundred to spare and leave me enough for every extravagance in China and till I reach Europe, where I can procure a full supply.

I expect to remain at least ten days in Hong Kong, Canton etc. Lady Alcock has asked permission to mention my name to Lady Robinson whose husband⁴⁹¹ is governor of the colony and rejoices in the name of Sir Hercules and proposes also to give me her card with my name on to make all sure. Lady Rutherford weighs somewhat less than a ton and is notwithstanding a Lady of weight in the fashionable world.

On Monday I expect to dine with the French minister and on Thursday with the 20th regiment. Sir Rutherford will be there and though not so proclaimed I suppose these may be regarded as farewell dinners to him. If no steamer arrive with the mail, he may leave in a war steamer, stopping at Nagasaki, which place I now fear I shall not see. To be able to leave here in March will demand all my time. But unless that same gunboat fail me, I hope to accomplish it.

⁴⁹¹ Hercules Robinson, 1st Baron Rosmead (1824-1897) was the 5th Governor of Hong Kong 1859-1865.

When I wrote to Mr. Brooks to send you a telegram I made the mistake which I made in my letters also. The date should have been November 30 instead of the 29th.

The [*Ida D.*] *Rogers* left here the morning of December 1st and the last sheets of my letter were written the preceding evening. It is now most probably two thousand miles off, as the winds are thought to have been favorable.

We have thus far had only two slight frosts, sufficient to destroy such plants as the heliotrope, but the native orange, camellia etc. are not in the least affected by it. A fair supply of our lemon verbena, the common verbena and the geranium with other more common plants are now being fast multiplied here. We have tomatoes in the market yet, a good supply, and potatoes have been unusually good this year. But of celery, cabbage and cauliflower etc. we have only what is raised by foreigners. In a few years a good supply of foreign fruits and vegetables may be confidently exported, as the population is increasing rapidly and a profitable demand is sure to be met by a liberal supply. Money unlocks the fetters which bind industry and impede all advance.

I have tried to urge the government to do something in this direction by stating how largely the cabbage is used in our country and how cheap and good food is thus provided for the poor, but it cares nothing for this. The people are not cared for here. They are robbed on all sides and only cared for as they supply those who feed on them. Whether they live well or ill is a matter of supreme indifference to the working class. The moment a man is supposed to have accumulated anything he is marked and he must share with his appeasers, who generally take good care he shall not find himself in a situation where he will have occasion to build new home etc., etc.

I do not recollect whether I wrote you of the loss of the steamer *Osprey*⁴⁹² belonging to the British squadron, intelligence of which reached us by the last mail. The captain (Boxer) whom Ber will recollect, two officers and five men were saved. Two of our Church themselves were on board, from whom Mr. Brown received letters a few days prior announcing that the ship was about leaving for Chefoo.⁴⁹³ The steamer had encountered a heavy storm and the weather being thick, no observations could be taken for several days and the captain mistook the harbor and the vessel struck a rock. Many were doubtless frozen as some of the bodies recovered show. We do not know the fate of our two members, [Thomas] Hart and Brown, but the chances are against them in view of the small number saved out of a crew of 126.⁴⁹⁴ I knew four or five of the officers quite well. One of them, Mr. Dooley, brought me the specimens of lead ore

⁴⁹² RHP misremembers the ship. It was the *Racehorse*, not the *Osprey*. The H. M. S. *Racehorse* wrecked in the South China Seas on November 4 1864.

⁴⁹³ Yantai 烟台, formerly known as Zhifu or Chefoo 芝罘, is a prefecture-level city on the Bohai Strait in northeastern Shandong Province, China.

⁴⁹⁴ Both Hart and Brown were listed as dead by the London *Times* on January 4 1865.

from Yesso which I sent home. I presume Mr. Brown has sent forward the letters I have referred to. Hart was better educated than Brown who was a marine, but both were good pious men and unmistakably intelligent.

December 11 1864

Although Mr. Fisher is reading aloud Barnes' *Notes* on the Revelations, I must write a few lines at the risk of mistakes and some meandering of thought. Though a stove has been put up in my room, it will not be so secured till tomorrow as to permit of its use and as I cannot say how much time will be consumed tomorrow morning in my interview I cannot be sure I will be able to add anything before the mail will close. I suppose the business to be discussed will be the only remaining claim, which I hope may be closed without arbitration, though by no means confident of such issue. Perhaps the reference will be the greater triumph and of that I cannot be deprived. Only one thing is sure, much time will be wanted and that needlessly. But the Japanese officials care nothing for this. They are reduced to go through a certain routine and nothing can direct or prevent them unless I should be guilty of rudeness, so I listen and must do so, however unpalatable it may be and however fruitless of any good result.

Mr. Thompson preached today and though it was a dark and cold day, mercury about 45 above zero, we had a fair attendance. I do not feel very bright as I have been in the house the balance of the day and had no exercise except the walk each day which I resolutely took, though Mr. and Mrs. F[isher] made use of the boat. I never take to the water when it can be avoided.

The *Jamestown* is here yet and will remain as long as I shall. There has been some alarm at Amoy growing out of the near approach of the rebels and our consul wrote to Captain Price for assistance, but as several British ships of war had reached the port and as the *Jamestown* could not reach it under sail so as to be of any service, I advised his stay here. The frigate *Severn* reached here from Amoy ten days ago reporting everything quiet, three British war steamers there and all danger passed away.

Mr. Brown came to see me on Friday showing me a letter from Catherine [Bonney] saying I had given her for her scholars a New Year's present last year and that a present this year would be very acceptable if I were disposed to repeat it, which will require at least \$25, which I suppose I may as well send. Her letter which I sent by the way of California will show the condition of her school and her purpose to continue it. I think she cannot be as useful now as when her husband was alive and if I am spared to meet her, I shall advise her return to the heathen at Albany under the shadow of our Church. I think she may find some without a search warrant.

The miscellaneous letters which I enclosed in one of the trunks were not sent for presentation so much as to get them out of the way. Some may possibly be worth keeping, but I had no time to make any selections. So I put the entire package in.

I hope to be able to bring you a few flowers plucked by the wayside, but have little hope I shall succeed in pressing them so as to make them worth anything. But we will see. Perhaps you only ask for them to divert me from other and more expensive acquisitions.

Mr. Portman has recovered from his attack of smallpox and is able to resume his duties. I have not seen him yet as I feared Mrs. Fisher might be uneasy, though all danger of carrying the infection must be over. Meanwhile business is accumulating as translations are in arrears, several large documents have been prepared, written a few weeks [ago], which must now be copied and go to the Department of State. And when Sir Rutherford goes home additional work will be thrown on me, part of what has been in progress having been left incomplete by the unexpected labors involved in and arising from the recent murders.

Last week the ancient God who had resided so long on the lot now assigned to the consuls took up a new abode. He must have been a very reasonable personage as the government notwithstanding its fears did not appear to have much trouble with him. He has shown good sense in fleeing from such close proximity to foreigners, as possibly as his little shrine would actually have been under the drapings of our Church edifice when built.

I cannot write decently on this paper. From some defect, probably in its manufacture, the ink occasionally spreads in a manner and to an extent far from ornamental and then again as I am obliged to hold my pen it will occasionally make its way through to the other side. And as I am at a loss when I occasionally venture to look back I am at a loss to read what I have written. I fear you will have much difficulty to decipher it. I see I have now repeated the words "at a loss etc." but I do not strike it out as the page is already sufficiently unsightly. But you can read, I observe, more easily when another sheet is held under, as the writing on the reverse does not show through so much. But I will close for the evening. It is 9 o'clock and Mr. Fisher is still reading. So good night my dearest.

Monday December 12

At length after nearly a week of gloomy weather we have a bright and clear day. I think we must have had some frost last night. It is now a little after 6 o'clock and I snatch a minute before breakfast for your use as at 10 o'clock my business interview commences. We have no appearance of the mail yet and it is no longer expected. Yet it will be far from unwelcome if it do come. Thermometer now 41°. So you can judge of our weather compared with yours. How does Ber get on with it? Is he prudent? You must watch him in the spring and make him mind you. He is far from prudent and I fear he may get a cold fastened on him which he will find it difficult to shake off. He can now see how uneasy I must have been when his rides were prolonged accidentally,

as he would say, beyond dark. I ever told him we were constantly exposed to danger here and we never knew it till it was on us.

Breakfast

I hope you and Sue will have your sables this spring. I heard of 30 elegant skins at Shanghae and sent for them offering \$25 each. Captain Endicott wrote me that I had offered the very lowest price which had been charged for them, but unfortunately no purchaser had offered and they had been sent up to the Amur to the Russian officer who owned them. I feared I had not ordered as many skins as you might wish through Mr. [Edward F.] Hall of Brooks & Co. and that at a venture I would secure these. I have written to Captain E[ndicott] asking whether they cannot be sent for and reach Shanghae in March but I fear there is not sufficient time to get them before I leave. We will therefore hope you will have enough. But you can give such directions to Messrs. C. W. B[rooks] & Co. as you think best. My impression is I ordered 50 skins. A few more may be secured by them at San Francisco as more than I ordered may have been sent forward and they may be able to supply a few more skins. I think you had better add at least 10 or 15 to the order. Mr. Treadwell can tell you what you will require. Be careful to say you wish the same kind I ordered, the Kamchatka and not the Siberia or Amur sable. These latter are very good but only worth some \$5 per skin, the fur not being as long or so full as that which comes from the far north where more warmth is required.

I note what you say on business matters. I am surprised at what you say regarding Charles' estimate of real estate. With such local governments as we have, portable property may be best. I do not care for real estate now except for residences as I have before written. I am willing to risk that. It appears to me the government and railroad stocks are the best and I hope you have purchased Central Railroad if you have had spare funds for one. Should I send you funds in January and a large premium be realized, it may be well to invest all in railroad stocks, say New York Central and Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati. This I say with reference to August prices of gold and those stocks. I do not know of course their relative value now, nor can I judge what they will be when this shall reach you. The presidential election and Grant's operations may have effected a great revolution and I trust light is breaking on our country. We have a few days later news via California and Hong Kong of a victory by Sheridan. Beyond the 23rd September all is blank. But we hope and will never cease hoping until the actual result shall be known.

I have no doubt if Charles has closed the Works he has acted judiciously. I can very easily see that it would not be safe to take contracts which would require a long time for their execution. I regret much that he has had so much extra labor by reason of my prolonged absence. Yet I am sure that one half, yes even the quarter of the labor he has

undergone, would have been more wearing and injurious had it been accompanied with pecuniary anxieties. He has been so comparatively easy on that score as to have had his mind much lightened and I am inclined to think I have lightened his labors more by my absence than I would by my presence, however cheerful and hopeful and laborious I might have been. Then again I might have been too hopeful and inclined him to risk too much. I doubt not it was better for all I was placed thousands of miles away, all but myself.

I will now close this letter. Should my business meeting occupy the day till the mail closes I must try and get one dispatch ready as no mail may go on the 18th and I do not wish important events to be first made known to the government through our newspapers or through the British government which last may easily happen as all the governments are now in frequent consultation on Japanese affairs.

Sir Rutherford has a printed copy of my Japan correspondence which he proposes to use for his defense when he reaches home. I do not know as I have told you he says I am regarded as the apostle of peace by his government and people so he thinks what I have written will prove a great service to him.

I have made unexpectedly short work of my Japanese friend who called to inform me that the government had adopted my suggestion for the prevention of murders: had warlord to put up notices holding the neighborhood responsible of they did not warn foreigners of danger or arrest those who had assaulted them, and would offer rewards to those who arrested offenders. Also that a confidential letter would be sent me concerning the favorable views of the Mikado and his present accord with the Tycoon.

As usual Captain Price has made his appearance. I have asked him to wait till I close my letter and then call on Portman with me. That is the only way I can secure my government correspondence as he formally makes a visitation when once seated.

So I close with kind remembrances to all inquiring friends, with love and kisses for yourself, Sue and my dear boys. I can't overlook Ber knowing his fondness for kisses which appears to have been wonderfully developed since he has reached home.

Adieu my precious, loving, and beloved wife,
Robt. H. Pruyt



No. 38 Kanagawa, December 17 1864

My Dear Wife,

When everyone had given up all hope of letters, the mail arrived. I received by it letters of the date of September 12 and 20th from yourself, Charlie and Sue. Ber must

have an extraordinary fit of application for which I should recommend a combination of treatment allopathic, homeopathic, hydropathic, Thompsonian or let the latter with its lobelia and red pepper have, if anything, the preference.

I abstain from further recommendations as my mind may not be entirely composed. As I took the pen and paper to commence this letter we had a most alarming shock of an earthquake. I hope what I have said may shake Ber up without further heaves to break up his intolerable laziness.

Your letters did not contain the welcome news of the sailing of the steamer. I shall hope it will reach here in time for me to leave in March though you write despondingly as if in fear of another year's absence, which I hope I may be spared, as well as a forty days' sail to California in which neither fish nor fowl nor ship shall be visible. I have had one experience like that with the solitary break at the Sandwich Islands and I do not covet another.

I shall therefore, if possible, adhere to my proposed route, not only with the object of seeing places of historic interest and otherwise worth seeing but for the purpose of avoiding a dreary sail with sky and water as chief companions.

Owing to incomplete negotiations Sir Rutherford is unable to leave by the mail steamer early tomorrow morning and now proposes to depart in the war steamer *Barossa* on the 22nd instant, stopping at Nagasaki, which will throw him over a mail at Hong Kong. I cannot promise you a long letter this time as I have not been in a condition to write till today and this day is to be broken greatly by a meeting for signing a convention as to land etc. we have had under way for more than a month. Let me give you an insight into a few days' experience.

Wednesday evening I fortunately was quite soundly asleep as early as 10½ o'clock. At 1 o'clock I was startled from sleep by a bright glare of light in my room. Huge cinders and sparks as numerous as rain drops were coming past my windows with the rapidity of a flash. An awful gale of wind was at its height. I was sure the rear of the house was on fire and rushed at once partly down stairs shouting to Fisher. I then opened the window and soon the Charthouse, a little over 200 feet distant on the opposite side of the street, was covered with flame, which was blown in our direction. I commenced dressing and at the same time a war dance in my room to arouse the family, sound asleep. As I supposed, such an unusual and lively performance at so unreasonable an hour had speedily the effect of exciting their attention if not their admiration and the accompanying pyrotechnics soon brought all in the house to their feet. Having made myself a little comfortable I went down stairs to give orders to the servants. Mrs. F[isher]'s woman, in true Japanese fashion, had gathered all her valuables in her bed quilt, in all with say 20 *itzabus* and was as is customary dressing in her best clothes, so that they at least would be saved. I told her to put down her bundle and directed Skaso to say to all the servants they must let their things alone, we would pay for them and to

go on the roof of the house, sheds, kitchen etc., etc., with water and when the house was on fire come to my room and get my trunk which was all I should attempt to save. For half an hour I would not have given Fisher for his house and furniture one tenth of its value the previous day. The flames were fairly dashed over it. The ground was one blaze of coals. The tile roof under my window was so covered with sparks that the white plastering which fills the edges of the tiles is browned and looks burnt. In far less time than I have taken to describe this the village of Honomura on the opposite of the canal was in flames and even the trees back of it were burning. A large tree over the canal opposite to us was burning, a fine tree probably a hundred years old, an evergreen of the pine species. The people of the village had little opportunity to save anything. The Japanese officials say 220 houses were destroyed. All that saved our house and others near was that the Charthouse was so slightly built. It fell very quickly and the heat was thus diminished, as also the quantity of cinders. The house immediately opposite us occupied by Captain Aplin⁴⁹⁵ and Lieutenant Smith was on fire three different times. Ber will remember this as the British Consulate where we first attended Church. There was of course in the panic some rich scenes. Mrs. Bailey and sister and the family of the British chaplain, though three and even four times the distance from the fire of our house, fled in their night clothes to a neighbors' one block further distant. As she (Mrs. B[ailey]) is monstrous fat, and used her nightgown, her only dress, as a wrapper for her child, she resembled a piece of statuary more than the woman in white. I am quite sure she would not derive much income from her use as a model. I was spared however the sight. That vision did not rise before me to add to the horrors of the night.

The new smallpox hospitals half a mile distant were at one time in great danger and even the barracks of the 20th of the Marines still farther off. After all danger was over I had ample time for observation. All the troops were on the spot except those under arms at the different barracks. Some of those in the town were under arms and acted also as sentinels keeping the streets from being crowded and keeping off the Japanese firemen who cannot be prevented from stripping off the tile, whether to preserve them or because they suppose they spread the fire by heating the boards on which they are placed I cannot say.

We have circulated a subscription headed by the ministers with each \$100 for the sufferers in the village opposite. It is uncertain whether the government will allow the people to take it. They say the government always provides for such cases. But I fear this provision is very scanty. The real ground of the objection is the fear that when foreigners sustain some heavy loss this may be used as a precedent and assistance asked

⁴⁹⁵ RHP spells the name with one p, "Aplin," but it should be "Applin." These two men were Vincent J. Applin, Captain, Commanding Legation Mounted Escort of the British Legation and Henry W. Smith, Lieutenant Commanding Legation Guard of the Royal Marines.

on their behalf. It is said that Japanese burned out are released from payment of half of all they owe. I must enquire into this.

On Thursday evening I dined with the 20th regiment, a farewell dinner to Sir Rutherford. We had a few speeches and I had the good fortune to make one which was admired more than it deserved to be. The truth is dinner speeches are normally heavy, and mine happened to tap them a little, so that they had spells of laughter for a few moments and they were pleased—with themselves. The French minister at once rose and said something very flattering in French, proposed my health etc. which was drunk with any number of cheers. Individual officers rose afterwards here and there and said “General, your good health” and we subsided again to the labors of the table. I spare you the affliction of what I said. I fear it would lose its effervescence by the time it reached.

The next day was engrossed by a Japanese Vice Minister in one interview and 3 governors in another, all with Sir Rutherford and myself, about affairs here and partly by an arrangement that an execution which was to take place should not be entirely private and that public notices should be put up giving information why the culprits were beheaded. The French Minister could not be with us. Sedate as he always is, he had a headache. So had Sir Rutherford. I, what the Japanese would call *scotie*,⁴⁹⁶ a little. Cause: too much water in some punch at the close of the dinner. But to return to the culprits. Two Japanese had demanded some articles in a tea house at Kanasawa and had threatened the people who did not serve them as they wished to treat them, as their companions had served the two officers at Kamakura. The men were arrested and brought here and tried. The government says they confessed they belonged to an organization hostile to and pledged to attack foreigners. They were at once condemned and were yesterday beheaded in the presence of numerous foreigners and a notice is to be put up saying why they were put to death. This deed, and the notice they are now putting up agreeably to the suggestion I made that all who fail to give notice of danger or to arrest persons committing crimes against foreigners will be punished and in fact making the neighborhood in such cases responsible, may increase our security. We have also official notice of the repeal of all edicts hostile to foreigners. Great advance has been made this year in driving, at least of the minds of the government, all idea of ever getting rid of us. We are like the Canada thistle, cannot be eradicated. I hope we will prove less noxious. Whatever may be the result we will remain and we have confidential letters from the Gorogio that the Mikado is now in favor of the existing state of things and will publicly declare himself so as soon as Chosiu is punished by the Tycoon. Chosiu will be invaluable to Japan for at least two years. He will be the standing apology for all inaction, the cause assigned for everything left undone which should be done. He is

⁴⁹⁶ *Sukoshi* 少し

tomorrow embodied and even a little later, unless the interpretation be true that tomorrow never comes.

What marked contrast our weather must be to that with which you are favored. It is now raining quite briskly. Thermometer 49. We have had very little frost as yet and are surrounded as we will be all winter by oranges, camellias, etc. in the open air. I have some before me now as large as our largest peonies.

I still hope to leave here so as to reach the steamer to leave Hong Kong March 26th. To meet me at Naples you should leave as early as April. I shall expect to see you and Ber and Sue and Charlie there. I am sure you can stand a ten days' voyage. Now first as to means. You can draw what you need in gold from Brooks if you have exhausted your credit with Barings but I shall advise those gentlemen you may visit Europe and to provide you with funds. You will find it will be a measure of time economy to do so. I shall then expend so much less foolishly than if you leave me alone. You will also please remember what I advised as to learning from Governor Seward what if any instructions he has sent me. I see no reason why you should not meet me—all of you, remember. I shall consider that settled. Only, if you prefer waiting for me at Rome, do so. Perhaps you will get so fond of the sea as to insist on coming as far as Cairo in which case I shall expect to see Sue perched on the Sphinx. I will look for her there.

I felt sure Charlie would be pleased at the Academy. He will learn more rapidly after being a little shaken up abroad. He wants confidence and manliness as well as knowledge.

I am glad to hear of Frank's release and hope that freedom, plenty of good food and a good constitution will soon restore him to health. I suppose my being here did not fail to aid his application.

Your remarks about political life, the way in which officers should be selected, their qualities, etc., I may venture to say are quite sound and speaking as a wary and silent diplomatist, fearing to express myself too strongly and wishing to avoid any positive committal on so grave, important and yet dubious and changeable a subject do really think may be just the thing. One year after the commencement of the millenarians, I reserve the right to change my opinion when we shall have a better opportunity for discussion.

