

**LETTERS HOME FROM SPAIN,
ALGERIA, AND
BRAZIL, DURING PAST
ENTOMOLOGICAL RAMBLES**

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Letters Home from Spain, Algeria, and Brazil, During past Entomological Rambles by Hamlet Clark

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HAMLET CLARK

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LETTERS HOME

FROM

SPAIN, ALGERIA, AND BRAZIL,

DURING

PAST ENTOMOLOGICAL RAMBLES.

BY

THE REV. HAMLET CLARK, M.A., F.L.S.

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INTRODUCTION.

A BUNDLE of old letters of mine has recently revealed its contents, the perusal of which has lightened the wearisomeness of a sick room. I am asked to allow them to be published. The following pages are sent to the press for the most part exactly as they were originally written, much that was only personal, or that had merely a family interest, being omitted.

The series is not complete; letters from Malaga and also from Brazil are missing; and unfortunately, by a most untoward accident, the whole of my private journals for several years, together with many MS. notes made on these and other expeditions, have been destroyed; so that to supplement these letters, or to add to the too meagre notices of natural history that they contain, has been made impossible to me.

The letters are for the most part addressed to my dear lamented father, the late Vicar of Harmston, Lincoln; one of them is to my friend Dr. Power, well known as being among the most eminent of British Coleopterists; two are, with the kind approval of the Editor, reprinted from

the pages of the 'Zoologist,' to which periodical they were originally sent as a contribution from Brazil.

The lithographs are copies of water-colour drawings made by my friend and fellow traveller John Gray, Esq., during our rambles together, first on board his yacht, and then in the province of Rio Janeiro, and are selected from his portfolio.

I am amply repaid for the work of conducting through the press this unpretending volume by the happy reminiscences of much innocent enjoyment which its contents have suggested, and which have had power often to charm away for the moment bodily suffering. I shall be more than doubly repaid if they should prove the means of suggesting to any the value of NATURAL HISTORY, either as an unfailing recreation, or as a more scientific pursuit.

H. C.

Rhyl, Easter 1867.

LETTERS,

&c.

R. Y.S. 'Miranda,'
off Hythe, Southampton,
April 24, 1856.

MY DEAR FATHER,

Here I am, in what will be, I am sure, a very pleasant home for the next month or two, as pleasant as it is now strange. I can hardly realize my present existence; everything around me is not only a complete change from my work at that ant-hill Northampton, but it is something entirely new to me, and very charming.

On Tuesday night we mustered at the Cottage a large party: some of us, I among the rest, slept on board the yacht; Gray filled his bedrooms on shore and sent the rest of his guests to the hotel. Before 7 A.M. all were on board, when we weighed anchor; but early rising for once did not pay: we weighed anchor, and spread no end of sail, and whistled; but there was no wind! not a breath. It took us more than two long mortal hours to do a mile; there were at least eleven miles of space to cross before this end of the great fleet at Spithead could be reached, and more than *twenty miles* to the other end (which was

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our programme, wind and weather permitting); and the Queen was to leave Portsmouth at eleven o'clock! We were in despair, and gave up all hopes of seeing anything after all, notwithstanding Gray's arrangements: but good fortune came to us at last; a handsome-looking steamer from Southampton, crowded with visitors for Spithead was passing us, when suddenly she stopped her engines opposite us, and somebody on board sang out, "Get out your hawser." The steamer was the 'Rattler,' from Liverpool, chartered by Liverpool men come over to see the Review; and on board of her was Gray's brother and one Colonel Blackburn, and others who knew Gray: they steamed round us, took the end of the rope on board, and away we went behind them at the rate of 10 or 12 miles an hour—so fast that the yacht's gig towing at the stern, had it not been a lifeboat, would have sunk; as it was, it was half-filled with water, and seemed as much below as above the surface. Well, we were going on right famously, when all at once a chorus of voices from the 'Rattler's' stern sang out, "Your hawser's broken!" and so it was; the rope seemed strong enough for anything, but it could not stand the pace. However, these splendid Rattlers did not desert us, for it was a dead calm; they let us get a still stronger cable out, and took us in tow again, past Calshot Castle, past Cowes, past Osborne and Ryde, *along the whole length of the fleet*, some 8 or 10 miles, past the gunboats, the mortar-boats, the floating-batteries, the frigates, and, lastly, the grand men-of-war. As for describing the sight, I cannot; I never saw such a spectacle before, and never shall again: nay, I suppose such a sight never was seen before by man! I hear (for people round me