

**THE LETTER-BAG OF
THE GREAT WESTERN;
OR, LIFE IN A STEAMER**

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The letter-bag of the great western; or, life in a steamer by Thomas Chandler Haliburton

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THOMAS CHANDLER HALIBURTON

**THE LETTER-BAG OF
THE GREAT WESTERN;
OR, LIFE IN A STEAMER**

THE
LETTER-BAG
OF
THE GREAT WESTERN;
OR,
LIFE IN A STEAMER.

Dulce est desipere in Loco.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"THE SAYINGS AND DOINGS OF SAMUEL SLICK," &c. &c.

PHILADELPHIA:
LEA & BLANCHARD.

.....
1840.

CONTENTS.

Dedication.....	Page v
Preface.....	xi
No. I. Journal of an Actress.....	17
II. Letter from Cato Mignionette (the coloured Steward) to Mr. Lavender	25
III. Do. from Captain Haltfront, of the — Regiment of Foot, to Lieut. Fugleman	31
IV. Do. from a Midshipman of H. M. S. Lap- wing to an Officer of the Inconstant .	40
V. Do. from John Skinner (Butcher) to Mary Hyde	48
VI. Do. From one of the Society of Friends to her Kinswoman	53
VII. Do. from a New Brunswicker to his Friend at Fredericton	59
VIII. Do. from an Abolitionist to a Member of Parliament	67
IX. Do. from a Cadet of the Great Western to his Mother	79
X. Do. from a Lawyer's Clerk	80
XI. Do. from a Traveller before he had travelled	84
XII. Do. from a Stoker	91
XIII. Do. from a Stockholder of the Great West- ern to the Secretary.....	96
XIV. Do. from a Servant in search of a place .	103

XV.	Letter from a French Passenger to his Friend in London	108
XVI.	Do. from an Old Hand	113
XVII.	Do. from an American Citizen	117
XVIII.	Do. from Elizabeth Figg to John Buggins	124
XIX.	Do. from the Son of a Passenger	130
XX.	Do. from the Professor of Steam and As- tronomy (otherwise called the Clerk) to the Directors	135
XXI.	Do. from Moses Levy to Levi Moses	142
XXII.	Do. from a Servant of a Family travelling to Astoria	145
XXIII.	Misdirected Letter No. 1—From a Colonist to his Father	151
XXIV.	Misdirected Letter No. 2—From a Colonist to his Brother	154
XXV.	Letter from a Loco Foco of New York to a Sympathiser of Vermont	156
XXVI.	Do. from a Coachman on the Rail-Road Line	164
XXVII.	Do. from the Wife of a Settler who cannot settle	170
XXVIII.	Do. from the Author	180

DEDICATION.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

LORD JOHN RUSSELL.

MY LORD :

Your Lordship will, no doubt, be at a loss to understand how it is, that you have had the honour of this dedication conferred upon you, which you had so little reason to expect ; and, as you have never seen, and probably never heard of, the author, must be conscious you have done so little to him to deserve ; and it is but reasonable and just that I should explain the motives that actuated me. Dedications are mendacious effusions, we all know ; and honest men begin to be ashamed of them, as reflecting but little honour on the author, or the patron ; but in a work of humour, an avowal of the truth may well find a place, and be classed among the best jokes it contains. I have selected your Lordship, then, as my Mæcænas ; not on account of your quick perception of the ridiculous, or your powers of humour, but solely on account of the very extensive patronage at your disposal. Your Lordship is a colonial minister, and I am a colonial author ; the connexion between us, therefore, in this relation is, so natural, that this work has not only a claim to your protection, but a right to your support. All the world will say that it is in vain for the whig ministry to make

protestations of regard for the colonies, when the author of that lively book, "The Letter-Bag of the Great Western," remains in obscurity in Nova Scotia, languishing for want of timely patronage; and posterity, that invariably does justice, (although it is, unfortunately rather too late, always) will pronounce that you failed in your first duty, as protector of colonial literature, if you do not do the pretty upon this occasion. Great men are apt to have short memories; and it is a common subject of complaint with authors, that they are materially injured by this defect in their organization. Literary men, however, may ascribe much of the disappointment they experience, to their own disingenuousness. They usually begin by expressing great diffidence of their own talents, and disparaging their own performances, and end by extolling the acquirements, the liberality, and the discernment of their patrons; and the latter generally admit the truth of both these propositions, which is all that is required of them, and there the matter ends. I prefer the more straightforward course of telling the truth; and so far from detracting from the merits of this work, and undervaluing myself, I am bold to say, it is quite as good a book, and as safe in its tendencies, as those of a certain fashionable author, who found favour at the hands of your party, and is therefore eminently entitled to your special regard.

I have inscribed it to you, accordingly, not for the purpose of paying a compliment to your Lordship, but that you may have an opportunity of paying a very substantial compliment to me.—Like an eastern present, it is expected that it should be acknowledged by one of still greater value; and, in order that there may

be no mistake, I beg your Lordship to understand distinctly, that its merits are very great, and that the return should be one suitable for your Lordship to give, and me to receive; and not such a one (as the Canadian rebels said to Lord Durham) "as shall be unworthy of us both." Now, my Lord, I had the pleasure of being in England during the coronation, and the high honour of being present at it. I will not say I crossed the Atlantic on purpose, because that would not be true; but I can safely say, not that I would go twice as far to see another, because that would be treasonable as well as false, but that that magnificent spectacle was well worthy of the toil of going twice as far for the express and sole purpose of witnessing it. The enthusiasm and unanimity of feeling that pervaded all classes of the assembled multitudes, gave a charm and an influence to that gorgeous ceremony, that neither rank, nor riches, nor numbers can ever bestow.

Upon that occasion, the customary honours, promotions, medals, ribbons, and royal favours, were distributed among those of Her Majesty's subjects who were supposed to be distinguished for their loyalty and devotion.

Few of them, however, have since shown by their conduct, that they were worthy of it. Instead of being overwhelmed with gratitude, as I should have been, had my merits been duly appreciated, these people have filled the country with their lamentations. The army complains that its rewards are by no means adequate to its deserts. The navy proclaims, with a noise resembling that of a speaking-trumpet, that it has not been honoured in an equal manner with the army; and the East India legions say that the navy and

Queen's troops have monopolized every thing that was valuable, and left for them only enough to mark their inferiority. All this is very amusing, but very ungrateful. Pets are always troublesome. I wish them all to understand, and you, too, my Lord, that the colonies not only did not obtain their due share of notice, but were forgotten altogether, notwithstanding the thousands of brave and loyal people they contain. They were either overlooked, amidst the numerous preparations for that great event, or the cornucopia was exhausted, before the hand that held it out had reached half-way across the Atlantic.

Your Lordship was a strenuous advocate, in days gone by, for extending representation; and, therefore, though no whig myself, I beg leave to extend this representation to you, because you were not then in the colonial office; and I know of no man there who will inform you of the mission. To show you the want of liberality in those who, for years past, have made the selection of names for royal favour, it is only necessary to point to the case of certain persons of colonial extraction. Now these very impartial judges of merit appear to have forgotten that they were advanced before, and already covered with honours. How much more just, then, as well as more courteous, would it have been in them, to have waited for their last step, until we had effected our first! But this is not all—some of them were appointed to govern a distant province; then Ireland; afterwards to preside over all the colonies; and subsequently to direct the Internal affairs of the nation in the Home Office. In your humid climate, it never rains but it pours; but in the colonies, as in Egypt, it never rains at all—even the