I am very glad you gave that ball to Helen's [Townsend] little girl, only think she might have been my child, and it was so graceful of you not to be jealous. I appreciate all you say squinting in that direction. But if she keep up with her sister-in-law in arithmetic what then? Had I a good escape? Did I see coming events casting a shadow before?

What a sad thing J. F. T.'s condition is. I pity his wife and family. I suppose "the morose" one thinks his fate not ill deserved. He has my sympathy. But all the sympathy in the world, and he has plenty doubtless, because that is not as high as gold, will not

feed and clothe 14 children.

You need not trouble Professor Cook for any coral. I have some elegant specimens. He can send you one piece to show what it is. I will replace it. I have no time now to notice his letter and Dr. Clark's and Mrs. C[lark]'s suitably. Please thank those of them you see for their favors until I can do so myself by letter.

I am at a loss to give full credit to what Mr. [Salmon P.] Chase says. He must have been too much occupied in the Treasury Department to know much or indeed anything about me, indeed I wonder he even knew I was here.

Tell Sue, Joe Paige's groans don't disturb me here unless indeed coming up from below they add force to our earthquakes. Some of our growlers who you will remember are directly beneath us, may aid in raising the wind for those upheavings. I should in that case be glad to have found they were of some assistance. If Joe had been adopted into the family what a jolly set we would be.

The consigners of the *Osborne* in New York were Napier, Walsford & Co. I see the last London paper received says she was expected at New York, though Low's agent Mr. Baker says he had arrived. Those who dispatched her do not know. I believe they were agents for a London house. You will be able to enquire now if you have not received your tea.

I have been interrupted to attend to business and as the mail will close in a little more than an hour I fear you will get little more than these three sheets.

The medical college will be welcome, unless the State adds them in their military trophy room to their shot and shell. I thank Mr. Olcott heartily for his kind present of grapes etc. to you. He could not please me better than this to remember you.

It is getting quite dark now. 3½ o'clock and I cannot see very well. You will remember our verandas darken the rooms considerably. But I shall be obliged to send my letter to the mail in a few moments.

We expect the mail of October 10 on the 22nd of 23rd. There may possibly be a little for me left over at Shanghae. The last mail was delayed by a cyclone in the Indian Seas and only reached Shanghae as the steamer was leaving for this port. The mail was in part put on board while in the river but two boxes were left behind. I received no Washington letters but am anxiously expecting some. It is more complimentary than pleasant to be thus left alone. But as I have been thus far sustained I shall do the best I can and hope all will be considered well done. I hope before this reaches you, you will have obtained from Governor Seward the diplomatic correspondence and read the 115 pages octavo devoted to Japan, more than of all the other ministers resident combined. I think it will interest you. You will see I have had a little sharp sink. But next year will serve up a more spicy dish if Governor Seward publishes as freely.

I think I have noticed all needful subjects. I only wish again to urge you to come to Europe. I am sure you will be pleased. You will of course, as I am still in commission,

have unusually good opportunities of seeing everything, with access to places closed to travelers. You may go as little to courts and cabinets as you please and I will only go when compelled to do so. I do not fear that obstacles will exist to prevent our going as much to high quarters as will be pleasant, as both in England and France I am given to understand my course has been highly commended in government circles. One of my best Holland friends, the A[ide] D[e] C[amp] of the King, is now on his way home. At Rome and elsewhere we will have the entree to the most prohibited spots of any there be. Therefore, come!

Love and kisses for yourself, my precious wife, Charlie, and Sue and Ber and kind regards to all.

From your loving husband,
Robt. H. Pruyn



No. 39 Kanagawa, Japan December 29 1864

My Beloved Wife,

Very unexpectedly a vessel has been advertised for freight to San Francisco, to leave here early in January, not later than the 15th and probably as soon as the 10th, by which opportunity I propose sending all my public letters and the bulk of what at this busy season I shall be able to prepare for home.

The last mail arrived here the 24th but its contents were far from satisfactory to me, only one letter, the first part of the same date September 24 or the closing portion of a letter received by the preceding mail, the last sheet of the date of the 27th. New York papers were received of the date of October 7 and telegrams from Paris of November 3rd communicating the New York news of October 22nd of a victory by [General Philip] Sheridan over [Lieutenant General James] Longstreet. If I longed for later home letters, I had some compensation in receiving a letter from C. W. Brooks & Co. of October 20 and California papers received of the date of October 20 and 21, and letters of the 22nd stating Sheridan had taken 43 cannon. We therefore anticipate we shall have satisfactory details by next mail which is expected January 7th. Grant still appears tenacious of purpose and tenacious also in his grasp on Richmond. We hope. The election news was quite satisfactory and light shines in that quarter also.

I could learn nothing of the gunboat. But on the 26th was agreeably surprised to see by a little Philadelphia paper which had been sent to a seaman on the *Jamestown* that it had on the 6th actual started on its trial trip. I shall be grievously disappointed if its departure for Japan was delayed beyond the middle of that month.

Before noting your letter I will say a few words of affairs here.

The first blood has been shed in Japan this month by order of the government in defense of foreigners. Two men who, although not actually participating in the murders, yet proven to have been in the company of one of the men suspected of the murder and to have belonged to a band combined to assail foreigners, have been publicly beheaded. Yesterday the man in whose company they were seen was beheaded in the presence of the 20th regiment and of the marines paraded for that purpose and of hundreds of spectator foreigners and Japanese. He was arrested in Yedo having been traced by means of some old gold coins which he had taken from farmers on the pretense of their duty to support him as he was working to rid Japan of foreigners. After being tortured he confessed he was the actual murderer and gave the name of his comrade. The Japanese invariably examine witnesses by some form of torture. In this case, I believe in addition to being beaten with bamboo, as the government stated they had done, he was made to kneel on pointing stakes and weight after weight was piled on his thigh till the pointed wood pierce to the bones of his shins etc. and till the agony forced a confession. Truth, even thus exhausted through the shin bones, may be very liable to suspicion. Yet his subsequent conduct and other proof leave little or rather no doubt of his guilt.

He was brought from Yedo and asked by the British Vice Consul whether he was the murderer and answered unhesitatingly "Yes!" But as he proceeded to state how he had been examined he was stopped by the Japanese officers, a boy and two men identified him as the man they had seen at Kamakura who had attacked and killed Major Baldwin and Lieutenant Bird. He was then placed on a horse and tied on a pack saddle with his hands pinioned, and preceded and flanked by a Japanese guard armed with muskets, and by men bearing two placards giving his name and age, stating also his crime and sentence, was paraded through the streets of both the foreign and Japanese quarters. I saw him thus paraded. He was truly a savage looking and desperate character, evincing neither fear nor repentance. Most of the time he was singing at the pitch of his voice, improvising verse. The burden of his song was his hatred of foreigners, the danger they threatened to bring on Japan, the growth of Yokohama, the decadence of Yedo. He was to have arrived from Yedo at 12 o'clock and after being thus paraded, beheaded at 4 o'clock. But he did not reach here till 3 o'clock and he was going through the streets after being examined by the Vice Consul as above stated as late as 4½ o'clock. At that time the British troops had been dismissed and Mr. Winchester, after consulting me, had determined he would not sanction by his consent a night execution. We feared it would excite suspicion, perhaps, that some other person had been substituted for the real offender. The Japanese officials were very anxious to have it over. They probably feared he might escape or be rescued and then woe to them! So they said while he was still at the prison a mile or more from Yokohama that he was so weak they feared he

would die that night, that he had been so badly beaten and had refused food so that he would escape final punishment if not beheaded at once. But all this was as we suspected untrue. On his arrival, when they were tying him on the horse, he asked where he was to be taken. And on being informed, complained he had not had his dinner. And when I saw him I was satisfied if he was not again beaten or otherwise tortured or punished he might reasonably calculate on a good long life, good only in point of duration. As he was taken out of the place Mr. Brown was near him while taking food and he said to Mr. Brown you need not be anxious I will soon be out of your way. It is the law or custom in Japan that a criminal thus paraded may freely call for and must have whatever he wants to eat or drink. The next day we learned that he was kept thus tied on the horse at the place of execution until 8 o'clock while the Japanese government was vainly trying to get the sanction of the British minister to his execution. That evening Mr. Winchester told them all along they might do as they chose, but on their own responsibility. He asked why they resisted, complained of cold and being sleepy. Meanwhile the executioner who had fortified himself with *saki* had got drunk and actually fell or nearly fell into the hole, I forget which, which had been digged [*sic*] for the head to fall in.

The final argument used in vain to induce consent being given to the night execution was that it could not take place the next day, some old Tycoon having, as the interpreter said, died on that day a century or so ago and that the next day was some other holiday. But this was false also or else the old Tycoon was terribly insulted because this murderer did finally die on the anniversary of his death, the next day and the hour of 10 o'clock having been finally fixed for the execution.

At that hour the troops and other spectators were present. Colonel Brown asked the British minister and myself to be present. I declined for the reason it would be regarded by the high Japanese officials as a degradation. If it had any impression on the people and any other on the officials it might be that we were vindictive and blood thirsty. My colleague of France sustained this view and we all stayed away. Our colleague of Holland who had been on the ground for more than four hours the previous day and had not seen us was present at the final scene.

I have had an account of what transpired from several amateur witnesses as well as from gentlemen connected with the British Consulate officially in attendance. The man refused to be bandaged and when his objections were favorably received manifested his satisfaction by uttering a hearty *arigato* (which Ber may have succeeded in remembering is "thank you"). He ate and drank within a few minutes of his death. Sang his death song, which may be used in corroboration of the idea that the Indians of our country are of the same race, declared that the day was an unfortunate one for Japan when a Japanese *yakunin* was put to death for killing a foreigner, that he would show foreigners how a true Japanese could die, that foreigners would yet destroy Japan. He asked that

his body and head might be sent home. This was at first refused and twice refused. He persisted in his request saying it was his last request and that he would pray for it (using a phrase which describes the Japanese urgent mode of asking rubbing the hands together) if his hands were not tied and in obtaining a promise from the officials that his body would be so disposed of, said he was then ready and in a few moments he was in eternity. I shall not further dwell on the horrid scene. By way of California I may send fuller details.

The head was placed on the bridge between the governor's house and this place. And soon all Japan will learn that punishment will more surely await attacks on foreigners than if made upon some at least of their own people. I must have informed you we have recently received notice of the formal repeal of the ancient edicts against foreigners.⁴⁹⁷

Sir Rutherford Alcock left here on the 25th leaving Mr. [Charles A.] Winchester, British Consul, at this port in charge of the Legation as *charge d'affaires*. This gentleman you will recollect occupied the same position for a short time on and after my arrival and until replaced by Colonel Neale, on whom by the way he is a great improvement. Colonel Neale, who remains Secretary of Legation yet by title, is in France said to be very sick and will probably be unable to act here, which will be a disappointment which will prove fatal to none. Should he come I may improve in compunction. I take it for granted you have read our correspondence in 1863 published in our *Book of Diplomatic Correspondence*, which if you have not received do not fail to get. And by the way let Ber see Dawson so that receiving *Red Book* and *Legislative Manual*. He and Van Benthuyzen have always supplied me and if copies have not as usual been sent to me it may very shortly be too late to procure back numbers. I think I have already made this request.

I fear you have difficulty in reading some of my letters. I cannot get good paper for overland mail. But you will lessen the difficulty of reading these papers by placing a sheet of pure white paper behind the page you are attempting to read.

In narrating what has taken place here I should have added it was first asked and insisted that the murderer should be executed at Kamakura, the place of the murder about twenty miles distant. This is the site of the ancient capital of the Tycoons. Many of the most distinguished are buried [there], as well as ancestors of Satsuma and other Daimios. The great copper image Daibutz is near and very many temples of great sanctity and antiquity. Of course opposition was made to the proposal and it was objected that these sacred places would be polluted. How far this was affected we cannot say. Perhaps had it been insisted on, the objections would have been yielded as readily as was that to the day on which the execution took place. But it was not insisted

⁴⁹⁷ See <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1865p3/d238> for RHP's dispatch to Seward recounting this event.

on as it would have necessitated a long march of the troops and subjected them to great exposure merely for an idea. And the effect might be questionable. Possibly some ground of objection such as was stated might exist. These temples are served by two-sworded men and it is unsafe to excite the fanaticism of a false religion, or even of one originally founded on truth.

The government has distributed quite widely—one is affixed at Kamakura—proclamations reciting the names, ages, offence and punishment of these men. Another paper is conspicuously put up requiring all persons on pain of punishment to give notice of any suspected assault on any foreigner, to warn him of danger and give information at once to the authorities if any attack be made and also to arrest at once the offender. The first effect of these proclamations will be to satisfy the Japanese of the wishes and intentions of the government to protect foreigners and to punish and not conceal as heretofore the offenders. The political effect is to widen the breach between the government and the hostile Daimios and to commit the government more thoroughly to the observance of the treaties and the maintenance of relations with foreign powers.

What will be the influence immediately flowing from the execution? If some Bravo were there of the same mold as the offender, animated by the same hostility to foreigners, ferocious and fearless as he was, he will be regarded by such as a martyr and his blood may stimulate others to kindred deeds of violence. He declared his name would be handed down as that of a true patriot. When life is so unsafe and so little valued, and where scarcely a day passes that their fearful swords fail to cut down some Japanese, it would be strange indeed if there were a particle of horror or any condemnation at the atrocity of the attack on the officers and their unprovoked murder. No such feeling as would thrill through any civilized community when such a crime is committed would be even understood here. I apprehend therefore that while this may in some slight degree operate to prevent similar crimes it will be full as likely to stir up others. What will be most talked of will be the motives which induced him to assault the officers. He said they did not insult him. He did not know that they even saw him. His fearlessness, his predictions of evil to Japan, will no doubt be discussed over many a cup of *saki* and I should prefer in such moments not to be so near as to put them to the test, whether they would think of the execution and fear to subject themselves to the same punishment, or of the man who was executed and covet his posthumous honors. I am far from believing the murder of foreigners will altogether cease.

December 30

Have three long years actually passed away since I left Albany for Japan? This day is really the anniversary of my departure. Three eventful years have passed. Their golden sands measured as they were slipping through our fingers appeared numberless as without end. But now that the font of time has compacted them, moistened as they are

by the dew of gratitude or the tear drops of sorrow, how few they appear, in what a brief space can they be contained. It appears but as yesterday since Ber left me. The same drizzling rain is falling, the same gloomy day darkens the shore and the bay. I am more restless and impatient. When I knew I could not expect to leave I submitted with a good grace. Now that I can think of leaving and am permitted to hope for the speedy arrival of the day, the hours are not winged. They are tortoises which travel slowly and whose motions cannot be quickened. And I am asking myself questions as to the movements of that ship and whether you have told the captain to spare no coal. I hope it will come with the wings of the wind, but whenever the wind is sleepy and its wings folded its slumbering fires will awaken and it will screw itself into my favor by screwing its way here despite calm or even adverse winds. The monsoon is against the ship at this season, but it should be here in 100 days. A steamer reached Shanghae in 63 days from New York. I expect no such performance. But it must be here in January. It cannot be that the captain has not been urged to make good speed.

My passage is taken for March. But I now fear I may be thrown over to April, a far less favorable season and with the certainty of having a poorer steamer. I hope nevertheless the ship left as early as the 15th October and if the captain uses coal as freely as he should it may be here in January. A month may be required to close my business here. The Japanese officials are so slow. I am now obliged to suspend writing as I have business with a governor at 1 o'clock. Portman is nearly well but as he is subject to fever at night I have not much assistance from him. He still complains of his head and says his mind is not right yet.

I have concluded the business I had with the governor which was of an unimportant nature and which anywhere else would have been postponed. I sent word I would see him if absolutely necessary but would prefer a postponement of the interview till after the mail had left as I was busy. But it is of no use to say this. However unimportant it may be, when told to do a thing no delay which they can avoid is possible. But when asked to do anything a different rule prevails. Then you have reason to believe that such a thing as haste or even moderate activity is an article not indigenous to the soil.

Mrs. Fisher is preparing for a party to come off Monday evening January 2nd. On Wednesday evening a Bachelor Ball was given which for Yokohama was quite a brilliant affair. Of course the thousand trifles which in civilized quarters contribute to the embellishment and to the luxury of a table are wanting here. Oysters are far from excellent and what we have are a drag. I did not go to supper. But what would be said of a table at home with those large turkeys, particularly if costing \$10 to \$20 each? Or with roast beef or mutton on it? A little cream was provided, simply for the ladies. An ice cream freezer here, preparing ice by means of heat, is an expensive as well as elaborate affair, and one machine will only prepare enough for a dozen or so.

But in one respect no country in the world surpasses this for such entertainments.

The quantity of evergreens, berries, and fruit which can be procured for ornamenting the rooms is truly wonderful. The small coolie orange⁴⁹⁸ as it is called, which is now in season, can be brought at very favorable prices and in great quantities, and while there are endless varieties of evergreens, there are also several varieties of brilliant flowers and berries. It is a fine country for Christmas and when that day comes to be observed by natives as well as foreigners there will be enough and to spare. We have now in great abundance berries like those in the tree in our old garden in the center of the Green and also the more brilliant scarlet berry of the sacred bamboo. The coolie orange is about the size of our Lady apple. We have now from twenty to thirty ladies who can be relied on for a dance and I am in my element because with the numerous officers afloat and ashore who are crazy for a dance I am not persecuted to be partner in a dance I do not understand and most thoroughly detest. The ladies are much favored in another direction. There are no wall flowers and so long as they can dance they are in demand however stout their legs or large may be their feet or awkward their poetry of motion, which may degenerate into more than plain blank verse. This is the paradise of old maids. Such may indeed be so venerated as to remain old maids still, but they are not avoided as Scotch thistles, nor are they held beneath the chin as I have seen boys and girls hold the butter cup, though I think they would be vastly fond of butter. We have a very young one here about 50 who is as innocent and coquettish as a girl of 15. She is very admirable at a distance. I have so profound a respect for the virgin fortress of her heart as to have never spoken to her. She is known to affect beer and porter and such varieties slightly. Her sister married the British Chaplain and if as is freely said she has on two occasions at least been high, it may only be intended as proof of her high Church tendency and show that she has only made a grammatical mistake in being spinsterously inclined.

The junior bachelors propose giving a ball about the middle of January.

I will say now a few words about your meeting me in Europe. While I have little faith in your ability to procure the necessary supply of courage, you cannot fail to see I have done my share in providing you with the necessary amount of cash. As you have sententiously said in reference to certain concessions, that will be my case. You need therefore feel no hesitation on the ground of expense. I will guarantee that we need trespass on no portion of our income unless you have grown extravagant since you were relieved of my presence, and of the restraint I imposed by precept and example. I can therefore see no reason why you should not meet me unless indeed Governor Seward shall advise you he expects me to come home with the view of receiving instructions and then return to Europe, which may not be either because he will send instructions

⁴⁹⁸ The orange *Citrus sinensis*, thought to originate in China. The orange was formerly considered to be a variety of *Citrus aurantium* (J. *daidai* 橙).

or because I will not be expected or required to act. As to Charlie, he of course will be a young traveler, but travel even at his age will do him no harm. Ber can hasten home as soon as he delivers you and Sue and Charlie to me if he do not wish to be detained from his studies. You will never have such another chance to see Europe and its celebrities. Therefore embrace, and come and embrace me somewhere about Naples or Rome. We will take a look into Vesuvius and see for ourselves whether the doctor has left anything in it.

I would suggest if you do not come and continue writing you should number your letters. I will know if any are missing and can enquire for them.

After this I shall begin numbering mine anew and every letter via California will be either No. 1 or No. 2 of the series of 1865. The French mail will leave here January 13, shortly before or after the mail via California. The British mail will leave about the 20th of January.

December 31

I have reexamined your letter received by last mail. It gives an unusually full and interesting notice of very many friends, their condition, doings, etc. which requires however no special reply. I regret to hear so many are beginning to show such unmistakable signs of old age. And should be glad to learn that in our Church especially there were to be found young men able and prepared to supply their places while in every other department of life there are multitudes standing ready to step into vacant shoes. It does not often so happen in the Church. The letters of Dr. and Mrs. Clark I hope to answer by way of California and to give Sue a New Year's blast. I fear she does not appreciate my letters. Prepared as you can see at a vast expenditure of time and labor and with a frightful waste of the tissues of the brain, the least I can expect is she shall not laugh when she reads. My next shall therefore be prepared with the view of exciting not even a smile. And if I am spared to return, I shall unite with your medical neighbor in insisting on homeopathic doses of laughter and noise. If I am to be an old fogy I must be a tremendous one. Is it possible for me to be at the head of the class, at least in our family?

I think I will not attempt to send more than this sheet. I am obliged to send at this season my quarterly accounts and certain formal dispatches which are required at the close of each year.

I may send a small package by Mr. Paine of Troy who returns by this mail. Should he not present himself at Albany in a respectable season Ber can see him or visit him.

