

Havana Nov- 13th 1863.

My dear Father,

Step by step we gradually are arriving at our point of destination - England, Little did I expect to be in this great city at this time when I left home on the 29th of last Sept. I thought that I would have accomplished my mission to Europe, & perhaps on our return with the — to Bermuda. You have no doubt rec'd my letters from Nassau in this time, so I will not relate anything prior to that date in this letter - As usual home, Our party, Messrs Tally & Milson, and myself - engaged passage on the Schooner "Leda" in Nassau for this place, After many disappointments about the time of starting we finally sailed on the 4th inst - at 1/2 P.M. - for Havana - and arrived on the 7th at 10 A.M. Fortunately for us the weather was very fine, a fair wind all the time, At one time things looked rather bad - on board, the Capt, 1st Mate, 2^d Mate, Cook, & one man were all down sick - & strange to say were taken sick shortly one after the other, I was very uneasy lest they had the Yellow fever or some other contagious disease. We had only two (2) well men on duty who had to cook, & work the vessel - fortunately as I said before we had fair wind & had nothing to do but steer the ship watch & mate, or not telling what time we would have gotten in, I was very much afraid that we wd have to go into quarantine, but fortunately the health officer

there is a perpetual shade which makes it very agreeable for those who have to be exposed to the hot burning sun. In driving in a volante it is a rule of the city to come up one street and to return by another; this is done to prevent collisions as the streets are hardly wide enough for two carriages to pass. The most pleasant drive is on the Paseo de Jacón where on Sunday you will meet the whole city driving out in the most splendid Carriages & Volantes I have ever seen in my life. The ladies all dress up in ball costume and put on their most bewitching smiles, which would make any young man forget himself for the time; that they look to be better than no one can doubt who has the least conception of the vanity of that gentler sex. After the drive the fashion is to drive to the "Plaza de Armas" in front of the Gov. General's Palace to hear the music, the music is splendid; over sixty musicians in the Band. Although the first blast would have taken the top of my head off, but the equilibrium was established afterwards by the most beautiful and soft flowing notes of the flute & clarionet solos. I never have heard such music nor seen so much beauty displayed on any one occasion as on last Sunday night. The Plaza about two acres is beautifully ornamented with statues and flowers all in full bloom which adds much to the scene.

Havana, Nov. 12th, 1863.

My dear Father;

Step by step we gradually are arriving at our point of destination, England- Little did I expect to be in this great city at the time when I left home on the 29th of last Sept. I thought that I would have accomplished my mission to Europe & perhaps on our return with the _____ to Bermuda. You have no doubt rec'd my letters from Nassau in this time, so I will not relate any thing prior to that date in this letter. As I wrote home, Our party, Misses Tally & Wilson and myself, engaged passage on the Schooner "LOLA" in Nassau for this place. After many disappointments about the time of starting we finally sailed on the 4th instant at 1:20 P.M. for Havana, and arrived on the 7th at 10 A.M. Fortunately for us, the weather was very fine, a fair wind all the time. At one time things rather bad on board, the Capt, 1st Mate 2d Mate, Cook and one man were all down sick, and strange to say were all taken sick shortly one after the other, I was very uneasy lest they had the yellow fever or some other contagious disease. We had only two (2) well men on duty who had to cook, & work the vessel- fortunately as I said before, we had fair wind and had nothing to do but steer the ship, watch & watch, or not telling what time we would have gotten in, I was very much afraid that we would have to go into quarantine, but fortunately the health officer did not come on board, and the captain had gotten about and fixed things up all right before we got in. I was relieved on asking the captain what was the cause of the sickness when he told me they had all been poisoned by eating a peculiar kind of fish found in the Bahamas. Our vessel being very small- a pilot boat- the motion was very great; I have often heard of going to sea in a sailing vessel; but as this is my first trial I hope it may be the last; on landing, I felt as if I was standing on my head and every thing before me going up and down, for literally, I had thrown my insides out, which will require a few days of sleeping, riding and eating to bring everything back to a state of quietness. It will be useless for me to tell you how much I am enjoying myself, surrounded by all that can make me happy in so great a city as this, -good company- fine music, and good living to say nothing about the society of our Rebel Lady friends who are staying at this hotel, "Hotel de Cuba" and as the yankee papers call the Secede trash, as it really is of Cuba! Tell Sister Sarah that Mrs. Newcome & two daughters, formerly from New Orleans are staying here. She will remember that Mrs. N. ~~br~~ brought a letter of introduction from Miss Kate Eveteth to her in April last. She stayed at Mrs. McMurdo's two months in R. when she returned to Baltimore & has been ever since attending our sick soldiers in hospitals near Gettysburg. She is a very agreeable lady full of patriotism, as well as her very pretty daughters. Mrs. Newcome, who has been living here for many years as a sort of Commercial Agent tells me he was formerly in the ^{old} army, he graduated in 1824. He remembers you very well, was with you in the Florida War & saw you last at Tampico. He wishes to be kindly remembered to you. There are a great many sympathizers with the South in Havana amongst the citizens, even amongst the Govt officials I hear there is better feelings still. I called on our Agent Maj. Helm(?) on my arrival, who treated me very kindly, offering to assist me in anything I may require while in the city. In his office I found 12 or 14 Confederate Rebels all seated in a circle discussing the war and the probabilities of its final termination. I felt quite at home in a very few minutes and soon found myself deluded with the idea that the Campaign this fall would bring the war to a close. I hope Lee's last victory may have a great deal to do with its termination as well as Bragg's in the West.

Havana is one of the most interesting cities I have ever visited,

indeed the whole world is combined in one city. People from all quarters of the Globe carry on business here, I believe, except the Japanese, and no doubt before long they will emigrate to this island. The streets like all Spanish towns are very narrow, in some of them there is perpetual shade which makes it very agreeable for those who have to be exposed to the hot burning sun. In driving in a volante it is a rule of the city to come up one street and to return by another; this is done to prevent collisions as the streets are hardly wide enough for two carriages to pass. The most pleasant drive is on the "Passaro de Tacon" where on Sunday you will meet the whole city driving out in the most splendid carriages and Volantes I have ever seen in my life. The ladies all dress up in ball costumes and put on their most bewitching smiles, which would make any man forget himself for the time, that they like to be looked at so who can doubt who has the least conception of the vanity of that gentler sex. After the drive the fashion is to drive to the "Plaza des Armes" in front of the Gov^t General's Palace to hear the music. The music is splendid, over sixty musicians in the Band, I thought the first blast would have taken the top of my head off, but the equilibrium was established afterwards by the most beautiful and soft flowing notes of the flute and clarinet solos. I never have heard such music nor seen so much beauty displayed on any one occasion as on last Sunday night. the Plaza about two acres is beautifully ornamented with statues and flowers all in full bloom which adds to the scene-- (The remainder of this letter is lost).

(This fragment of a letter was written by Capt. Edward R. Archer CSN to his father Dr. Robert Archer of Richmond, Va. on his way as a member of one of the missions sent by the Confederate Government to England to solicit the sympathy and help from the government of that country.

M.F.Godwin).
Charlottesville, Va.