I have sent via Shanghae 2nd and will send direct by the *Bacchante* firsts of certain bills to C. W. Brooks & Co., directing that the gold collected shall be paid you and the proceeds of the sterling bills held to your credit about £494, gold about \$1,000. If you conclude to have amount with Brooks for investment please advise him. I think if gold

continue high or rather currency depreciated you had better have it sent to you and invest it in government bonds or New York Central. I hope you took some of the new forty million loan⁴⁹⁹ should another one offer. You can subscribe direct through the Bank of Commerce.

You will bear in mind that New York Central Railroad at late prices equals less than 55 cents in gold. It appears to me therefore you should have purchased some unless you think it better to put all spare funds in government stocks which are of course more advantageous as they can at any time probably be charged for railroad stocks even at more favorable rates.

You will bear in mind I sent two trunks by Mr. Brower at beginning of this month and a large box in the *Delaware* which reached San Francisco in October and by both these opportunities a small box of plant bulbs etc., etc. I hope all arrived in good order. The trunks contained the linen, silver, etc. I expect to ship in a few days direct to New York a large number of boxes which were packed before Ber left.

You will not fail to remember me as usual to those who shall enquire as to my health etc., etc., and to give my regards especially right and left to the family. Also my love to Charles, Abby etc., Baby and love and kisses for Sue, Charlie, Ber and for yourself, my dear wife.

I must now go to Portman's and finish my papers, some of which may have to go this mail.

You may like to hear that the friendship of Sir Rutherford and Lady Alcock was uninterrupted. He is anxious for my presence in England and says he will tell Earl Russell I am expected. His letter taking leave was highly complementary and kind attributing much of his success to my efficient services etc., etc. My own government cannot fail to be pleased.

I may be able to send a few lines more, though the inducement is wanting as letters via San Francisco will probably reach you earlier.

Adieu my loving and beloved wife,
Robt. H. Pruyn

⁴⁹⁹ In October of 1864, the U.S. Treasury Department issued bonds to the amount of \$40,000,000 dollars bearing an annual interest rate of 6%.

1865

2. ⁵⁰⁰

I do not think hostilities need be apprehended with this country or any of the Daimios, but efforts will be made by the hostile party to intimidate the native merchants and then annihilate trade. It is said the organized opposition avow their determination to destroy these men as enemies to their country, who for their own gain are willing to impoverish the country and therefore more to be hated than foreigners. It will be necessary however for all to observe great caution. In our country railroad companies and steamboat proprietors have the monopoly of the privilege of undervaluing and destroying life. In this, every man who wears two swords will surrender his own life as readily as he will destroy another. These rice fed people have thin blood and I suppose wounds and death even do not hurt them much. And yet they never expose themselves if it can be avoided. They are cowardly assassins when they can be such. But if they cannot attack in numbers and behind one's back and exposure becomes necessary they do not hesitate even though their own instant death is inevitable.

I received last evening a curious letter from Tateishi Onigero (Tommy) who wishes it returned as his head would be off if it were known he had written. He says the Gorogio are intimidated and cowardly, that the hostile party go to them every day and talk angrily and threaten, that he hears we have been to Yedo and were to be there again today. That we must talk strong and strike the table hard. Then the Gorogio will think we are in earnest but that if we are very moderate and cool and friendly they will think we are afraid. That the party friendly to foreigners are looking with anxiety to our course and believe peace will prevail if we are firm. We have all refused to go to Yedo and to listen to any propositions to abandon the sport, except we will forward to our governments any rate and communication they may see fit to address to us. Another British minister has written that if the government or Daimio make it any attack, the British force will retaliate, whether one small force will join depends upon circumstances. I shall exercise great forbearance towards the government, less towards Daimios. We have a right to

⁵⁰⁰ This is an orphan page. From the contents, it seems to be sheet two of No. 1 of 1865.

regard such as Nagato if they fire on us as pirates, enemies to us and the rest of mankind and rebels to their own sovereign. In all cases I shall be very firm and resolute. We had gained much by our firm attitude against Nagato. The U.S. flag is more than a rag or strip of bunting. It is more respected by all and represents power. I have some curiosity to hear how my small war was received at home. They must send someone else here if willing to stand such nonsense. By the way, I sent via San Francisco and Cape Horn the shot which went into the captain's cabin of the *Wyoming* and a part of the shell that did most of the damage killing and wounding seven men. I will place these in our state library or at Washington as is thought best. Although Nagato, when the *Wyoming* reached Simonoseki, had already fired into an American merchant ship, a small French gunboat and the sloop of war *Medusa* of Holland, yet the *Wyoming* was the first vessel which went to fire and be fired into and these are relics of the first action ever deliberately joined in Japan.

I may as well say that a large box will go the same way containing a crab, dead and only the shell of a crab such as you and Sue like so much, directed Rutgers College care of Professor Cook. This crab is only 11 $\frac{3}{4}$ feet from end of claw straight across his back to the end of other claw. In the box are some hide skins for stuffing and some of the splendid coral I have already described. One package is for home and I shall ask Professor Cook to send it to you. It will be on hand for next Commencement. I suppose you sent the bugs etc. to him.

As the mail closes at 4:00 this sheet is all I can add to my morning work, which was pretty well used up in getting Mr. Hall off. He waited for breakfast after all, but did not change his mind till I had closed my letter. At 11, he was under sail with a fair prospect of a fine offing. As soon as I close my letters I must take some exercise as I have the first headache of the year.

If the ivories I sent reach you safely you will see some beauties. The group of mother, child and girl may appear unnatural in one respect, too much development in a region always open to inspection here. Though I can speak from a very extensive personal observation it may be as well to observe that as children are nursed here till 3 years old and hang on fairly sitting standing and lying. You may reasonably expect that nature will not be parsimonious. I submit all this however to Sue's better judgement. You may call Abby in and hold an inquisition when the lady reaches you.

And now again, a Happy New Year, my beloved and loving wife, from this far off land. With the wishes appropriate to the season to all enquiring friends and with abiding and unabating love for you and home from which I never wish to stir again.

Affectionately and fondly and ever yours,
Robt. H. Pruyn



No. 2 Kanagawa, January 10 1865

My Beloved Wife,

I can easily and fully understand how heavily the announcement that the gunboat could not sail fell upon your ears and heart.⁵⁰¹ To me your letter sounded sadly enough, though only conveying the announcement of what I regard only as an unfortunate delay. My telegram of October 18⁵⁰² announcing the full and satisfactory adjustment of all differences in Japan most assuredly have taken off the ban imposed by the president. Though the cause assigned was the attack on the *Monitor*, I can see that there were weightier considerations, connected with our relations with the Treaty Powers and affecting the proposed operations in Japan. But whichever may have been the real cause, whether one or both, they should not interfere to prevent the sailing after receipt of my telegram. I see the *London and China Express*, London November 10, announces, copying description of armament etc. from *New York Times*, that it had left for Japan. But I presume this was a mistake. I presume also the President would have allowed the ship to leave and confided the decision of the propriety of its delivery to myself, had he not designed its stoppage to have some bearing upon the discussion and decision of the course of England and France as to permitting Confederate ships being fitted out. You will readily see how the announcement that a formidable war steamer had been sent to the Tycoon as all the Treaty Powers were about commencing operations against a part of his empire would sound. And it was probably in this view he felt it impossible to confide the direction to me. That would have been known only to the government and myself or if communicated to other governments, would after all have left it my power to act if I felt so disposed contrary to the wishes or even the requests of my colleagues, while the departure of the ship would be an occurrence known to all and perhaps misunderstood by most.

I have said this much to show I was not greatly surprised by the occurrence. I had considered the possibility but had hoped it would be under weigh long before intelligence reached the government would make such an extreme measure possible, much less justify it. It would be improper for me to say more on this very unpleasant subject, except it will embarrass me greatly should great delay take place in its arrival. The time occupied has been necessarily, I know, so long as to make the Japanese government anxious. And if we have persons at home who think and openly declare

⁵⁰¹ See <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1866p2/d551>

⁵⁰² See <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1864p3/d502>

the country is ruined, would it be singular if this government attributed the delay to our pecuniary troubles and began to think its money would be engulfed with our country in one common ruin. But I shall say nothing to them at present. I shall put forward the London announcement of its departure, if I say anything, which I shall not do unless obliged, talk of long passages, adverse winds etc. and hope, expect and wait, for its arrival.

The *Bacchante* will leave here for San Francisco in a few days. I will send the government a telegram, asking it may be suffered to depart, though I still hope it is already far on its way.

This letter will go by the French mail which I hope it may reach at Shanghae to which port one of the French Squadron will go early in the morning. I shall not attempt a long letter. I am not exactly in humor for writing. And this cannot be expected to reach you as early as the letters which I hope to send via California, and probably no sooner than letters by the regular English mail, leaving here the 18th. I desire however to embrace every opportunity of sending you, if no more than an announcement of continued health.

Nothing has transpired since the 1st of any importance in a political view. All is quiet. The Tycoon appears to be preventing with some degree of energy his war against Chosiu. Large bodies of troops are moving towards Osacca, said to be collecting for such purpose. They are well armed and for the first time clothed in somewhat more of modern American and European style. But war among the Japanese will for a long time be more bloodless than with us. They do not know what a fair stand up fight means.

I have had my entire morning absorbed in some Nagasaki business by our Consul at that port, which I tried in vain to put off for a day.

I may as well speak in this letter as far as I can of my probable movements. Assuming the steamer left early in December, I might be able to leave early in May, which is the latest I fear would be prudent unless I had an opportunity to go via San Francisco, which for many reasons I dread. Shanghae, Hong Kong, etc., etc., are very unhealthy in summer and a passage up the Red Sea in July or August is dreaded and avoided by all who can do so. If thrown over May, I may be obliged to delay my departure till the last steamer in August, though even then the typhoon season commences. It may do however to go, say, the 18th or perhaps even September 1st. As to letters for me you may send direct for one month after the steamer leaves home, assuming the letters will occupy 3 months in transit, the steamer 4 months subject to the above considerations as to seasons. For should the ship reach here in June or even in May, it may throw me over August. But I say no more. Here have I been counting the days of my further residence gradually lessening from 90 to 60 and then falling below that number and here comes a tiny sheet of paper, with a few lines traced with a pen and mighty as the want of an enchanter it fairly deprives me of breath.

My darling wife I can only hope you are now joyous in the thought of obstacles removed and conjecturing the progress she has made toward her port of destination. I shall not permit myself to think otherwise. Keep up a good courage and be a brave little wife as you have been and we will pray for better times and a happy meeting.

How would it be if we were in Europe a few years and have our boys educated there? Think of it. I could easily effect an exchange with one of those missions and in these times such a salary is well worth consideration, especially in view of what Ber says of Charles' xxx. But whether this is desirable or not, it is all sheer nonsense that any pecuniary obstacle exists to all of your meeting me in Europe, and staying there as long as agreeable. And I am not sure that it would be unwise, unpleasant or unprofitable to our boys to adopt the plan of a short residence in Europe. I am sure I could effect a transfer to almost any of the countries where we have a Minister Resident and in close vicinity to a good university and school.

With my love to my boys and Sue and to you, my dear wife, and kind regards to all relatives and friends.

Truly, your loving husband,
Robt. H. Pruyn



No. 3 Kanagawa, January 16 1865

My Beloved Wife,

I have received no letters from home since my letter number two sent you a few days ago by the French mail. This, like that, will not be a very long one, as at the end of this week the *Bacchante* will bear to California a package which will reach you many days in advance of the arrival of either of these which were sent off in advance.

I hope you rejoiced weeks ago in the departure of the long delayed *Fusiyama* and that it is by this time half way on its long journey to Japan. Though grievously disappointed, I shall be satisfied if it reach here in time for me to leave early in May so that I can reach the French steamer leaving Hong Kong the end of May. It is barely possible (but I should fear to do it) I might venture to leave later. But I fear there will be no escape till late in August. I shall send a telegram via San Francisco as a precautionary act. Every difficulty is now settled as the government has arrested and executed one of the murderers of Baldwin and Bird and two of his accomplices and will without doubt use every exertion to arrest the one at large. Great Britain will not make any pecuniary demand. Japan is now under obligation to pay all and probably more than will be insisted on. My darling wife the distance between us appears longer and more inexorable than

ever before. I would not say this, if it were not that these lines will be read by you when much of the time will have a lapsed which interposes a barrier to my ability to lessen that distance. I have been unsettled of late. The next mail will scarcely bring me any tidings which will enable me to decide my course. And probably many weeks will drag their slow length along, if my life be spared, before I am any wiser. But I shall try and be easy hoping at least that you will be pleasantly relieved of this uncertainty.

It has been quite stormy on this coast. Since the year commenced, a British merchant ship has been wrecked and the corvette *Osprey* from this port to Hakodate with Captain Vyse,⁵⁰³ the British Consul for that port on board, had a narrow escape last week. She put back arriving here on Saturday with three boats gone, bulwarks broken in and otherwise disabled.

The local news is in other respects very tame. Sir Rutherford's furniture was sold last week, bringing \$7,200 for what cost half that sum. Much of it had been in use all the time he and Colonel Neale were in Japan. Some of it had belonged to her ladyship when she was Mrs. Lowder. Polsbroek, the Dutch Consul General, said to me what rotten things were sold? He had purchased a package of linen nicely tied up, said to be sheets and pillow cases. He said he of course thought it needless to examine the package, as he would have done at an ordinary sale. But when sent to the wash he found he had purchased a lot of old rags, the most valuable part of the package being one of her ladyship's night caps. The gossips when I leave will have no chance of criticizing any of our articles, though all that I had even including those bought of Mr. Harris would stand hard usage. I forgot to say Polsbroek paid \$4 Mexican for each sheet. Had ours been without your name on I could have made a good operation by bringing them to the hammer. Two looking glasses, oval with candlesticks at the side, half the size of your old ones, brought \$50 each. Yellow covered literature 12 bits per volume. Auctions are considered an amusement here and like amusements prove expensive ones to many. Extravagance has not many avenues in which to display itself here. And yet there is not a mercantile house here where household expense is less than \$5,000 per annum.

I enclose bill of lading of 25 boxes sent to New York in British ship *Velocidade*. The ship is sent to Napier, Wilsford & Co. and if it make as quick a voyage as was expected will be with you nearly as soon as this letter. I will send via San Francisco another bill of lading and an invoice together with a letter to the Collector. When I shipped these goods I hoped I might reach you nearly in time to see myself to the unpacking of the boxes. Now it will be needful not only to avoid having the boxes opened in New York but even to prevent their going to the public store because the two large boxes especially, which contain the two large cabinets, if handled as carmen usually throw them around, would be worth very little when they finally reached you. It is likewise essential that the

⁵⁰³ Francis Howard Vyse was the consul at Hakodate from 1862-1865.

boxes should not be opened, because you will know how frail most Japanese articles are and they cannot be repacked as I have sent them. The first thing is therefore get them home directly if possible without being opened, and have them sent from ship direct to steamboat. If this is impossible have them sent and stored at Albany to await my arrival and if this cannot be done they will then have to be stored in New York. I have had these articles insured for \$5,000. Bear in mind many of them were purchased in Yedo three years ago, some since then and at $\frac{1}{4}$ and sometimes $\frac{1}{5}$ of the price now charged for the same class of articles here even at that time, and everything has now advanced in price. You had better have Mr. Usher, if yet in the Custom House, take the supervision of these things. He may see that the two larger flat boxes which contain the cabinets shall not be knocked about. I fear I did not take sufficient care in putting a support between the shelves to strengthen it when standing on its top. If Mr. Weed is on good terms with Draper the Collector⁵⁰⁴ he may be able to arrange this as he may get an order from the Department at Washington. One of the cabinets I think now will answer to what Mrs. Alden wanted. If he cannot arrange it Charlie or Ber can see Mr. Draper who is an old friend of mine and this may answer.

The consigners of this vessel are the consigners of the *Osborne* and you can see about your tea if you have not got it yet.

I have two dogs which I expect to send by *Benefactress* in March. They are about half the size of those you have, but as wild as kittens yet, being entirely unused to foreigners. I have them brought up to my room. But they are inclined to show their teeth and repel all friendly demonstrations.

I should say in relation to goods shipped, boxes 19 to 25 both inclusive contain Japanese paper lanterns and umbrellas. The lanterns will be grand for illuminations. One small box of tea, 15 pounds, presented to me by Mr. Loureiro is included in those numberings. Ber will recognize what was saved of my Yedo things, screen and fringes, etc., etc.

I am unable to write much more today as I have to arrange for charter of *Takiang* today which has been delayed till now as the owners claimed more than I was disposed to concede. It is well therefore that it is better to delay sending much by this mail, as the *Bacchante* is expected to make a fair passage, though probably not as rapid as the *Ida D. Rogers* and other ships which have long known the way. I shall try and send a large package at the end of the week and exhaust all I have to say as well as every thought I can conjure up.

We have fine weather. Fruit trees in blossom. The lowest point the mercury has yet

⁵⁰⁴ Simeon Draper (1806-1866) was appointed the 16th Collector of the Port of New York in 1864. Before that he served in various capacities in New York state government, and was a member of the Whig party.

reached that I know of is 32 above zero though Dr. Hepburn I believe has recorded it at 26 above. What a different climate you have at this moment at Albany! I hope Ber is very careful. See to his clothing. I never found him too careful here. I tremble now when I think of the risks he would have run had he stayed here while the murderer Seigei⁵⁰⁵ was hanging around seeking an opportunity to cut down foreigners. The smallpox continues still on some of the ships, but the mortality is not great. The *Jamestown* is free from it. An engineer on the *Coromandel* while reading on Sunday in his cabin was suffocated by the fumes of charcoal. In falling he upset the *hibachi* and set his cabin on fire, which led to his being found, though too late to revive him.

My beloved wife, for you and Sue and Ber and Charlie I send love and kisses, with every loving wish and constant thought and with kind remembrances to all and hoping you are even now giving my relatives and friends my kind regards and wishes. God keep and bless you, my precious wife,
Robt. H. Pruyne



Business January 20 1865

I will write a few things, my dear wife, under this head, though my head is not so easy as to make writing easy or pleasant. I unfortunately dined out last evening, dinner commencing at 8 o'clock. Party separated at 1 o'clock. Party present: our entertainers Mr. and Mrs. McDonald,⁵⁰⁶ Dr. and Mrs. Jenkins⁵⁰⁷ (a sister of Mrs. McDonald), Mr. and Mrs. Fisher, Mr. and Mrs. Schoyer and Mrs. Blidgens her sister, Captain Vyse British Consul at Hakodate and Mr. Loureiro and myself. Dinner in part, mutton from China, turkey from the Sandwich Islands, pineapples from the island of Formosa. The presence of the ladies would guarantee sobriety, therefore it is not needful I should say anything on that subject and yet an unmistakable headache is the result. But as a slight cold accompanies it, that may be the proximate cause of the headache.

It is blowing fearfully today, which I hope will delay the ship. The mail is now adverting to close at 5 p.m. tomorrow and these are the first lines I have written to you. I have only completed my blast for Ber and two sheets of Bowwow for Charlie. And I should be mortified if my performance by this mail should fall far short of the promise.

⁵⁰⁵ Shimizu Seiji 清水清次 (1841-1864) one of the men executed for the attack on Bird and Baldwin in 1864.

⁵⁰⁶ William McDonald (d. 1884) was a broker for Lloyds of London.

⁵⁰⁷ Griffith Richard Jenkins (d. 1870).

I have sent you three letters in January and all of them unusually brief as this opportunity was to be given. I am now at Portman's. He is finishing the last of 16 dispatches for the Department which will go forward by this mail, affording an unusual supply of light reading, including as enclosures testimony in Major Baldwin's etc. case, confession, sentence and execution of murderer. Land conventions etc. and sundry important documents, some confidential. If these dispatches contain much rubbish, it is a comfort nearly \$100 of postage will be saved the government which would be the contribution to our European neighbors if sent via Marseilles.

I note what you say of New York Central Railroad stock which is all right. It would be a good investment at par to which point you say Cashier Martin anticipates it will go, provided you shall, long before it touches the point, convert your gold funds into currency, as I presume New York Central will not touch par till gold has had a tumble which will break the back of speculation or very seriously cripple it. I count upon my remittance early in August reaching you about the right time. I should not fear if you even doubled what I estimate you have in government stocks. If they are worth little, everything else must fall.

I did not understand whether for this purpose you proposed entirely or partially to withdraw the funds in the hands of Messrs. C. W. B[rooks] & Co. Do as you think best. I have now sent them about \$3,500 more with the same instructions as to your control.

By the time this reaches you a very material change may have taken place in the money market. If gold be still worth so much more than the currency it will be a nice question for you to decide what to do with your uninvested funds and those in hands of C. W. B[rooks]. It might do very well to convert to currency and keep a large balance to your credit in bank to invest when the bottom falls out of the stock market and the bulls lie prostrate after a Waterloo defeat. Of course that deposit would be a fixed and available sum whereas if invested in any stock, that stock would decline with the one you might be inclined to buy. In speaking thus I do not contemplate any such thing as speculation, but only the purchase for desirable stock when it has reached its lowest or very near its lowest price. In all this Martin would prove a very safe and sagacious adviser with one advantage certainly, unless he has very greatly changed, of not being over sanguine. I should advise you to have at least \$5 to \$10,000 always to your credit, never mind the loss of interest. Let it be a year uninvested if need be. The time will come when you will be able to quadruple the interest you may lose, or let Martin invest on ten days call a good sum in good security at a low interest and with a large margin of the stock on which loaned and if all this will give you too much trouble let it alone and do not care for any gain. I am writing as I do because you have become a business woman and must think of such sordid things as stocks and bills and gold. You must pay the penalty for such distinction. I suppose you read every day the money article and in addition to the daily discussion of the price per pound of beef, sugar, butter, etc. you

also consider the weightier articles of gold.

I do not see as it is of any importance for me to give you any further or other advice. I am so distant as to make my opinions of little value compared with that of an experienced financier like Mr. Olcott or Mr. Martin, to both or either of whom you or Charlie can at any time have access.

I should be pleased to have heard something about our bank but it is of no consequence now. I am glad you assisted [my brother] Gus as you inform me. It is better to give assistance early and if he has any disposition or power to be prudent now is the time for him to practice. If he cannot save now that his income is small he will not if it should be largely increased.

I cannot understand what Charlie can mean if he discourage your going to Europe on the score of deficiency of means. What you have even of mine must give you a handsome income which must be all surplus. I cannot judge what it is. But it cannot be less than your own and as I imagine much in excess. Though I am in the dark as to that because when you stated yours I did not know whether it was exclusive of mine entirely or included a part.

What Charlie and I have at the Works will of course be in great measure unproductive if he closed them in October as proposed, at least all of it which is absorbed in real estate, machinery, etc. though even from that source something must be available if the business be closed. But I will go on no more. Perhaps I may have some kind of statement.



No. 4 Kanagawa, January 21 1865

I have written, my beloved wife, a few pages of business matter for the mail which is now announced to close on the 24th and in this last evening of the week I commence a few lines which will neither be monopolized by curios, Custom House or the more solid charms of that rare article in our country, ruddy gold.

The first idea which occurs to me almost suffices to cause me to lay aside the pen at once, as it is founded on the small text comprising your letter of October 18, saying the vessel was not to be permitted to leave. The moment I placed my eyes on the shriveled envelope I knew it betokened leanness. I did not know what was the matter. But I instinctively knew something was out of joint. I pass by this most disagreeable topic awaiting the mail.

Last night we had another excitement. Three British officers started early in the morning up the bay after wild fowl, accompanied by two marines in an open boat.

About 9 o'clock it came on to blow fiercely and at 5 p.m. which was the hour they should have reported for duty, they had not made their appearance. At 8 o'clock Colonel Brown feeling alarmed, as he now says fearing their boat might have been swamped, but really having much more apprehension that the inevitable *ronins* were again at work, started out mounted parties in search for the tenants, as well a boat expedition, the wind having died away. The excitement increased as midnight was reached and no officers returned or intelligence arrived of their fate. The Japanese officials of course were called out in great numbers and were riding furiously in all directions. This they would have done if guards had only been sent out in pastime. They would have been obliged to issue forth ostensibly to protect the British soldiers, or as a corps of observation. Finally the missing party arrived about 3 a.m. They had put ashore a few miles above Kanagawa to escape the storm and when that subsided, it being very low water and their boat high and dry, they were obliged to wait till it was high tide again. I thought at the time there was needless alarm. The wind had been so high that a ship in the harbor dragged its anchor and lost it, the chain cable having broken. It was not unreasonable therefore to conclude that they had sought safety during the blow and as there were five well-armed officers and soldiers they were pretty safe from attack, which thus far has only been made on defenseless persons because unarmed or solitary (except in one instance) and taken by surprise, which this party was not likely to be after two of their comrades had by their false security paid the penalty for exposure by their lives. Besides, one of the number, Lieutenant Smith of the Marines, whom Ber knows, had long commanded that part of the legation guard and was an old campaigner in Japan. We have had those Americans for the last three days down the bay, but they started with the intention of staying away several days. Should they be ingloriously cut to pieces, it will be a national question, in any other country a simple murder, for which the offenders would be executed if caught and found guilty. What right have men to expose themselves thus?

I have sent 25 boxes home in the *Velocidade* consigned to Napier, Wilsford & Co. I give you the name of the consigners of the ship so that you may write to them and have them advise you of its arrival immediately she reaches port. I enclose bill of lading, a duplicate of which I sent you by last mail via Marseilles. Boxes Nos. 1 to 18 inclusive contain two large cabinets, 1 large screen, two pair large bronze vases and sundry articles I have had in use. Three of the boxes contain some porcelain vases from Nagasaki purchased for me by the Consul General of the Netherlands and which I have never seen. Boxes 19 to 25 inclusive, contain 1 box tea presented me and the balance paper lanterns and a few umbrellas. The invoice contains a full description as is needful. The first thing is to have them sent to Albany free or with duty if needful. If they are first sent to the store house and knocked about as carmen generally treat large packages many of the articles will be broken and rendered worthless. There are three large flat boxes, which contain the two cabinets and the base of one of them. These will require

very careful handling. I should have braced between the shelves as the lower part is so much heavier than the top, on which it may at times stand. But in other respects you will see it will disclose a wonderful care in packing. It is so exceedingly beautiful. I hope it will arrive safe. I would not give much for these things if opened at the Custom House. I enclose a letter to my friend the Collector. It may do well to invoke the aid of Mr. Weed. But I believe he and Draper are not on as good terms as formerly. Still it may be necessary for him to get an order from the Treasury Department at Washington and with the American Secretary Mr. Harrington he can easily arrange it. I should only be charged duty at the most say on \$4 to 500 worth of the articles as the bulk in value has been in actual use by me. I have put down the cost at far less than the present value here. Many of these articles have advanced greatly in price. Besides they were purchased at Yedo where I had no competition. The large screen which cost me a little over \$60 I could have sold here for \$600, and so with many other articles. I have had them insured for \$5,000 less payable at Shanghae which would net me in gold say \$6,200 in New York, so if they are lost I shall not be without consolation. It may be well to invoke Mr. Usher's aid, who will be able to select careful cart men and have them put safely on the river steamboat direct from the ship. Try and have it so arranged. I will say in my letter to Mr. Draper what I suggest as admirable giving several alternative proposals. Charlie or Ber had better see Draper or have Stetson do so if Weed and he are not on good terms now. I feel sure Mr. Draper will do all he can. But an order from Washington will put things right. It is impossible for me to give a particular description as a few of the boxes were already packed at the time of the Yedo fire and I cannot tell what they contain.

The two cabinets are in boxes Nos. 7, 8, 16. These are the boxes which require to be handled most carefully in taking from the ship. And it would be next to impossible to save the articles from being broken if opened and repacked. The same may be said of all the boxes up to 19 except Nos. 1 & 2 which contain the heavy bronzes. I believe there are bronzes in two other boxes, but I am not sure. I had four large bronze vases, but cannot say that more than two were saved. Should these boxes be unpacked before my return you must be very careful particularly with Nos. 7, 8, and 16. See they are placed broadest side down and covers taken off very carefully. You will find matting, cotton and silk wadding around the cabinets. They cannot be broken unless as I have said by standing on top too much.

But I thought it too formidable a thing to repack them especially as they have been so long in the boxes and I have ventured on their shipment. I did wish to open the large cabinet myself, a perfect beauty. But you had better not delay it, if sent to Albany. I have a few things yet at Fisher's including a very beautiful red cabinet which I purchased at the sale of M. de Bellecourt's things, also a stand or small table of same material like one sent by *Velocidade*. Do not forget to see that the consigners of ship are requested to notify you of its arrival—Napier, Wilsford & Co. New York. The ship left early in

January and is expected to reach New York in March as it had a favorable monsoon through the China Seas.

I see by letter from Messrs. Barings Bros. & Co. that you have drawn what I placed to your credit with them. With what reached you sent forward in August, bill on Mercantile Bank London China etc., etc., and your California funds you must be quite a capitalist. As I am not with you to inculcate prudence let me whisper this word along the small whispering gallery which is stretched out between us. I should do nothing except in government stocks, New York Central, Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati Railroad, which is a decided favorite with me. Say City Bank. We have enough in the Commercial, Merchants and F[armers]. Should it be in the market at what is considered fair terms, Albany Insurance and good real estate like the store on Broadway. Some good opportunities may offer if you keep funds well in hand.

I have written the above to spin out the business sheet. The ship it is now (Saturday 21st) said will not leave till the 25th. So as it is a beautiful day I will walk. The mail is expected tomorrow or Monday. So I may have an opportunity to answer your letters of as late date as last week in October, perhaps of November as it is the mail from London of the 26th of November. I had only three letters by two last mails and one the short one about the slow coach gunboat, which I hope is now half seas over.

Kanagawa, January 23 1865

I have written, my beloved, several sheets full which are sealed up in envelopes. I think seven to you, four to Ber and two each to Sue and Charlie unsigned.

Mrs. Fisher was telling me last evening that one of the purple dresses which I had given Mrs. Brown rubbed off its color so fearfully as to render it useless. You had better enquire as to those given Mrs. Weed and Mrs. Seward. Those and the pieces you have on hand it may be should be dyed. The Japanese colors are all vegetable, some of them are not fast and spot easily while others, strange to say, will bear washing well.

I send you in one envelope a complimentary New Year's letter addressed to me by the Gorogio and also one from the governor of Kanagawa with translations for presentation in our archives. I send also a copy of a few of my fancy letters where I have had passages of arms with colleagues. I have no right to take public letters but these are so much of a private and personal character that I thought I might do it. You and our immediate family may find time to read part of them and find something to interest you. You will be able to judge to what extent they got the advantage of me! I presume by this time they are all printed in the Diplomatic Correspondence, as Governor Seward caused my first letter to Colonel Neale to be published, he will probably not withhold the others.

I send also a card case, a specimen of Bombay inlaid work which I hope will arrive safely. To even up the package I put in a beautiful small lacquer box and surrounded all

by some specimens of paper pictures which will almost suffice for pocket handkerchiefs.

By the way you had better send the balance of photographs to Van Benthuisen to be put in albums. He and I can settle. I am now collecting specimens of paper for him for book binding which reminds me of this. I am afraid some will be injured if left as they are. When you send them say I have desired it as he and I can very easily settle all unadjusted balances.

The mail closes tomorrow but I will seal up all that is ready in one or two large packages and enclose to Mr. Brooks. Then I will have little on my hands at the last moment.

Good day my dear wife,
Robt. H. Pruyn



January 24 1865

My Dear Jennie,

The mail is not yet in though this is the 60th day since it left London. The captain of the *Bacchante* is ready for a start and is only awaiting its arrival. The mail will therefore close today. But should the ship be detained beyond tomorrow morning I may have an opportunity to send a small parcel.

I will make up in one or two packages what I have ready. I send you a large number of photographs, stereoscopes, etc., etc., you will find an excellent one of Major Baldwin copied from one taken by himself, also one of Lieutenant Bird and the head of Seigei the murderer, as affixed on the bridge after the execution.⁵⁰⁸ There will be 9 packages of letters etc. like this, including this package.

I scarcely knew how to write to Mrs. Clark. I had neither time nor inclination for any heroics and she may not have been pleased with any. You may do as you please about handing her the note. As this is a very gay country at this time, flowers in full perfection, fruit trees radiant with blossoms and everything joyous as spring, she may better understand me and it. The truth is I am never bluer than when I write home, more so even than when I receive letters, because my letters are bound for home and I am not.

Everything is quiet here now. The new road to Mississippi Bay is in daily use. I have parted with my horse and do not ride much as I have been advised other exercise is better. So I walk sometimes nearly 10 miles a day, generally up and down the Bund

⁵⁰⁸ See <https://perma.cc/5G3S-UFRN>

where I have good sea air and as the club has a temporary bowling alley better than its former one, I am again at liberty to take that exercise which I have had an opportunity in one week to do on three occasions.

I think I had better not entirely exhaust my ideas now but leave something to send via Marseilles which I will have an opportunity to do in about ten days. I will not fail to send a few lines if possible in acknowledgement of any letters which may arrive. I shall now close, my dear wife, with my most loving wishes for the health and happiness of you and my darling ones far off at xxx. My kind regards to Baby, and all my relations and friends as usual.

Ever and faithfully yours,
Robt. H. Pruyn



Kanagawa, January 30 1865

My Dear Wife,

The *Bacchante* has proved a very uncertain damsel. But the captain now tells me he will get off tomorrow. Whether he will or not remains to be seen. Tomorrow the overland mail closes and I shall therefore not add to my large packages via California, simply sending a few lines in order to give the latest date.

Howard Brown will leave here in the *Benefactress* on the 3rd or 4th and that ship is expected to reach New York inside of 90 days. I hope privateers will not distract her on his account and also on my own as I will have 2 dogs on board and nearly 200 pounds of tea.

I am now looking to get off in April if possible as I wish to be in London while Parliament is in session, which I fear I cannot do leaving in May. Whether I shall stop at Rome will depend upon that session. Business may require me first to visit England. But unless ordered home I should hope then to visit the Continent. But I make no plans till I reach civilization.

The ship may be detained beyond the overland mail. Then I may add a few lines. But not if only detained one day as that would interfere with my letters tomorrow. And I have considerable China correspondence.

Love and kisses from your faithful and loving,
Robt. H. Pruyn



No. 5 Kanagawa, January 31 1865

My Beloved Wife,

Some half dozen bulky packages are probably at this moment on their way from this port in the *Bacchante* which has been delayed day after day until my patience was exhausted. A telegram of yesterday's date will be sent to you while two will go forward to the government dated ten days ago. But as they are enclosed in a large package to the Collector which I do not wish to disturb, I make no alteration.

Whether I shall leave here this spring I can probably decide next week and if so, whether in April or May will depend in a great measure upon what I hear from Mr. Delano. I have written by this mail to Messrs. Barings asking them to forward any letters they may receive for me to this place until advised by telegram to send elsewhere and I have requested Mr. Brooks to advise you of this by telegraph.

The *Lucy Ashby* from Shanghae for San Francisco will be here in a few days. There are grape cuttings from north of China on board for me. I wish all cared for by Dingwall. When I return we can send some to Washington. There are several varieties, one large white like the Malaga. As there are very heavy snows where these vines grow and the ground freezes to a great depth, deeper than with us, these may prove valuable varieties. I propose having them repacked by Mr. Hogg and sent to care of Mr. Brooks.

There is no garden in Yedo known as Von Siebold's, but I will enquire as to the sky blue grape which I believe to be all in the sky.

I have as usual had an hour's visit from Captain Price. He says I am always writing. Therefore he never thinks of going till his talk is exhausted, which would take more time did I not act most admirably the character of a listener and feed but slightly the fire by any fuel added by myself.

Howard Brown will leave for New York in a few days in the *Benefactress*. He will have as companion the two dogs Foose and Tama. I hope he and Charlie's pets will arrive in good health. The ship is expected to reach New York inside of 90 days. I will send four large packages of tea put up in ten pound boxes, in all 160 pounds. You will please present one of these boxes to Abby, one to Cousin Bob, one to Mrs. Clark. I leave the others to your discretion. If you think best to send to Cousin Cate, all right, and perhaps you had best send one to [Montgomery] Rochester. The tea will be marked and by next mail I may give description. You will have to pay duties if required. I will attend to all else.

You must have had brisk and noisy nights preceding the election. But I would have preferred all such an experience rather than wait more than three months to hear the result.

The government has approved my second war in Japan. Though I have not as yet

heard what they think of my charter of the *Takiang*. No one should be here as minister who is timid, nor anyone who is rash. I think you will all agree I have not been guilty of the former failing.

I feel very thankful for the result of the election. Personally I care little, though of course it is as well that my future course shall depend on myself or yourself. I suppose no one will be so unkind as to suppose the government would not prefer I should remain. It is always pleasant doubtless to have patronage. I am quite sure the president would be well satisfied to have me remain here or return and stay as long as he is responsible for the conduct of affairs. I must and will be modest and will leave it to others to say what verdict shall be passed upon my public acts. We will discuss the question you ask as to the next four years when we have the joy of meeting. I am constitutionally slow and averse to hasty decision. Slow but sure. Let that be our motto. You speak of my letter of August 26 but say nothing of my remittance of August 12, and of that day 3rds which were in shape of a bill on Chartered Mercantile Bank London China & India £1,500. The first was sent direct to Bank for acceptance. Write to Bank if 2nds etc. were not received.

You should have paid in the funds for the scholarship in our joint names. That was my wish and you should have observed it. For this you must expect a good scolding the first opportunity.

Perhaps it may be well for you to send for Ramsay and say I expect the directors of the Susquehanna Railroad to give Augustus as good a position as he is capable of filling. If Mr. Ramsay leave I hope soon to see him. It may have a good effect. Be careful to avoid giving him any reason to believe I do not intend to return. I do not wish nor will the government wish any rush for my place. It is far better the public shall understand I return. It will save Governor Seward and the president a vast deal of trouble. It may be well, should the war continue, seriously to consider the propriety of our being in Europe. I have no doubt King at Rome and many others would be glad of an exchange. This between ourselves as a family secret.

I suppose Sue has endowed one of Jonathan DeWitt's professorships, though I think the amount he asks for too little. The General is a liberal man. I hope Uncle Jacob H. will be long spared before his will takes effect.

As I have given Sue a good quantity of pen and ink sketches via California I will save her letters for reply till next mail. That golden wedding must have been a pleasant affair. I am sure I would have enjoyed the groom's poetry. The quotation must have carried the day. Sue omitted to say whether it was in Classic Dutch. That would surely have proved irresistible. I think it must have been our good *Christian Intelligencer* motto. Though unfortunately Mr. H. may not have known that our language was so rich as the paper was not published and he a heathen Yankee had no means of enlightenment.

I wrote you via California and now repeat for fear of miscarriage of that letter, that

I never refused, as Mr. Boady says, going on with Chicago and Northwestern Railroad. I never knew Plumb had any stock or Mr. Boady had any connection with the road. I cannot understand what he means unless he had written to Plumb and he refused for himself and for me without taking the trouble to speak to me. I never exchanged a word on the subject with either.⁵⁰⁹ I enclosed a letter for J.V.L.P. who can doubtless arrange it for me. I do not wish to lose 5 to 8,000 dollars in this way.

When that insurance stock falls I want it.

You are mistaken in supposing we are a very gay circle. For so small a place we doubtless are quite gay. Scarcely so, as compared with the thousand and one modes you have of being gay.

Captain Price says his wife writes she was going to Albany to make some purchases and proposed calling on you. I hope she has and that you will return her call.

I sent photographs etc. home for you by her brother who left here nearly a month ago.

Ber was not quite so clear on the subject of Japan luxury as he is now. The flesh pots of Egypt were doubtless pleasant to the Israelites while in that land, but not so much so as to invite special mention. They looked more inviting after they had been left behind. I hope you may soon have an opportunity of contrasting, not comparing, our performances in the consumption of food. I do not think Ber ever found four meals a day too much in Yedo. But then he was growing! I infer he has not stopped.

My trip to Yedo as you see was a decided success. I made no miscalculation that time. But I was glad enough to get my guards safely on ship again. Though for my own safety I never had any fear, even when advised of *ronins* being gathered near. The Japanese doubled and quadrupled their guards, we did not and the night was peaceful as I thought it would be. The money I sent, and which you have not acknowledged, was for my furniture etc. destroyed.

If the goods I sent by *Velocidade*, bill of lading etc. enclosed, are admitted duty free you had better give say \$500 to soldiers in such way as Weed etc. Charles think best.

I think his disposition of funds very good and if stocks take a tumble will afford good opportunity in buying New York Central. Should Cleveland, Columbus and

⁵⁰⁹ This passage is in response to JALP's November 7 1864 letter in which she wrote in part, "[my brother Charles] tells me he has already seen about your Chicago and Northwestern Stock personally and was told the time for changing it to another stock, which had been offered, had passed. Mr. Boady (I think that is the name) informed him that Plumb and others, with yourself, had refused to go into the arrangement, and that he had personally written to you advising you to go into the arrangement, and you declined. And now for Insurance Stock. Your stock was sold. And Charlie can get more of it if he thought it expedient at 50 per cent advance. But he would advise you to wait. His idea is that stocks will fall and plenty will be in the market." B2F6.

Cincinnati touch par let him secure some. Also 3rd Avenue Railroad at a moderate figure. He must keep all the Japanese funds in his own hands and Mr. Weed's depositing in U.S. treasury to his credit at interest. I will see to all when I get home. He must not part with funds. I am individually and not as minister responsible, that was the order of the U.S. government.

I have written so much that I shall not undertake to finish more than this sheet by this mail as in two hours it will close. What goes today in the *Bacchante* was written so hastily at times I scarcely remember what I have sent, but I think you will admire my letter to Mrs. C[lark] and thank me for my thoughtfulness in offering apologies for you. I wish you had seen Aunt Van Vostrand at New Brunswick. She would have given me so good a character as to exalt me in your estimation. Was it not a pleasant old place? I hope Ber liked it and did not see signs of immorality. I am sure it is far more pleasant for me that I graduated there when the synod of our Church meets. I meet old acquaintances of these. What bond would there be were it not that our ministers whom I meet and hear in our pulpit often are not mostly graduates of my own college? How seldom does Charles meet his old companions compared with me? The Church bond and the college bond do not pull in different directions. They are strengthened by union.

I have had several business letters to write this day to London, Hong Kong, and Shanghai and one yet to write to the latter place. And as Mr. Sassoon, son of the Sassoon of Bombay (that vastly rich family) though a stranger was the means of putting several thousand dollars in my power in the way of stock in the bank of which he is one of the directors, I wish him a few lines of thanks. My reputation for hospitality was great at Hong Kong. I have entertained so many British merchants who otherwise would never have seen Yedo. I will determine after I have seen Mr. Delano how much of the stock I will keep. If it advances on the other banks engaged in Eastern business, it will be immensely valuable. But it is good enough as it is. What I can now realize placed at xxx would provide us with tea and every Eastern luxury all our lives and our children all their lives. As I wrote you via San Francisco without paying a dollar I can realize \$2,000 which would net in currency, adding exchange, say \$5,000. Next mail will bring news of a much more considerable advance. It is expected to reach double its present premium in March. So you see my good friend who spoke about that future can see it is rolling up. I am sure the news would give him great satisfaction. You may spare him the glad tidings however.

I sent yesterday three photographs to Brooks to be forwarded from sketches taken by Wirgman.⁵¹⁰ 1) the procession of Seigei through Yokohama, 2 & 3) the execution of himself and also of his accomplices. I suppose you will have no special fancy for them.

⁵¹⁰ Charles Wirgman (1832-1891) was a sketch artist and reporter for the *Illustrated London News*. The photographs were by Felice Beato, and are further mentioned in the next letter.

But they will complete my gallery.

My health continues good and I pray God may spare us all to meet.

I wrote you about joining me in Europe. I should not be surprised if the government first wished me at home. I may possibly hurry first to London. I wish to be there while Parliament is in session both for public considerations and for pleasure. As an old parliamentarian, I wish to see the House of Commons particularly. Besides, at that time I will be sure to meet many of my old friends of China there who have given me the directions necessary to inform them of my presence. I have made many pleasant acquaintances at Yedo. Ber will remember Mr. Gibb of Gibb, Livingston & Co., Mr. Forster of Foochow and Mr. Overbeck. The latter gentleman I hope to see in Hong Kong when passing through it. Mr. Delano has invited me to come to his house and stay with him. I now expect to be in Hong Kong, say, 10 days which will be ample for that place and Canton.

I am glad to hear the Church has raised Dr. Clark's salary. I hope he had a good present this New Year's in addition. Give my full share in any such effort. Represent me. I wish to be behind no one who should not be in advance of me. I would prefer to err on the side of liberality.

And now, my darling, the mail will close in about an hour. I will take this to Portman to send to the post office and then finish my China letters which are received by the agents of the Line.

I hope you will receive safely the small specimen of Bombay work sent through Mr. Brooks in an envelope to your address.

Kind regards to friends and love and kisses for Sue, the boys and yourself. I will write Charlie by next mail and Ber and Sue. May God bless you, my darling, and keep you safely in the prayers of your loving husband,
Robt. H. Pruyn



No. 6 Kanagawa, February 2 1865

My Beloved,

Yesterday the overland mail left with a moderate sized letter for you and the long delayed *Bacchante* got off for San Francisco with as much as you will be able to read in a day. I doubt not you will have occasion to take several long rests, and if any reads aloud what I have sent, to ask someone to come to his or her relief. If that Lady should chance to be present, who sought relief in sleep from your description of Japanese curios, she will have a secure refuge. I may not have ventured on so great an allopathic dose had I

not been quite sure your complaints would not reach me before I bid adieu to these smiling shores, "where naught but man is vile."

We have today a gentle spring rain, with the exception of a slight shower Sabbath night, the first rain we have had in five weeks and we have had no snow. Do you not wish to be in such a climate? I sat down to write a few lines to Charlie, to ensure his not being overlooked in the hurry of the departure of a mail which will not arrive till the 6th instant, and having finished all I had to say to him, concluded to put in writing what I proposed saying to you of a more formal character, reserving until after your letters had reached me the residue of my communication.

I am now like a wet towel well wrung out, quite limp, without an idea which I think worth sending to you.

At the last moment after your letters were closed I got from Beato views of the execution of Seigei and his accomplices and of the parade through the streets of Yokohama of the chief criminal. These you may not fancy much but I enclosed them to Mr. Brooks and asked him to forward to you. I suppose some will like to see them.

I will be able after the arrival of the mail I hope to determine on my future movements. If the ship is incorporated in our Navy I propose leaving say April 28. If not I may be thrown over till after the summer months. As a few days will decide I will not speculate, but wait for the decision of the government as patiently as possible and if obliged to disappoint this government, put the best possible face on it.

The government forces for the war on Chosiu are now assembled. The Daimios of Kiusiu [Kyūshū] are at Kokura on the south side of the straits. Those of the other islands at the eastern bounds of Chosiu territories. Chosiu himself is now a retired Daimio. He has shaved his head and assumed the garb and character of a priest. It is said his son has done or proposes to do the same. One of his chief officers has assumed the direction of affairs and has taken off and sent to the Prince of Owari the Tycoon Generalissimo the heads of five of the ministers and secretaries of Chosiu. Owari shakes his head and keeps silence, thereby intimating that ample atonement is not yet made for the sacrilegious attempt to seize the sacred person of the Mikado. You must bear in mind that his hostility to foreigners is not the cause of the crusade now in progress against Chosiu. It is his attempt to seize the Mikado, which if successful would have made him virtually the reigning emperor. I think Suwo, one of his prisoners, will be taken away. The Japanese have a story that he has succeeded in a great Council of Daimios in showing that he has acted agreeably to the orders of the Tycoon and that the Tycoon has been ordered to rebuild Chosiu's *yashiki* or palace at Yedo demolished by him, to supply him with guns equal in number to those taken by the allies, to leave him in possession of all his territories, and finally to pay out of his own reserves the entire indemnity promised the foreign powers. But this I do not credit. The government has written it will, after the holidays, send down a governor of Foreign Affairs to give full

information as to the progress of the expedition.

The steamer *Monitor* which was fired on is now here, her name changed. She is a nuisance, has been five times in ports not open to trade. I have ordered an examination. I suppose the officers and crew will show enough to prevent a large fine from being imposed. She will fare badly if proven guilty. I wish to clear her however in the eyes of the Japanese and of the Treaty Powers, but I know more than will see the light in these proceedings and am quite sure of much more gathered from the owners accidentally but which I do not feel at liberty to use against them. Mr. Fisher had an examination of several hours yesterday. The owner now here declined making any statement on others, but will probably think better of it, as his claim for damages which must now be presented to our government as this case is provided for by the indemnity of three millions.

You see if I make war I also provide for the payment of the expenses. I have not yet heard what the government thinks of my charter of the steamer, but take it for granted they will approve particularly when it is seen this government will pay for it and a quarter of a million more. I do not know whether the president even suspected I feared so little to take responsibility. But I do not permit myself to be a non-entity so many thousands of miles from home. I have made and finished two wars and my vindication is success.

The papers which I have sent home fully establish the wisdom not only of what I did, but that it would have cost blood and treasure had we failed in this emergency to act as we did.

Looking over my letters, I find leave of absence was granted me on the 7th July 1863. The president cannot think I have abused his permission, nor can anyone on the other hand fail to see that I have acted right in postponing the privilege. I hope for a few years of quiet in Japan. Not but that they will have enough of internal trouble. Civilization, commerce, all true progress are the offspring of Christianity and the solution of the whole question can be found in the declaration of our Savior that he came not to bring peace into the world but a sword. And this country will never again see peace till the ignorance, superstition, and consequent oppression of the people, the middle and lower classes, give way and this people are elevated in the social scale and have the rights which they are entitled to claim.

It is well enough to say how happy is their condition. Yet we know they can be seized and no one of their friends know why it is done or dare enquire where they are. A woman was burned a few weeks ago for incendiarism. She was not believed by the Japanese to be guilty. But she confessed. Why? She was tortured to a point where death was esteemed a happy release. Can any condition like this be one of happiness? The arguments to prove it are of a par with those to establish the heaven sent blessings of slavery lacking the one that they are thereby made Christians.

February 10 1865

The mail of December 10 from London only brought me one package of letters bearing date 19th November. I was much pleased to learn that my telegram which left here on the *Edith Rose* on the 19th October had been received by you. Since that day two other ships have sailed from this port for San Francisco and still another will leave this month, so that you will have late dates from me each month the present winter.

Your letter left me uninformed as to any further movements in relation to the *Fusiyama* and I infer no change had taken place. Mr. Hogg had a letter from his brother dated November 20, which spoke of the delay of the ship and expressed the hope it would soon leave. I hope therefore the government had not taken it when my telegram announcing a full settlement with Japan arrived. My dispatch to the government was full and explicit and I cannot believe further delay was insisted on. I shall indulge in no speculations as to a result, which next mail will disclose. You will have, before this reaches you, been able to judge of my movements. If the ship is to come I propose waiting its arrival. I have no alternative. But it is a comfort to know that by the time this reaches you, half of the time which is in that event likely to intervene before my departure will have expired.

Mr. Graham of the *Jamestown* is ordered home to be examined for promotion as Lieutenant. It is so much easier to write on paper which unlike the white sheet has the pen sticking through it every minute or blue like this that I will place the balance of my letter in his care, as I have made him bearer of dispatches and he has a parcel for the government. I feel sure you will receive the letter about the time you receive this. He goes direct and I have asked him to mail it in Paris or New York.

February 14

You will, in looking at this date, recognize my birthday, which fortunately is also St. Valentine's which seems to enable me to remember it. It is the fourth one passed away from home. Otherwise not worthy of special remembrance. So we will let it go.

Yesterday Howard Brown sailed in the *Benefactress*. If what I have said in my business note is not sufficiently clear please bear in mind that everything is to be paid and charged to me, board, clothing, education, etc., etc.

Besides the dogs he has in charge for me a camphor trunk containing a smaller one in which is a small tool chest of his own, a number of specimens of the desired coral and also of Japanese woods. These latter I will probably present to the State. I will write on this subject via California. There are also 16 boxes of 10 pounds each best Japan tea, in four large packages, two marked R.H.P. Albany, Nos. 1 & 2. These are probably the best. 2 packages are marked Mrs. R. H. Pruyne Albany, Nos. 3 & 4. Mr. Fisher has written about these and two boxes of his to the Collector and Messrs. Low & Co. The tea is paid for. Freight and duty, if any, he has asked Mr. Low to pay, which you will of course

see to so far as our boxes are chargeable.

Admiral Kuper left here yesterday morning. Admiral Jaurez will leave the 28th instant. But a large fleet will remain and intelligence came by the last mail that the British government has concluded to abandon Shanghae as a military station and keep the forces here and at Hong Kong. This place will no doubt be hereafter the headquarters of the fleets of the different powers as four of them have naval lots here and hospitals are provided for. The news now is that Chosiu has succumbed and he and his son are deprived of their territories. But I am not quite sure of this yet.

The weather, so charming when I began this letter, has been far otherwise as it has progressed. Rain on Sunday changed to snow enough to whiten the trees, though not the ground. In papers which I will send by California, you will see a tabular statement of the maximum and minimum of the thermometer each month of the year, also for the past few weeks the daily reports. My fingers are cold as I write. We have a slight flurry of snow today. You would be glad to have such a day any time during winter, but it is out of place here.

When the dogs get home be careful for a time of their teeth. They may be strange and wild. They are beauties and I hope will reach Albany safely.

February 15th

Last evening Mr. Fisher gave a dinner to the French and Dutch ministers etc., etc. His birthday is on the 13th and mine being the next day probably led to the selection of the day. I am about going on the flag ships of the French Admiral [Jaurez] and the British Commodore Montresor⁵¹¹ preparatory to a dinner which I propose giving February 22 to the French Admiral preparatory to his departure. Captain De Man,⁵¹² the Dutch Commander of Squadron, leaves the same day. By the way the captain is far from neat. He is personally strongly adverse to soap and water. The queen of Great Britain having recently made him as Commodore of the Dutch squadron at Simonoseki a C. B., Companion of the Bath, when the commodore was congratulated by some officers of the honor they told him they hoped he would use it often and much. The Commodore does not understand English well so he very innocently bowed and thanked them and said, "Yes, yes." It is now said that the Queen when she gave him the bath should have sent him an abundant supply of soap. I can repeat this safely as the Dutch minister told the story last night before all the guests.

Mr. Brown has accompanied his daughter Mrs. Lowder to Nagasaki where he proposes staying the next month. Her boy is a very bright child, as he should be having

⁵¹¹ Frederick Byng Montresor (1811-1887) was in command of HMS *Severn* before being appointed Commander-in-Chief, East Indies & Cape of Good Hope Station in January 1865.

⁵¹² J. E. De Man (1814-1872) became a Rear Admiral in 1870.

seen the light so much in advance.

Among the guests last evening was Mr. Flowers the Vice Consul, now the acting British Consul, who told Mr. Fisher that on the night of the arrival of the news of the reelection of our president, Mr. Walsh, our Vice Consul at Nagasaki, chanced to be a guest of the Legation and Consulate mess, the gentlemen of the British Legation and Consulate having taken Sir Rutherford's old quarters, parts of which were always used for offices and have a mess. Mr. Flowers thought it proper and by the way he was the highest in rank there to propose the health of the president. A gentleman sitting at his side commenced hissing in a low key. Mr. F[lowers] turned and asked what it meant? No reply but a hiss. He then said do you presume to hiss a toast which I propose? Another hiss! Mr. Flowers at once conferred on the offender the Order of the Bath in the shape of a glass of champagne in his face, which was wasting good liquor on an ass or a goose, I know not but that his ears are so large as to render feathers out of place. I know not who it was. I may do the young gentleman injustice but I suspect it was Lady Alcock's son Mr. Winslow Lowder. I do not think another would have ventured to do such a thing in Mr. Flowers' presence. I beg Mr. L[owder]'s pardon. The parties were Mr. Troop, an attaché or interpreter who has just come out and whom I do not recollect to have seen, and a Mr. Galton⁵¹³ who has started in business recently as a commission merchant and auctioneer. It was this latter gentleman who received the bath.

I will now close this letter reserving the few words I have to say for my No. 7. Which Mr. Graham will take containing already four sheets for you and 3 for Sue which I hope will not be regarded as wet blankets.

With kisses for your good self, Sue and Charlie and love for Ber and abiding love, my dear wife, for you and my little ones,

Yours,

Robt. H. Pruyn



Business February 10 1865

You will not like my text and yet you will admit I must answer the enquiry you proposed in the letter now under notice. Remarking that you cannot appreciate my anxiety to know if a certain piece of real estate is my own or your property, you say in your next please explain the difference.

My desire to know this was not because I was disposed to regard it as of consequence

⁵¹³ Howard Allen Tucker Galton (1844-1866) worked for Adamson & Co. in Yokohama.

where the title was. I simply desired this knowledge to enlighten me on other subjects, of which I was ignorant. I suppose the title is in you, as the New York Life and Trust Bond has not been changed in my account, if I rightly recollect as I have destroyed the statement Charles sent me.

You stated you had a certain income. I did not know whether that at the time was made up entirely from your property or partly from mine. Assuming it was entirely from yours you will see that in estimating our joint property, it was a material point to know whether the rent of the old house was included or not.

I repeat then to this day I know less than many strangers of your Father's will and your property and once for all I will repeat all that I have been informed 1.) That certain real estate had been divided in a.) the House 52⁵¹⁴ to you b.) Store Broadway to Sue c.) I suppose the Exchange Hotel⁵¹⁵ to Charles; 2.) That you had certain stocks, so many shares of City Bank, so many of Gas Company and so many of an Oswego Bank, but how much each share was whether \$20 or a \$100 I do not know to this day, except as to City Bank 3.) That some stocks had been given Sue and Charles and balance of property was to be divided share and share alike and that you would have about a certain amount.

Now I have only one word in addition to say. I would rather that you had ten thousand less and know all about it than have it as it is. And simply for this reason, occasionally comes a remark from Sue as to Charles' views, then from Charles as to estimate of depreciation of real estate, though I believe this was in your or Sue's letter and from Ber etc., etc. Now I would not give the subject a second thought if at home. But here in the dark and at times with an unoccupied mind I sit down to make a calculation and I am entirely at sea.

I have written thus because I do not wish to be subject to the suspicion that I wish to make a distinction of the character you refer to. I should be very willing that the whole or any part of the funds I have sent you should be put in your own name. What difference would it make? In the will I sent home and which I hope has been received by Charles which is under seal I have given you every dollar of my property. You will see that as Ber and Charlie are not of age and could not disperse of any share they might have, a possibility exists, a contingency might arise under which sad havoc might be made of a portion, if it went where the law would send it. They must therefore look to you. Besides it is not best that children should be independent of a parent.

You cannot answer this. I have therefore the last word, and I shall leave the subject.

Note: I speak of real estate because I see brown stone houses in the upper part of New York quoted as low as \$17,000 currency.

⁵¹⁴ 52 North Pearl Street, Albany. This property was the home of JALP's father when he died.

⁵¹⁵ The Exchange Hotel was located at 25 Maiden Lane, Albany.

With regard to management investment etc. I am satisfied Charles is doing well, probably better than I would were I home. I wish you and he therefore to do what you think best irrespective of all I may have written. It may be well if gold keep so high or rather currency so low, to draw from Brooks a large part, if not all, of what he has and invest in government securities. Do your best share and more in aid of the government. If he has not sent statement get it and taking good advice determine whether it is not better to purchase real estate or stocks of the government or state, or something else than leave it in gold funds in California. All this will depend on the prospects of this war.

I have written about J.V.L.P. arranging the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad stock. He can do it. They will not dare to perpetuate such a fraud if he intervene. He is too much interested in companies where they may find it necessary to stand well.

You will, if the gunboat has left, continue sending letters here [damage] arrive before September 1. And inform Messrs. Barings, or after my letter to them they may think no one writes me from home.

I see you had received the remittance I spoke of not being acknowledged in my last letter.

I can think of nothing else in this connection and shall probably have no occasion to advert to the subject [damage]...will remain undisturbed at least till my arrival. The rate of exchange should in no sense affect your determination as to meeting me in Europe. I again advise should our war continue that you seriously consider the propriety of my exchanging my mission for one in Europe which can with ease be done as I doubt not several would be glad of the opportunity when I shall have had an opportunity of making the proper explanation of my object.

Howard Brown will leave here tomorrow. When I spoke of my willingness to take care of him, which Ber mentioned to his father, I had, as you are aware, the scholar's life in view. But it appears I too hastily jumped to the conclusion that he would study for the ministry. He has no fixed views. I do not wish to disappoint the boy. His father first intended to send him to Hartford. I prefer however to pay his board in Albany. Let him go to the [Albany] Academy. Would Mrs. Clinton DeWitt take him, as a boarder? At least till you can find a place. You must not take him in our house. You have no room and besides must not have the care. Do not go contrary to my wishes and furtive injunctions on this point. Pay and charge his expenses to me and have good care taken of him. He may like to try engineering. If so, send for Ramsay and say he must go on the Susquehanna Railroad under Augustus. I can tell you more of this when we meet. I pass it for the present. Only have him cared for. I doubt not you can find many good families where he can board. You will like him much.

So much for the business, my darling. I feel better it is off my mind.
R.H.P.



No. 7 Kanagawa, February 11 1865

My Beloved Wife,

I have placed in the mail my usual package, but have thought you will not feel overtasked if I send a few additional lines by the hand of Lieutenant Graham of the *Jamestown*, ordered home by the Navy Department. The mail does not leave till the 16th, closing the 15th, but today and yesterday have been on many accounts dreary and the wind and rain having kept me within doors I have appropriated their hours entirely to reading, writing and a long interview with a governor from Yedo. A new one made his appearance. The Japanese government is not troubled with ballot boxes. Governor Seymour would have been extinguished before his feeble wick had half burned out either by retirement or by an expeditious happy delivery.

I had a letter a few days ago from the Gorogio informing me the embassy appointed nearly ½ year ago for the United States and Europe would not sail. I told you at the time it would never make its appearance in any foreign country, except China perhaps. But I may not have explained the whole *modus operandi* at the time and at the risk of repetition will lift the curtain of Japanese politics.

The old embassy to Europe had returned. Their convention with France had been disarmed, the ambassadors had been imprisoned and all their suite interpreters and servants visited with the displeasure of the government.

The government then informed the Foreign Ministers that it would appoint new ambassadors, but solely for the purpose of gaining time and making the hostile party believe that the Tycoon had not abandoned negotiations for closing this port, but that the ambassadors would not be sent either to America or Europe. Perhaps it might be necessary to start them on their journey. If so the government would direct them to wait for further instructions at Shanghae and they should go no further. A few days afterwards the ambassadors, two grave looking gentlemen whom I had known as governors of Foreign Affairs, waited on me, informed me of their appointment and asked my friendly assistance and that I would write to my government so as to facilitate as much as possible the objects of their mission. I examined their faces carefully and critically, fastened my eyes on theirs to see whether I could detect even a latent gleam of humor. I had before me faces which would baffle mortal man. You might as well have tried to find a meaning in the stony face of Sue's Sphinx. That Egyptian old maid keeps her secrets no better than did my Japanese visitors if they had any to keep. And I am to this day puzzled to know whether they were in the secret. Their attendants

certainly were not and no doubt many an ambitious and pleasant scheme was nipped in the bud.

Had I not been apprised of the purpose of the government the ambassadors would not have been cordially received or obtained assurances of any favor, but I assured them with great gravity that when they reached the United States they would be cordially received and though I could not promise they would succeed in their mission, I could say they would be received in the most friendly manner, that no letters of mine were necessary to ensure this, but that my letters would not be wanting, etc. A very great number of cordial good wishes were exchanged and my visitors left for Yedo, where I suppose they remain unless posted by the government to a more distant place than any earthly mission, though I saw one of them at least in December.

As I read your remark that you cannot convince yourself that these long, long years have passed and I still abroad, I lay down your letter and think. Many minutes are thus occupied. How sad and dreary and hopeless would such a time appear to look forward to! What an age and yet how many families in our land and other lands are every week subjected to parting with the certainty of at least such a separation. The relief in our case has been that it was not anticipated but protracted little by little. If my life and health are spared, I cannot well see that anything can arise which can further prolong this stay. Political events of any consequence will be rare here for a few years except so far as they will indirectly affect us. The storm will be internal and we shall only see a few of its wrecks. Chosiu has beyond doubt submitted. I may have even before this mail closes the promised information from the government.

We must keep to ourselves my intended movement and especially my purposes. I see no reason why if this war continue we should not all of us pass a few months or a year in Europe. Nor do I doubt King would be glad to apply for an exchange with me. I should prefer Switzerland or Holland to Rome, but speak of the latter because I think it could be more easily managed. I would expect to live very handsomely at either place and spend all my salary if not more, but see what we could save of income. And this may be of some consequence. I might even manage to have Berlin. I speak of these places with especial reference to the education of Ber and Charlie.

You and Sue and Charles think of this and keep it to yourselves. It might seriously embarrass the government if anything was said of my return, except that I had leave of absence and you can say nothing more till you see me. Unless indeed you go on to say that there may be a struggle between us, you to have me remain, I to have all of you go to the land of the Rising Sun. But you will readily see the government will not thank me if it is pestered with applications for my place and, as it was said when I was appointed, had it been known the place was vacant, one thousand would have applied for it. I feel sure the war has not diminished but will rather increase the number of aspirants. Keep this therefore in view.

I am greatly pleased to hear what is said of my conduct of affairs here. And yet I am sure you would not be likely to hear what was said in disapproval. I have had little apprehension of that of the president, unless indeed he might think I might as well have let the charter of the *Takiang* alone. But when he understands the whole case I think he will heartily endorse that act. I have had everything approved up to that. And it would seem a logical sequence that everything I judged necessary to carry my plans into effect would meet with like approval.

I have been very fortunate thus far in the hearty praise of the government and in the entire and full powers and discretion given me. My position is simply this. You are too far off to give you any special instructions, what we did give might be useless and inapplicable when they reached you. Exercise therefore your best judgement and do what you think right. I have done it. And I shall be very happy if it meets the approval of the government and receives the endorsement of public opinion.

I do not think the English papers will handle me as they do Walsh and I feel sure my dispatches will delight the British government, which has already endorsed my policy and sent a copy of the dispatch through Lord Lyons to Washington. I look for a like flattering approval of what has been written and done since August 1st. But, my dear wife, it is a fearful responsibility to have thrust on one person. Because everyone here knows, and the government of England also, that the powerful fleet collected here would never have weighed anchor had I not approved and most certainly not had I protested. The French admiral has been promoted from Rear Admiral to Vice Admiral and yet he said when he returned he would not have gone had he received the mail before he left port. Admiral Kuper has been made a K[night] C[ommander of the Order of the] B[ath]. But none of these gentlemen wished to go and absolutely refused unless the ministers would be responsible for the defense and safety of this place. We gave them a meeting to that effect and the fleet sailed. The consequence is peace, which would not have lasted six months had we not been firm. But there was one mind with the Foreign Ministers. The Dutch naval officers were anxious to go. Captain Price was willing to do as I thought best but the two admirals had to be pushed and forced almost. The Secretary of the Navy had placed the *Wyoming* expressly under my orders and the letter of the Department was broad enough to give me the control of any and all U.S. ships. But both Captain Price and Commander McDougal were willing to act and needed no entreaties or orders of mine. The *Jamestown* continues here in consequence of a letter I have addressed to Captain Price. Not that I regard its presence as needful for protection of life or property, but simply as a support to the government in its operations against Chosiu. The presence of the fleet gives a strong moral support. Our one vessel should not leave therefore, while the fleets of other nations remain. The British admiral will leave on the 13th instant.

As to my enjoyment of a quiet home never fear that. The only fear is I will be but a

mole or a sloth or a snail or some animal more lazy than either of these typical animals. I do not know as I shall ever be stout, so be careful that you do not get farther than the comparative degree. I am glad to hear you are getting stout, but shall cease to approve when three letters instead of two are added to that word, only because I do not wish to see you dumpy.



General Burgoine's gift is mounted and I now have it on. I have taken it off and run the pencil around the outer edge where the gold claws which hold the pearl would allow. You see the mark. It is perfectly true, without a speck or flaw or hole and as round as if turned by machinery. The larger mark was made in trying to make the entire circle and is enlarged by the gold work. Suffice it to say it is like a good sized pea

or currant.

There was no danger in my Yedo visit, at least I could see none. When Sir Rutherford Alcock went there however for one day and with a guard, her Ladyship went to the Church followed by an orderly with a book to offer prayers. I should have been as well and better satisfied with prayer for me at home especially as this Church was only consecrated by Bishop Boone and that may not suffice as he was an American Bishop. I have been on the point several times of giving you this little incident, but refrained as it had the merit of being perhaps very sincere though certainly rather pharisaical. She only resembled the Publican in kneeling at a distance (from Sir Rutherford Alcock in Yedo). The next time Sir Rutherford went to Yedo was with all the ministers and most of the ships of war, her ladyship then had the courage to accompany us. We had her presence and she and the orderly and the prayer book did not go in procession to the Church.

I occasionally receive a New York paper in your packages but have not received one copy direct. There must be some mistake in giving or receiving the order. It is of no consequence now except that payment should not be made if the proprietors have failed to mail according to order. This had best be attended to at once by letter or in person by Ber or Charles, when in New York. I should have said every mail brings papers enclosed by yourself. I have received no *Littell's* for some months.

Shoes and stockings will receive due attention when opportunity presents but I think when the proper time comes you had better send your measure as I remember you always had difficulty in getting a ready-made boot or gaiter to fit and I propose bringing you at least a dozen pair walking gaiters etc., etc., also a good supply of stockings, gloves and everything so as to make it unnecessary for you ever to make another purchase unless you come and make your own selection. I suppose a half dozen silk stockings would not be amiss, or are they never worn now. I do not see as many stockings as at

home. The Japanese women are by no means extravagant in dress, except they have large bundles of hair combed to the top of the head.

February 15 1865

I will only add a few lines to the many I have already written. You will receive by this same mail a letter of three closely written sheets which I do not entrust to Mr. Graham with this. I thus divide the risks and make it more sure that one will reach you early, although I feel quite sure that Mr. Graham will mail this promptly.

The French mail is expected in today, though it is not likely I will receive any letters by it, as the British postal authorities keep all letters unless specially marked to go by the French line. And I have not asked you to mark any thus because the French is only a monthly service and if your letters reached Marseilles a day too late they would be over one month. But we may possibly have the president's message as the mail left Marseilles December 19th one week after the English mail, which brought us a telegram which reached it while on its way, that the message had been sent in and advised a vigorous prosecution of the war. But it required no telegram to enable us to understand that these were his sentiments.

We are now anxious to hear the result of Sherman's grand movement. While I have great confidence in him there are so many contingencies which may arise to baffle the wisest and best places even when everything which mortal men do has been done to command success that I am anxious to hear a glorious result. Nevertheless, God in his own good time will command the light to shine and once more will be heard in thunder tones the majestic words "Let my People go that they may serve me" which they cannot do suffering a bondage like that of Egypt.

About the time the next mail leaves overland I suppose the *Ashby* will be on its way, when I hope to send you more acceptable parcels. Though I always write, as I need not inform you, with a free and roaming pen, with no attempts at style and I fear having little matter which can prove interesting, you often rise from the perusal of my letters with a feeling that you are not truly satisfied though perhaps scarcely realizing why you feel so.

You will please give my kind regards to enquiring friends not overlooking Dr. Wyckoff, Van Vechten, Dr. McNaughton, Mr. DeWitt etc., etc. also generally, and Aunt Sue and the rest of the uncles, aunts, cousins, brothers and sister which are and are to be.

God bless you dear wife and children is the prayer of husband and father,
Robt. H. Pruyn



No. 9 Kanagawa, February 26 1865

The mail leaves here on the 1st of March closing on the 29th. As I expect to [be] in Yedo on the 28th and 29th then returning in the afternoon of the latter day I will be deprived of my usual time for writing. I had proposed however reserving for the *Ashby* the bulk of my mail matter for this next month.

The occasion of my going to Yedo is the presence of Messrs. A. F. Heard and Augustine Heard Junior of the great American house of Augustine Heard & Co. We will go up in a steamer early Monday. To remove all alarm from your mind I inform you that the Dutch Consul General and some guests are now there and Mr. and Mrs. Winchester and a lady guest will go up on Wednesday for a four days' visit. I may reasonably hope that a few hours ride will not expose one greatly. As I may be able to add a few lines I will keep the letter open and ask one of the Messrs. Heard to mail it at Shanghae.

By the last mail I received your letters to December 12 and Charles' of December 14th. In the steamer the long expected trunk arrived, talked of for months but happily reaching San Francisco in good time to meet a vessel bound for China. Its coming was quite unexpected as in a letter of the date of December 3 Mr. Brooks made no mention of it.

I was rejoiced to hear your sables had reached and gave you satisfaction. I am at a loss to imagine why Sue's did not reach you and why you had only 20 skins, as I ordered fifty I think. Mr. [Edward F.] Hall may have looked only at the first memorandum he made, which I know was only for 20. But I am sure that I ordered that number for Sue also and afterwards added 5 or 10 for cuffs etc. I was told that very often more than 2,000 skins had to be examined to find 20 which would perfectly harmonize and the entire yield of Kamchatka for one year is about 3,000 skins, and it may very well be that my entire order could not be filled to the satisfaction of the agents to whom it was sent. But if Sue continue good, she may expect to receive them speedily, as I shall call Mr. Brooks' attention to it at once. I feel quite sure that if Treadwell had those skins at \$75 each he would have made nearly as much more as they cannot be purchased for less than \$25 in silver. Add the large premium on that to the Amur and see what they will cost. The Siberian sable can be bought for \$5 each skin. At Shanghae I missed getting a lot of 30 for which I offered 33 dollars each, which would be \$40 in silver each skin. You will be able to estimate your value now when dressed. But remember I do not estimate you that way. The Manila articles are now on their way. I have ordered largely as I do not intend to be worried by going out to purchase New Year's gifts. I will be such a home body as to wish not even to go out on such an occasion, but simply to a dresser, and you will see I am bearing in mind on your behalf what Mrs. Governor

Weller asked me to do for her: make her the best dressed woman in the United States. I hope soon to be able to see how well they become you.

Your letters left me still in the dark as to the fate of the gunboat, which is made more doubtful to me as the government should have heard as early as November 20 that we had concluded a convention with the Japanese government by which 3 million of dollars was to be paid. The Four Powers of this I advised by telegraph stating the convention was ready for signature. It was actually signed October 29 and a copy left here November 1st. The English copy reached London December 26 and the copy I sent must therefore have reached Governor Seward say January 10th. My feelings are of a very contradictory nature. Personally it would be agreeable to me to hear the government had taken the ship as I could then leave in April. Officially and also personally, so far as I shall be affected by the disappointment of the Japanese government, I should prefer to hear the order Charlie speaks of having been issued and which had not reached him was that the ship might leave. As I cannot help myself I shall accept with resignation whatever has been ordered and make the best of it. If our Navy has it, I hope to be off in April. If there is still a prospect of her sailing or if she have sailed I am anchored a few months more. You will be able, life and health permitting, to judge of my movements, which will be fully determined so soon as I hear of the final disposition of the subject. It is far from pleasant to be kept so long in suspense. Officers were down from Yedo to see Portman yesterday, ostensibly to give information as to the progress of the Legation building. Incidentally and accidentally the interpreter asked about the ship, of the difficulty which has arisen. I have as yet given no official notice. Time enough when the question is actually disposed of.

The clothes you sent were very excellent and very acceptable. I have only purchased two coats, one a frock, one a dress coat, since I left home. I shall use my suit to ride in at Yedo and there break it in if it is not too heavy for Ber's old horse Tommy which I propose riding. I suppose the spoon, knife etc. and Bible marked "Jennie" were for Jennie P. Fisher as well as the doll, though you do not mention it. The paper was very acceptable and I wish you had sent me some vising cards as I have a short supply. I may by economy make what I have answer till I reach Europe.

You will please thank Dr. Clark for his sermons and Mrs. C[lark] for the book she had the kindness to send me. The trunk is a very excellent one and much needed. I suppose Ber did not make a good selection in England as they have some very superior trunks. I shall supply myself with what else I now require with such as I sent you of Chinese make.

Dr. Armsby's letter was quite exhaustive. I hope to acknowledge it properly in a few days. He certainly covered much ground and did not mince matters as the girls would say, however he may have made mincemeat of some whom he condescended to notice.

I suspend writing for a short walk and propose sending at least one sheet more and

I hope two of them. Adieu for a brief session. The day is dark, cold, and very gloomy.

February 27th 1865

I feel quite sure you cannot, when you seriously reflected, have supposed I would at this time be on my way home. It would [be] strange after having waited so long, if I failed to remain at my post a few weeks longer until I had fully ascertained what was the final decision of the government. I am sure therefore you will not be surprised to learn I am yet a fixture in Japan. But I cannot make you fully understand how restive I have become and this feeling becomes stronger or rather more active each successive mail. Public considerations as well as those of a more private nature combine to form this homeward tendency. I am sure I cannot say or do anything which will be likely to increase the little reputation I have been able to gain. Nothing is likely speedily to arise to give an opportunity for distinction. In the absence of important questions, others of little consequence loom up which produce weariness worrying and unpleasant feeling. My position has always been somewhat exceptional. The Civil War has affected us more here than in any country perhaps except England and France. We have been supposed by most foreigners here to have ceased to exist as a nation. And though this may not have been fully believed by the Japanese government or people, they have by no means felt assured that the country is true. England, France, even Holland has been represented here by powerful fleets. I have had for two years the *Jamestown*, which has been to me what the town from which it took its name has been to our country, a name *vox et praeterea nihil*, which Charlie will please translate. Of other considerations I shall not speak as you can fully anticipate and appreciate them. Knowing me as you do you cannot believe I have enjoyed this unexpected, prolonged absence. The only palliation has been that it was and has continued to be unexpected. My departure has been put off time and again, my stay added to little by little. This alone has made it endurable.

The last mail brought a telegram from the British government through its Consul General in Egypt, that Sir Rutherford Alcock's whole course had been approved and that he would return immediately on his arrival. Mr. Winchester thinks he will not be here till next October or November as it would be cruel in his state of health to expect him to travel in the heat of summer and that a short holiday could not be denied him. Sir Rutherford will not come back at all if he can help it. He will try for something better and will expect to be successful, as he was not very handsomely treated. He was hastily recalled in consequence of the timidity of the government. Results prove he was right and Lord Russell wrong. He has the government at a disadvantage. He may not however have either strength or influence through friends to avail himself of the advantage of his position. The British officials have not only offices which yield salaries while they fill them, but which entitle them to very considerable pensions when they retire. These pensions are graduated according to length of service and are founded on the salary of

the last office held by them, so that Sir Rutherford may be in a position where he will feel compelled, though if he were in earnest much against his wishes, to come back. He will of course have fuller powers and probably have in some other mode an equivalent adjustment of pension, his service having been consular till recently. His pension is founded on his last salary as Consul, £1,800 per annum, and his pension would be only about £900 or £1,000 now or even two years hence. This may be increased as the law does not contemplate such change of service and a special arrangement is needful.

May I not be here to see him, but be far on my way to union of which I am an ardent advocate.

I think I wrote you I was pleased to see you had endorsed the scholarship though not pleased you had done it in my name alone. That proves you were not at the time properly mindful of the union. I see you drew from C. W. B[rooks] & Co. the full amount. Did you pay in gold \$2,500? If so there was enough for two scholarships and it should be so credited and arranged. But I can scarcely think you did this. If it, by any possibility, be so, it should be arranged at once.

I am glad to hear Ber has learned that good can come out of Rutgers. We have heard too much of questions like the pharisaical one, "Can any good come out of Nazareth?" applied to our little despised institution. I have never cared what was said or thought, provided we were not stabbed in the home of our friends.

Charles Van Zandt's loss is a sad one.⁵¹⁶ But, no doubt ordained in mercy. "Suffer little children to come unto me" is still heard coming far down from the skies. The words were beautiful when uttered on earth. They are now irradiated by the light of heaven and fall upon the ear with a melody richer than the songs of angels. And the voice is still the voice of Him who spoke as never man spoke.

I have received Mame [Rochester]'s letter, one about the dress and the other from Providence to you. It appears to me I have written to her since their receipt. I am quite sure I have written to her as often as she has to me. I will send a few lines to be safe.

Sue did right to protest against cutting up and dividing those fans. You might rather have given them to her. They were not intended for division and I hope hers will reach Albany next fall.

I will if possible add a few lines to my letter on Monday or Tuesday but the facilities for writing on a small steamer will not be such as to admit of my doing much. And it is hardly possible I shall be back early enough to write on Tuesday evening. I add here for security having this vacant space after filling the 4th page.

My messages of love to Ber and Charlie and Sue and all and kisses for you and them
R.H.P.

⁵¹⁶ JALP wrote on December 12 1864 that Emma Van Zandt, daughter of Charles Van Zandt had succumbed to scarlet fever and died the previous week.

I note what you say as to my remittances for volunteers etc. In addition to what you name in your letter and what Charlie gains in his statement should be the following charged by Russell & Co. of Shanghae as paid for me "1863 March 24 our bill at 2ms on Messrs. Barings Bros. & Co. on farm of George Dawson on £147 ¹⁹/₉" I supposed this was the bill which had reached Albany and that the one of £238 ¹⁸/₆ sent through and to Charlie was the missing one. I will enquire of Russell & Co. about it and also with if needful to B[arings] B[rothers] & Co. as it may have fallen into the wrong hands. Then I think there was also a draft of E[ugene]. M. Van Reed on his father or someone else at San Francisco for \$25.

I had intended to write to Dawson. He has a heavy blow in the loss of his son.⁵¹⁷ I must put it off till next opportunity.

I cannot meet your wishes as to that old friend who wishes me to remember her. When we belonged to the Natural Admiration Society I made her a magnificent present and she reciprocated. We gave each other a most brilliant star. Mine alas is gone. If not actually a Coat Pleiad, I don't know where the fair creature is. I do not know whether she treasures my gift. But do you think I would spoil the romance of this affection by the gift of a miserable earthly gem set in shabby gold, after in my boundless generosity I had given her a gem set in heavenly enamel and in a ring with the circle of the sky? Is she now looking at my star as it shines far off over Japan, rejoicing she has not a truant husband? It was kind that she came to console with you.

Good night, dearest R.H.P.

Page 3 of No. 9 March 1 1865

My Beloved Wife,

I went to Yedo early on Monday morning by steamer intending to sleep on board the only night we proposed remaining there. But the weather being very unpleasant, cold and rainy and the sea high and the steamer cold and uncomfortable, we determined to make the old temple in Yedo our resting place. Our party consisted of Messrs. Augustine Heard Jr., Albert F. Heard and Young Mr. Forbes,⁵¹⁸ son of the old Episcopal and R[oman] Catholic Rector of New York (a brother of P.C. Forbes) and myself. At the Legation we found Portman, Dr. Vedder and Captain Huntington of the marines of the *Jamestown*, who had gone by land. As my cook, Takiso etc. were there we had an excellent dinner. Fish, chowder, oysters, good soup, wild boar, chickens, quail

⁵¹⁷ JALP reported in her letter of December 2 1864 that Dawson's son had had his leg amputated after being hospitalized in Washington for a long time, and was now in Albany in a critical state.

⁵¹⁸ I. Frederic Forbes, Jr. (calling card in RHP Papers, B4F7).

etc. We slept very well though it was quite cold, and very safely though without our usual guard. But we had enough I suppose, one hundred men. Yesterday was a beautiful sunny day though the wind was high and cold. We took a long ride, which Ber can describe, to Asaxsa [Asakusa 浅草], along the River, Hamagoten,⁵¹⁹ etc. We then went to the *atoba*⁵²⁰ to go on board the steamer but the sea was so high the boatmen could neither be bribed or threatened to induce them to go off. Portman and Vedder had gone down to Yokohama at 12, our household was broken up, things sent away. To make the officers do the best with the boatmen, I told them I should stay in Yedo, complain to Gorogio and do all manner of things. The Messrs. Heards however were to leave here for Shanghae this a.m. at 9 o'clock so after waiting to see the wind go down without success, we started for this place at 6 o'clock. We got through Sunagawa before dark which was the most I cared for. And after a dark cold and weary ride, the horses stumbling because completely jaded and Mr. Augustine H[earde]'s twice falling, we reached here after 11 o'clock. We were obliged to walk because though we had early in the evening a streak of a moon and later bright starlight the sky was finally clouded. So we had only at intervals where the road was quite safe a chance to press on. And we were all weary with a ride probably of 45 miles.

Except a slight stiffness in the side of my neck where the wind struck it, perhaps a slight addition to my cold, I am all right this morning. I have risen at 7 to write these hurried lines not wishing to leave you in suspense for two weeks as to the result of my Yedo trip, though you will earlier hear from me, much earlier should the *Ashby* get off. Your suit of clothes arrived in excellent time and were grand for this expedition as also the traveling bag.

Love and kisses, my dear wife, for yourself, my dear boys, Sue, etc.

From your loving husband,

Robt. H. Pruyn

I just have time to get this to Mr. Heard who will mail it at Shanghae.



No. 10 Kanagawa, March 6 1865

The last letter I sent you was of the date of the first instant completed on my return

⁵¹⁹ The Hama-rikyū Gardens 浜離宮恩賜庭園 were built in 1654 as a recreational site for the Tokugawa Shogunate.

⁵²⁰ *Hatoba* 波止場, a wharf or jetty.

from Yedo and was I think numbered 9. I wrote that quite hurriedly promising myself, my beloved, to make amends for it by a letter which would reach you full as soon via California. But the *Asbly* which has had many cases of smallpox and which was to be detained, is unexpectedly announced to sail at daily light on the 8th. The mail will close at 5 p.m. tomorrow and it is now nearly 8 p.m. I had hoped it would remain here till the mail arrived. It may reach us tomorrow but most probably not till the 8th a few hours after the *Asbly* has left. I am expecting by this mail to learn the fate of the gunboat. Charles' letter of December 14 left me in doubt whether the order signed by the president was for its purchase or clearance. I can see that his signature would be needful to authorize the latter, which the Secretary of the Navy would not require the president's order to justify its purchase, but I shall not speculate on a subject which a few hours may decide. And my feelings are so mixed as to make me one moment desire an issue which the very next moment I dread. If it is to come I shall not be able to leave here until the time when, with a different result, I may hope to be, if life and health be spared, in Albany. Should the arrival of the mail enable me to do so I shall announce the decision by telegram.

The political news will also be vastly important. Next to the reelection of Mr. Lincoln the most decisive perhaps of the issue of the war brought by any mail. The telegrams are always as much strained and perverted to represent our cause as ruined as is possible. The rumors we have had of reverses to the North have in many instances proved unfounded. But if the telegram received by last mail representing [John Bell] Hood to have been defeated by [George H.] Thomas at Nashville with the loss of 5,000 prisoners and 42 cannon shall prove unfounded it will be the first instance of a telegraphic dispatch being more favorable to the North than the actual result. The *Straits Times* published at Singapore is violent slush and in the interest of the Canton speculators. So also of Sherman, we hope that the news of his success near and at Savannah may be confirmed. With Thomas and Hood successful it appears to me the issue will be much contracted. The great constrictor may begin to multiply and tighten its folds and neither Hope nor Freedom ever bid farewell to our Western World.

It may not be amiss to repeat that I hope to leave here on the 28th of April if the ship is not to come. But not till as late as October or if the storms should continue during that month as is often the case till the end of that month, if I learn she is at last granted a clearance unless indeed it should reach here as early as May which is not very likely. You will now be able to make your calculations. While I should be most happy to have you meet me I shall not urge you more, as I know you will if it be prudent and I would prefer to re-cross the Atlantic myself with you than have you come against your better judgement. I have become so accustomed to think of and travel vast distances as to think of a trip across the Atlantic as I did in 1860 of one to Washington and for that matter to regard it as quite as safe.

In my last letter I noticed your account of the sables I sent. But as this may possibly first reach you, I repeat that either Mr. [Edward F.] Hall has made a mistake or else he was unable to have my entire order filled. I ordered a set both for Sue and yourself and each set was to consist of 25 skins. I fear your pattern will be scant, though Mr. Hall said 20 skins would suffice. I at first so decided and that memorandum he may have acted on. Subsequently I increased the number and perhaps only then ordered Sue's and that he may have overlooked. But I hope by next spring to have all made right. If any sables are over they will suffice for cuffs and a muff. I am delighted they pleased you and shall be more delighted to be able to decide very shortly for myself whether they become you or rather whether you add to their appearance. I repeat that only from 2 to 3,000 such skins are annually received from Kamchatka and a first rate set must, to harmonize color etc., etc., be selected from one thousand skins. I have no doubt therefore what Mr. Brooks said of them was literally true.

My grape vines from the north of China, Tiensin within 80 miles of Peking, are on the *Ashby*. I had the box opened and the cuttings examined by Mr. Hogg. Owing to imperfect packing decay had commenced. Mr. Hogg cut off the decayed parts and repacked them. But they may not arrive in very good order and will require prompt attention and great care. I shall urge Mr. Brooks to have them at once forwarded. And hope some specimens may be saved. They may prove very valuable, as they must be very hardy, the ground freezing there to the depth of several feet. There are three varieties, one of a white grape as large as the Malaga. A ship left here this morning for ice and I have for further security sent for another supply to be set out here on their arrival and forwarded next fall, so if this venture prove unfortunate that at least may succeed.

In this connection I may as well say that in estimating income for the tax you should not add what I send as that has already paid income tax. I simply transfer from one place to another and you can neither know the time it has accrued or for that matter the source, as a very considerable portion has been derived from other sources, as for example the last remittance was of money received from the Japanese government as I think I advised you and it simply replaced furniture I had lost and was no more income than a loss paid by an insurance company.

What you should pay for therefore is your own income and on the income derived from interest, dividends, rent etc. of my property which you have in charge. Charles will attend to any derived from the Works, if any there be.

As to Edward's family it is a burning shame he is so idle or works to so little purpose, but it will not do to let his family suffer.⁵²¹ If I am spared to return we can decide what

⁵²¹ JALP wrote in early December 1864, "I have still to tell you of Edward's absence and although he has written to his wife that he proposed going into the army, having left of the Hudson River

will be the best course to put a stop to such a life of miserable dependence. I would cheerfully give more if he would only gain more manliness thusly. It is not what I may lose, but his contemptible conduct that vexes me. Had he even lost a limb for his country and shown a particle of courage I could have assisted with alacrity and all that was necessary without a murmur. But I believe him an errant coward or he would have taken advantage of the opportunity he had so early in the war. Cowardice, I hope that no injustice is done him, was I believe the cause of his failure.

Howard Brown left here February 13 in the *Benefactress*, having in charge a married couple of the Japanese canine species. Fooge⁵²² or the flower and Tama his wife which means a jewel or a ball, the ball of the eye etc. May they reach you in safety. I have written all about Howard. Please find a boarding house for him and clothe and send him to the Academy and charge me. I had supposed this would be chargeable on the scholarship, but never mind, all the same even 100 years hence to go no further. There is something which I will personally explain needful to enable you fully to understand this. But it is all well.

I am pleased to hear that Augustus has a position on the Susquehanna Railroad. Say to him for me that however much it may be below what he may conceive to be his claims or actually so, that he will not be wise to lose it. It will be time enough to give it up, when something better is actually secured. Those alone succeed who work steadily and compel even adverse circumstances to minister to their success.

Francis is of course in a port of great danger. I pray his life may be spared. He at least is doing his duty and I wish my kind remembrance and love conveyed to him the first opportunity.

I fear I shall not be able to write to Charles Van Zandt by this opportunity but will try to do so at an early day, as also to Mary.

Ber's descriptions of pleasant life and luxuries in Japan are all very well. But sure am I were he here again he would be the most discontented of mortals. There are no luxuries here to compare with those of home and comforts are not to be thought of. We are here as you would feel in a tolerable hotel at home, the name of home with very few of its attendants, all consider themselves as mere sojourners for a few years and

railroad, I make my weekly visit to meet the ones of his family for that time, but he is not aware of my so doing. Can he imagined they live on air? His last letter which his wife brought to me yesterday was in a much more subdued tone so we may hope for better things." A month later she wrote, "I have had some conversation with Mr. Bell about the family of truant Edward. Seven months have passed and he is still roving, and unaccountable proceeding for the father of five children. The exclusive privilege, as yet, is mine to look after them in every way, which at present prices is not a little item."

⁵²² *Fuji* 藤, "wisteria"

none, except perhaps the missionaries, speak of it or even think of it as home. Except the drawback of distance etc., were absence compulsory it would perhaps be as desirable as any place I could hope to live in, while in the government employ, having reference to results etc., but weighed in the balance of home it is miserably wanting. And if I live to reach home, you will not question either the sincerity or fullness of this verdict.

March 7

The last evening was rather suddenly and unpleasantly broken up by a very violent attack which seized Mrs. Fisher indicating the presence of poison. We had all eaten at dinner of a shell fish similar in taste to the oyster but differently named by the Japanese from the ordinary small oyster. It is large and more the shape of the clam. Its shell is fluted. For more than four hours she had violent retching and severe pain. She has not made her appearance this morning. She is quiet but quite weak. I have had a severe headache but whether it is in part owing to this same cause or to an addition to my cold which I brought from Yedo I cannot say. I have twice steamed my face this day which is a remedy recommended by Dr. Vedder, inhaling the steam. I had my catarrh well under command as I thought till this month. But the weather is severe for Japan. March has come in like a lion. We had a slight dash of snow on Sabbath. And yet Japonicas are in full bloom, in the open air.

As usual I have had three visitors and as one was Portman I occupied the time of his visit in preparing a dispatch which I feared I could not get ready as it will contain nearly 10 enclosures, but as half are ready I have determined to make the attempt as the postage via Marseilles would be quite an item.

Should there be another fair for the Sanitary or Christian Communion it might be well to write to General Seward and say I had sent one of my Japanese letters which did not relate to public business to be disposed of if he saw proper at some fair to be held for the benefit of the soldiers. At all events I may have an opportunity at the close of the war if not before.

I have not failed to think of coffee. Captain Price has agreed to take some home for both of us from Manila and I am to send for mocha coffee. You may be aware coffee improves much by age and has been kept for forty years and become valuable. So a good supply need not alarm.

I am daily exporting the Manila articles which I have directed to be forwarded to this place. I hope soon to send you a sample.

Another visitor, Major Wray, whose card I enclose.

I have forwarded to Mr. Brooks some newspapers for Ber. He will see Hansard is firing into Fisher. But Fisher is right. So it matters not. I am not so fortunate as to be noticed by the papers.

Sir Rutherford is to be ordered out again and probably must come. He may be

expected therefore as early as October next. May I not be here to meet him. I hope to be home nearly by that time and yet I want that ship. Oh that it were here!

I do not know, my beloved wife, that I have more to say. Affairs are quiet here. I slept in Yedo without even my usual Japanese guard, hardly $\frac{1}{5}$ of the usual number.

I think we can fairly calculate on a period of repose, freedom from war or alarms.

We had an earthquake on Tuesday last, so violent as to stop several clocks and make people very generally stampede from their dwellings. But I was on horseback riding from Yedo and did not feel it, which inclines one to believe it was quite local or else my horse was very steady on his feet.

I shall not attempt to write any more though I have a full hour left. My hand is cold as I write and my head aches slightly yet.

I think I told you my trunk arrived safely. The traveling suit has already proved serviceable and I expect comfort from it here at least. It will be too warm to wear on the way if I leave in April, but may answer in Switzerland though I may press right on to England. Another mail may suffice for me to speak more clearly.

So I conclude, my darling, with love and kisses for your own dear self, my boys and Sue and kind regards to all.

From yours ever,

Robt. H. Pruyn



Business

I know of little special to be said under this head as I nearly exhausted it by the last mail.

You had better, if the time shall appear at hand when currency shall be of more value, convert the gold we have at San Francisco into currency.

Street Railroads may do well for a season in Albany but I have no faith in their managers. As I do not know who they are, this remark can scarcely be regarded as libelous. So stop where you are in Albany Railroad. Salt is good. I am not afraid of a little of that savor.

I have no doubt you and Charles are managing well, at all events as well as these uncertain times will admit.

But I should like the old Spencer house and I again say let Kidd be on the lookout for it. Perhaps Baker may see something he prefers.

But if you come to the conclusion to try the Continent for a few years it is of no consequence to get a house.

Do not fail to have J.V.L.P. see to Chicago and Northwest and Charles to

Bellefontaine and Indiana Railroad stock.



No. 11 Kanagawa, March 15 1865

My Beloved Wife,

My last letter went forward by the *Ashby* on the 7th instant via San Francisco and I also requested Mr. Brooks to send a telegram. This letter will therefore only convey to you intelligence a few days later than that which you will have received nearly two months in advance of its arrival, of my continued health.

The mail arrived on the day the *Ashby* left bringing your letters of November 28 and of December 2nd and 12th and 26th also Charles' letter of December 18th. I am still of course in doubt as to the final decision as to the sailing of the *Fusiyama*, which may be controlled by the arrival early in January of the convention made with the Japanese government in full settlement of all questions then open with the Treaty Powers. Unfortunately, my telegram announcing the murder of Major Baldwin and Lieutenant Bird may reach Washington about the same time and the political insignificance of that event may not be fully comprehended. It is quite certain that Great Britain will make no demand in this case as three Japanese, one of the murderers and two accomplices, have been beheaded.

We have nothing to interrupt the dull quiet which usually prevails, except a sharp quarrel in which all the ministers are involved, except myself. It has several very comic faces but is far from a laughing matter so far as the parties themselves are affected. Mr. Winchester you will recollect is now *charge d'affaires* for H[er] B[ritish] Majesty. He is of course desirous to make the most of his brief tenure of office. Reports having been for some time in circulation that a project was on foot to send all the silk to Lyons to be sold on account of the government. Mr. Winchester waited on the French minister and called his attention to the subject. M. Roches promptly disarmed any such purpose. Mr. Winchester, instead of asking him, as he should have done, to write in a memorandum pointing out to the Japanese government that any such attempt would be a breach of treaty, went to Yedo as a guard of Polsbroek the Dutch Consul General and those two gentlemen a few day afterwards had an interview with the Gorogio and introduced the subject, expecting doubtless to have the project promptly disavowed by the ministers. They then could have sent home a flaming dispatch in which they could have taken great credit for nipping in the bud a commercial speculation which could have proved so injurious to Great Britain, the principal purchaser of silk in all the Eastern markets. But much to their surprise the Gorogio declared they thought they had the right to do

so, whereupon they handed the ministers a long memorandum in which they discussed the point and declared that their governments would regard any such attempt as a violation of the treaties. The Gorogio promised to send governors of Foreign Affairs to consider the subject after they had given it an examination. This made it necessary for those gentlemen to do what they should have done, consult their colleagues, when therefore they came to me. I said I regretted they had, on a subject of common interest, acted without the concurrence of their colleagues, that I was not disposed to part an unfriendly construction upon their failure to do so, being well satisfied it was thought no want of country or desire for our cooperation, that without any dispositions to criticize their memorandum I thought they had made a fatal mistake overselling their entire argument when they said they did not deny the right of the Japanese government to send abroad products to pay for ships etc., etc. Because in that event the Japanese government would be the sole judge of the extent to which such a right should be exercised, that as the connection had been made with the Four Powers I also regretted they had introduced that subject at their conference, stating the views of their governments when not instructed to do so, thus separating them from the other powers, saying also I had no doubt our governments would at the proper time act in consult. To this they replied disavowing all intention of discourtesy etc. They had understood M. Roches would be in Yedo, that Mr. Winchester had written Polsbroek asking him to see me in Yedo, but unfortunately owing to injury to the boiler of the gunboat the letter arrived after I had left Yedo. They were not so fortunate with Mr. Roches.

He was excessively angry, said they insulted him by implying doubts of his truth when they introduced this subject to the Gorogio after his disavowal and, as Polsbroek says, scolded him as if he were a school boy. They then sent us a letter etc., full report of what had taken place. M. Roches sent the Abbe Mermet to me stating his grievances. He refused to sign any paper with Winchester. After I had tried in vain to reconcile matters I called on Roches taking Portman with me so as to be able to dispense with the attendance of Abbe Mermet. Mr. Roches talks very good English and I can understand the most of his French. But in such delicate matters you must be quite sure there is a full understanding. M. Roches was very severe saying had such a thing happened ten years ago he would have been disposed to box their ears. He finally proposed he and I should write in a letter which he had prepared in reply to W[inchester] and P[olsbroek]. This, I told him, I thought was not best while I concurred with him in the political view. Our personal relations to the affair were distinct, while I thought our colleagues had acted unwisely and had made a great blunder. I was not disposed to do more than send a reply which would only inferentially be a censure as I was sure they had intended no disrespect, had only perhaps tried to do without my aid to increase their own glory, and they had failed. That I would write as I thought best and as gently as possible, and he could write separately, which we did and communicated copies to

each other. I enclose his private note in which you will see he says my letter is clear, precise and conclusive as all my papers are. I feel quite sure it will be some time before the wounds are healed. Yesterday I had difficulty in getting away from Winchester to dinner. If he send all the papers home, my letter and M. Roches', he will reap no glory. His government will see he has blundered fearfully.

The weather has been very cold and unpleasant thus far this month, much as at home except we have no frost. Last we had a mixture of rain and snow and it is decidedly wintery today. But it is hardly possible it can last much longer.

The last mail brought Mr. Winchester a letter from Mr. Hammond of the Foreign Office saying that Sir Rutherford would soon return. But he wrote from Ceylon that all his Majesty's cabinet had not sufficient power to compel his return. But I suppose he will have something done for him in the way of increase of salary and be in Japan before the year closes.

I have declined three invitations to dinner this week. I am very desirous of avoiding any more cold. I think my catarrh is in a fair way to disappear and I will err on the side of prudence. I am preparing however to give the married people, ladies, etc. a sociable dance in a few evenings and I must give a few more dinners this and next month.

The *Jamestown* is still here. But Captain Price wishes to go to Amoy to put his ship in dock. I think I must keep him a little longer as I am threatening the Gorogio with a visit to Yedo like that of August. I am quite sure they do not wish that and will soon surrender.

I learn from Captain Price that Kidd's oldest son has gone abroad not wishing to live in a country so miserably governed and Mrs. P[rice] writes that the father is much of the same way of thinking. It is very strange that so many should be found to differ with such high personages and such great authority.

March 16

You must not conclude from what I have said as to cold that I am sick. It is only at intervals that I am troubled with this catarrh and now when it does come instead of being severe as formerly I scarcely notice it except in the evening and when I first rise. Still I have concluded to try some iodide of iron pills which I commenced to take yesterday and I do not doubt that as soon as we are favored with the departure of this cold spell my cold will also take flight. We have had another slight flurry of snow this morning. But it is not very probable such unusually severe weather will continue much longer.

I have read Charlie's letter again and see that when speaking of your income he says your tax will be swelled by what I have sent you, meaning the income which will arise from the investment of my remittances. That is right. I hope he will have no difficulty in reading my hieroglyphics. I am aware that my crowded lines must require great care

when read.

I cannot think of any business matters you would desire me to speak of. And it may be as well for me to say once for all, do as you are advised and think best without reference to what I have said, except for your guidance, everything else being equal.

I am glad to hear of Eugene's engagement and hope it is a good one and he will find it a happy one. The same as to Anna Pruyn's. The best thing Lansing can do will be to take his ease a little and put V[an Rensselaer] in with Frank. He would no doubt be a safe financial manager and could do better for himself than in a bank.

I felt sure my dear Charlie would be a good scholar at the Academy. Emulation is a good and needful stimulant. Ber I suppose is making good progress in preparation for college—Rutgers. I feel sure he will see that while such destination will be pleasanter for me—it will be best and pleasantest for himself. It will lie in the same direction as other interests he will favor—Church—associates—friends. In after life, if his life be spared, he will often find reason to rejoice he decided to go there. I think the college bids fair now to take a very high rank.

I do not always notice the contents of your letters, as I do not desire to make mine simply an echo of yours. You will therefore remember it is not for want of interest in what you communicate.

I cannot imagine my dearest how you could expect I would be on my way, although you were not aware when you wrote of the conclusion of the convention (which you and the government must have heard of early in January and which causes me still to hope for a favorable result), yet both your and Charles' letter leave the question still not finally decided. So long as the ship is in his hands it may come and then having waited so long it would appear wise though unpleasant to wait a few months more. You will bear in mind however that if no ships had been ordered I could not have left before this last December or January. Such has been the situation of our relations. Therefore charge not the unfortunate *Fusiyama* with all your disappointment. The word *Solace* must have been added to the name for your sake. Or the clerk who made out the order for the president to sign must have been indulging largely in some Virginia tobacco, which I believe bears such a name.

I have this moment received a letter from the Japanese government about the ships. Recounting what has been done, saying I had said they would cost more than first estimated and asking what I advise. I have not yet officially communicated the president's order but Portman informed an interpreter who called on him of it. He remarked simply he supposed as everything was now settled it would be allowed to come. The letter is not yet translated and it may contain more than the brief statement above given. It will be a hard blow to American prestige and influence if the ship do not come. The government will not be able to understand why the United States alone makes difficulty when thousands of rifles, many ships etc. are freely procured from

other countries. They will attribute it to our difficulties in spite of everything I may say to the contrary. Let Charles and Mr. Weed urge this view of the case as entertained by me. I omitted mentioning it in my note to them and in my dispatch to the government. The fact also that much of this money was converted into U.S. currency before its great depreciation took place should also be urged without going into particulars.

I have written via California about the missing bill for soldiers. It was sent direct from Shanghae by Russell & Co. as stated in their account to order of George Dawson. I will know soon where the mistake has occurred. They can scarcely have forgotten to send it. At all events the delay is not chargeable to me. And I hope it will, if it have not already been received, reach Albany so as to realize a good sum for our sick soldiers.

Our war is certainly far reaching in its efforts. Famine, starvation and death of thousands in India may soon be added to the fearful catalogue of evils it has inflicted on the human race at home and abroad. The high price of cotton has stimulated as was hoped its cultivation in India. Half as much more land has been devoted to cotton this year than ever before. Rice has been to an unwise extent neglected. And the small quantity sown coinciding with a severe drought has produced so inadequate a crop as to alarm the Indian government. I see one rich Parsee has given £10,000 and 7,000 sacks of rice for the relief of the suffering. It is feared that large districts will be depopulated. The distances are so vast and population so scattered as to make it difficult to reach those who suffer. There is also a scarcity in Siam and its export is forbidden. Japan has a great abundance and no rice is exported. If the treaties had not so provided we would have had a fearful state of things, rice is so low in price here compared with other countries. In many parts, much the largest part, of Japan it is worth only one cent per pound, perhaps considerably less.

The death of Charles Van Zandt's little girl must indeed be a sad blow to him. He knows where alone to look for comfort. I do not think the death of little ones should be mourned. They are taken from evil. If God had use for them here, they would not be called on high. Viewed in that light their graves should bloom with flowers.

Dr. Armsby's letter was a great treat. He is welcome to the shot and shell for his museum. And you may say if he will promise to allow me to be an undisturbed old fogey with full liberty to grumble at what others do and do nothing myself I will enrich the museum with a full suit of Japanese armor. I have no doubt there was much of truth in his description of things, though a part of what he saw may have been distorted by the medium through which it was seen. When people use glasses they must be sure they are neither discolored nor out of focus or they will give false ideas both of color and proportion. I have become very much of a philosopher here in Japan. Nothing would surprise me, not even to have Skaso come in with a card from the man in the moon, and say that an august individual was waiting to see me.

Our Church certainly appears to have prospered not only in its financial condition

but also in its membership, according to the statistics given in the *Intelligencer*. The pew rents might have been made a little higher with as much ease as at their present rate, but they will be sufficient probably in ordinary times. They should have been fixed at \$50 at least in the middle aisle. So far as the parsonage is concerned do for me what you think best. Give as much as anyone gives who is no better off, not as little as some do who are better able. An addition should be made. Please say this for me to Uncle Jacob.

There have been some unfounded rumors of another eruption of Fusi-yama which has now been quiet for one hundred and seventy years, but the snow covered mountain is as unmovable as its namesake in the United States. The origin of the story was the night observation of an officer of the fleet who probably saw some large fires in that direction. The atmosphere is at times of such a character that strangers unaware of the great distance of that mountain from this place, about 70 miles, would say it was not more than six miles distant. It looms up so near and so distinctly at times that it would appear as if a man or even a bird could be distinctly seen if standing on its pure white side. And I suppose that frequently at night a state of the atmosphere may exist greatly magnifying fires.

We had the news of Sherman's capture of Savannah and Thomas' victory over Hood at Nashville. The expedition to Wilmington was left where sensation writers would leave it for a next number. But we hope that if the Secession Snake at Richmond is not killed or even scotched, that it is beginning to feel mighty uncomfortable at Richmond and is wriggling in its hole. I suppose it is bad enough to be worried as you are by so many unfounded reports, but this waiting so long is dreadful. Besides we have so many who wish all that is evil will happen to us surrounding us in this community. And yet I have more patience with them than I would have with copperheads at home.

I am glad to see the effort which is in progress for our theological seminary. With this successful and the Agricultural Department at Rutgers College in operation we may hope for great prosperity attending the juncture of both those institutions so essential to the prosperity of our Church, and so much entitled to the support of all its members. When Charles went to Williams College, Rutgers was but just beginning to breathe. It had scarcely attained the dignity of creeping. Your father therefore was not to blame for overlooking it. The feud which existed in the denomination and led Drs. Landlow and Ferris⁵²³ to turn a cold shoulder to it was not healed till 1830.⁵²⁴

⁵²³ Isaac Ferris (1798-1873) was the founder of the Rutgers Female College. He was active in the Dutch Reformed Church in New York City.

⁵²⁴ In the early 19th century a split occurred in the Dutch Reformed Church, caused by government-imposed rules regarding the selection of commissioners to the National Synod in the Netherlands. As a result, in 1834 Minister Hendrik de Cock and his congregation seceded from the DRC.

March 17

The next mail is expected on the 23rd. I would have hurrying work should the intelligence it shall bring justify my leaving to put affairs in proper shape, but would hope to succeed in doing so. That is the last mail, April 23, that would be pleasantly available. I should dislike to pass later through the Red Sea and I wished to be in London when Parliament is in session. This I could accomplish on a second visit. But I should scarce expect to make one. I have cold comfort to give should I remain. The only thing I can say is half the time of the enforced stay will have passed when this reaches you. I cannot believe that the government will detain the ship after it hears of the convention with Japan. How can it justify such course? If it do our mechanics will lose millions of money. No orders will be given which they can fill for many years.

I am not surprised to learn we had frost last night. The world has drifted into a cold stratum of air. We have no icebergs on this coast and it would be too early in the season if we had for them to leave their moorings at the North Pole or I would think we had some floating near us.

I enclose two monograms for Charlie and am now laying aside a few suits for him. I shall order monograms for you and Sue and myself in London. Do you wish others?

I do not see how you can reasonably complain of the length of my letters. You can readily see I must write to many others. Everything is done by writing here and I often had several notes a day from Sir Rutherford and now that he has gone I have some relief and yet every day brings me notes which need reply and many require great care. Since I commenced this letter, I have answered half a dozen notes and drafted five dispatches, one containing seven enclosures.⁵²⁵ And I detest writing. I should esteem it a great luxury to be relieved of it altogether. As it is I frequently walk half a mile, for the two fold object of obtaining exercise for myself and freedom from answering some note in writing, preferring to give an answer in person. I think I have written a vast amount when you consider how much I would desire to be free from it after having issued once a half dozen dispatches, which trouble me more in deciding what to omit rather than in finding words sufficient to clothe my ideas. The fact is, it is so difficult sometimes to avoid saying what would be considered very apt and sharp and yet what would be best unsaid. But you know while I cannot claim to write well I do write rapidly, otherwise I should be overwhelmed at times. I endeavor to do each day's work promptly and so master my work instead of being its slave.

The other ministers as you will see by the Diplomatic Correspondence have comparatively little to do except in England and France, Mexico and China. And they

⁵²⁵ Perhaps <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1865p3/d244>, although it contains only five enclosures, not seven.

always act under express instructions. I am left to myself and it is so much easier to criticize what is done after all its results are seen that I am amazed I have not stumbled. But thus far everything has been not only approved but even warmly approved. But it would be pleasant to be relieved from such a bother of responsibility, which makes the labor here more severe and harassing to the mind.

I think, my dear wife, I shall not attempt another sheet. The envelope will have all it can contain and as much as you will care to read, voracious as your appetite may be.

I have had as I told you great comfort in wearing the clothes you sent me. I find them quite seasonable and can assure you your trouble has been amply repaid if my gratitude for your remembrances will be accepted as good current coin.

And now, my darling, the time for parting has come once again. I hope it will not be often repeated from these shores. But whether twice more or twelve times more a few days may disclose.

You will remember me most affectionately to those of my friends and relatives who keep me in remembrance and give my respects to all enquiring friends and with love and kisses for yourself, Sue and the children,
I am ever and affectionately yours,
Robt. H. Pruyn

I hope some grape cuttings arrived in good order of those sent by *Ashby* from China.



[Based on the content, this letter is probably from early 1865]

I enclose seconds of sterling bills of which I sent you firsts by last mail. The firsts of the bills on Washington which I enclose are intended to be in place of those I sent by last mail and which I requested you to hold and not have presented until you heard from me again. It is rarely Mr. Portman makes so great a blunder and I seemed to have a presentiment that something was wrong. You will destroy the ones I sent you which were too large by about \$138, the calculations having been made on the amount of the bills in U.S. currency instead of Mexican Dollars as it should have been. You understand the bills on London were right. These on Washington are right as now sent.

The bills I now send were purchased by me with the balance in my hands received for my losses at Yedo. I sent you in August £1,500 for this. Here is the balance together with \$1,500 I had of Ber's profits while in Japan, which I allowed him, so that neither this remittance nor that of £1,500 is properly income, and should not be returned as such.

You will see my losses were paid to replace property destroyed and are no more income than an insurance claim would be.

The sum belonging to Ber he expected to receive for his passage home. That I prefer to pay. He may have his earnings for his own use. Let it be properly invested for him or kept till I come back as you prefer.

I think railroad stocks will tumble more. Do not be in a hurry to buy. In all my advice, I of course am obliged to speak on the assumption a state of things may exist which may be far different from what will ready take place.

I only mean to say that when railroad stocks such as New York Central, Cleveland and Columbus, Delaware and Hudson Canal and such stocks reach their current point I think they will be more likely to have some value than banks etc., which may hold notes and which are depreciated or worthless. So with gas stock. That is all.

My loss on Northeastern Railroad stock should be deducted from income this year.

Let Charlie give these bills to D[elaware & Hudson] C[anal] & Co. directly or through Martin without any endorsement because though I purchased all properly there is no necessity of giving explanations which might be needful if they were traced to Albany.

Charles has written me about the Works. Please say I do not see how he could have done better. Neither he nor I will care to be compelled to devote more time to them than we choose, so if a good sale cannot be made, and I suppose it cannot, it will be well for us, as I have before written, to form a special partnership with some safe practical men putting in each say 5 or 10,000. Then we need only keep a general watch of matters and can get a good rent for our property. Probably however no safe opportunity will present before my return. The conclusion of the war will have to winnow all business and businessmen.

But it is well enough to keep this plan in view as one which may be feasible and at least worthy of attempt. It by no means follows that it may be impracticable to substitute some other business.

I will, I hope, be home in amply sufficient time to decide with you not for you our location. I am glad to see Ber is settled down to College and that he and Charlie are making good progress in their studies.

The news which he had by telegram from London, March 4, of the capture of Charleston received in Hong Kong in 21 days from London through the new line through Persia, is grand. We had this news of the capture of Fort Fisher via California. Is not the end near? I hope and pray it is. It appears so.

I hope there will be a speedy end of the expenditure of treasure and blood. Perhaps it has already been reached.



No. 12 Kanagawa, April 12 1865

My Beloved Wife,

I propose leaving here on the 28th instant unless the mail shall bring letters which render delay necessary. But as the *Ida D. Rogers* will leave for San Francisco after the mail shall have been received you will learn my final determination by telegraph or even letter that way before this letter reaches. It is unnecessary for me to write any more. I think you will say it is already the best letter I have written. As my time will be much occupied and every moment required to make the necessary preparations for the care of the Legation, arrangements with the Japanese government, correspondence with colleagues, etc. it will be as much as I can do to get off and shall be uncomfortable till the mail arrives. My decision necessarily had to be made before its arrival because as the steamer only remains six days, perhaps less, that short time would not suffice for preparations. So I have announced my departure subject to the contingency above stated.

I received by the last mail your letters of January to 22nd and Charles' January 27. They contained much of interest, both pleasant and painful.

I mourn most truly the death of Dr. Cogswell.⁵²⁶ He will be much missed. Few husbands and fathers and physicians will leave so great a blank to be filled. I now regret more than ever the contests which separated us during the last few years and only now think of what was good, pleasant and loveable in his character and intercourse with me. I hope his family will be comfortably provided for. I suppose not very largely.

The accident which resulted in the injury of Frank's boy is distressing. I hope the little fellow is well.

13th April

I feel sure you will not expect a very long letter today. The mail closes at 4 o'clock and I have one of the inevitable governors on hand. I have put off the interview till 3 o'clock. But I have letters to write to Shanghae, Hong Kong, and London with reference to my contemplated movements.

I am very happy to learn of the wise decision of Augustus and hope it will be productive of much happiness to him and theirs and that he will prove a useful man.

The only important news we have here is the arrest of the other murderer of Major

⁵²⁶ Mason F. Cogswell, of 13 North Pearl Street. (1863 Albany Directory). JALP wrote in January 1865 that he had fallen ill and died rather suddenly.

Baldwin and Lieutenant Bird. The last mail brought papers containing an extract from the *Paris Satire* saying the British government were about demanding £40,000 as an indemnity. This is not true. But still the Japanese government may and probably have thought it wise to be a little more energetic and so they have found the other murderer or someone to put forward as the man. He will not be beheaded here. Mr. Winchester has asked that he be furnished with the evidence of his punishment and that will satisfy him. The Japanese government have given notice that they will commence paying the indemnity in three months but wish a delay for the other instalments. They do not wish to open another port. This will give our government say about \$300,000 enough put at interest to pay our diplomatic and consular expenses in Japan forever. I am quite sure the government has no reason to find fault with my management of the Legation.

I was pleased to learn you were accustoming yourself to think of meeting me in Europe. My sojourn there as I have explained will depend greatly on what Governor Seward directs. If he wish me to hasten home with a view to a return to Europe to arrange Japanese matters, my flight would be more rapid. Should this not be decreed I would wish in view of the doubt which would attend my ever being there again to have at least a hurried glance at Naples, Rome etc., etc. I am therefore thinking now of stopping at Messina and passing through Naples, Rome, etc. particularly as I wish to see Edward King at Rome. You may be able through Mr. Weed to learn Governor Seward's wishes, to meet me if that is best or to propose to visit Europe with me if such be the prospect. It is very possible however the government may decide at Washington all that is to be decided. It is my present purpose to get to London before Parliament takes a recess and to be there say near the middle of July and as much before as possible. It is impossible for me to speak with greater certainty of what I propose. Leaving here by the British mail I will remain over at Hong Kong for the steamer of the French line which leaves about the 22nd of May, which will give me a few days at Canton as I do not wish to leave the East without seeing Mrs. Bonney and without a visit to so celebrated a place as Canton. As the British steamer will only remain one or two days I could not accomplish this. So either the French mail steamer or the next British one must be taken. I do not care to remain at Shanghai and I must give up the sightseeing in which Ber had an opportunity to indulge. This will enable him to be my instructor in Eastern curiosities.

My beloved wife, I am in trouble already. I have this moment had an interview with Portman in which he threatened rebellion. As I understand the law or rather understood it, the Legation could be left in charge of Fisher. But Portman rebels and points me to a section of the law which staggers me, especially in connection with the recent appointment of our consul at Paris as *charge d'affaires*. The question arises have I the power to leave Fisher in charge? Yet Mr. Portman though acting as Secretary has only the commission of interpreter. And I supposed till a few moments ago the law was clear.

It will not do for me to go away leaving things in a snarl with all our officers quarrelling. I shall try and reconcile matters and hope I may be successful. I do not feel I leave you in much humor for writing. I have been to agents, engaged passage, and am partly ready for going on board, have announced my departure to my colleagues and unofficially to the government and it will be a dreadful disappointment to be obliged to stay. Although I anticipated no such state of things, I wrote long ago to the department saying the Legation could be well cared for by either and I should have supposed I would have been instructed. But I suppose the government has its hands full and has overlooked it. In a few days the *Ida [D.] Rogers* will leave and as by that ship letters will reach you as early as by this mail I will close this letter with this page.

Fisher is at the office, knows nothing of this flare up. I shall try and get them together and see how I may be able to reconcile matters. He could not get along without Portman and Portman positively says he will not act under him. I can say no more till we talk it over.

And now, my darling, with a heavy heart I close. I felt yesterday so buoyant and have ever since I considered my movements settled. And now I cannot bear the thought of even being again unsettled. I trust it may be only for a season.

So my precious wife, with love for you and the dear children and Sue with many kisses adieu with regards to all friends from your loving,

Robt. H. Pruyn



Kanagawa, April 24 1865

My darling,

I write you a very few lines this morning announcing my purpose to leave here on the 28th and expressing my belief that you would gladly accept that message rather than have a letter of many pages. If I have mistaken your preference I shall on being so advised make a very ample and humble apology.

I have finished all I can do today, especially as it has commenced to rain and now at 5 o'clock add a few lines, as I dislike to send so meager a letter even on so auspicious an occasion.

My silk man brought me from Yedo two pieces of gauze today, which Mr. Van Reed who goes on the *Rogers* will deliver to Mr. Brooks. I received your letter saying you had not asked for it, but what you have has been so useful that it is as well to send it, though of course the price has advanced.

Ber's dress is not ready. I hope Mr. Wellman who will shortly leave will be able to take it to him, whig and all.

About your meeting me in Europe. I am of course in doubt, especially as joined to your own hesitation is the chance that Governor Seward may advise you he would prefer to have me hasten home in which case I could reach home early in August. I hope to be in England in July, before Parliament is dissolved. To do this I should be obliged to hurry through Italy or else postpone visiting it till I had been in London.

I propose staying in Hong Kong and Canton ten days, taking the French mail which leaves there about the 22nd May, which I hope will enable me to get comfortably through the Red Sea.

I suppose leaving for Europe so late as you would now do if you came to meet me, that Ber might easily enter freshman in the winter when he got back.

I have asked Mr. B[rown] to send telegram.

It is well also to consider the advisability of my remaining in office a year or so while money matters are so uncertain unless the war is terminated.

If I retain this mission I can save. If exchanged for one in Europe I can pay all expenses from salary. I have no doubt such exchange can be made, unless a difficulty occur with the government which I should hope to be able to remove.

We shall if our lives are spared be able to discuss this question. There is one other aspect in which it should be viewed. May it not be an excellent thing for Charlie. May it not improve him physically as well as in manners and mind. I suggest this for your consideration. I will have no preferences in which you will not be able to concur, because I shall prefer home unless it is manifestly best for all that for a year at least we shall all be abroad, except Ber, who I suppose will prefer college unless indeed I could be located in the vicinity of some good university.

I can scarcely realize I am so very near the hour fixed for my departure. I can now say I have sometimes thought I should never get away from Japan and thought of it with a chill. But God has been very merciful and I pray He may guide us to a meeting on earth and another and a happier one where there will be no parting.

I am in some doubts about my ability to protract my journey homeward. I feel at times as if I should prefer hastening home even at the expense of revisiting Europe even though not officially. On one side home draws me, on the other the consideration that I can have access in my official character to places etc. under more favorable circumstances. Home may be much the stronger as I reach Europe, and prove irresistible when I get in England. It is getting so dark I cannot see the lines. I will try and finish this sheet.

The mail closes this evening. Ship sailing early in the morning.

The mail steamer only stays five days this time, half its usual period. It reached here Saturday evening at 10 o'clock and leaves Friday at 9 a.m. The season is regarded as a

very favorable one for leaving here. Three years and three days if God spare my life till then will be the duration of my residence in Japan. And eventful years they have been, both here and at home. I have every reason to feel grateful for what I have been able to accomplish.

7 p.m.

Mr. Fisher is about leaving for the office to close the mail and I will close and give him this letter. The last I expect to write to you from Japan unless I leave behind me a few lines to go by the *Jeannie* which is daily expected here to remain only a few days.

So once more my dearest I say farewell from these distant shores with love and kisses for you and the boys and Sue and kind remembrances to friends.

Robt. H. Pruyn



Private

I wish you would at once procure a good waiter and have everything on the scale which our ample means will warrant. For the sake of the boys observe more style at table. Before I return please begin this. Let the boys dress for dinner and have always full courses, soup, fish etc., etc., each day. You will probably have some guests soon who have been accustomed to a little more of this style than our good Dutch old fashioned way. I beg you not to overlook this. You will only anticipate a few months. I have for three years been accommodating a mass of habits, some good and some perhaps not so good. I will have enough difficulty in giving up the latter.

The sheets No. 6 etc., etc., are in another package.

R.H.P.