

**Transcription of letters from Elizabeth Gwillim and Mary Symonds, 1801-1807**  
**British Library APAC IOR Mss.Eur.C.240/1-4**

These transcriptions were made by members of the Gwillim Project (2019-2022) from images of the original manuscripts in the India Office Records held in the APAC division of the British Library (Mss.Eur.C.240/1-4). The names of the letters and the page numbers (in bold parentheses) correspond to those in the scanned copies of the letters. The original manuscript and folio numbers are given in brackets at the beginning of each letter.

**Letter\_001\_EG\_XX-1801: Elizabeth Gwillim to Esther Symonds, 21 [February] 1801**  
**(Mss.Eur.C.240/1 ff. 2r-3v)**

**(1)** My dear Mother,

You will be surprized perhaps to receive a letter dated from this place where however we may possibly stay a long time. We received a summons from the Purser on Wednesday which was not regarded but the wind proving fair & the convoy lying ready with orders to sail instantly we were inform'd on Thursday we had not a moment to lose Mr: Clarke, Rich[ar]d & Temple set off at 12 oclock at night & we three follow'd with 4 horses at eight next morning after having sat up all night - when we arrived here very much fatigued we were inform'd that the wind having suddenly changed every ship had been obliged to put back for the Downs - so we are now waiting for the wind & they tell us it is likely we may not go off this 3 weeks or a month -- I do not know whether you will be sorry that this hurry has prevented Mr: Gwillim from being knighted - he received directions to attend the Levy for that purpose on Wednesday last. But the Kings illness prevented him from having~~the~~ the Levy & many were obliged to return dressed. On Friday he was to have attended a private one for that purpose but for that we cou'd not wait - for my part I have no regret about it, as it add [sic] nothing to the respect of his situation, but he was desired to accept, & it had been done long ago but for the confusions in the change of Ministry by which every thing has been delayed & we think ourselves very fortunate to have had all material things settled - had it not God knows when it might **(5)** for the seal of the court was sent us down to this place only a few hours ago - [illegible] we expected to have sailled [sic] without it. It wou'd not have prevented Mr: Gwillim from receiving his salary but he cou'd not have done an atom of Business 'till it had arrived. for my part I have got all my preparations in excellent order - but I have laboured & travelled so much to do it that I have not had one moment to myself -

I like my black man & maid very much. - I do not know whether you read that I had been at Court. Because in several papers it was put down Mr: Gwillim by Mr: Yorke instead of Mrs: Gwillim by Mrs: Yorke - she & Mrs: Carew offered to take me I was much pleased to go with her. Mrs: Carew sent her chair & chairmen for me Mrs: Toussaint made all my cloaths [sic], & I was dressed there I assure you I have not looked so well a great many years as I did in my hoop & blond lace - I have had it all packed up for a Ball dress - I was not at all frightened & Mrs: Yorke was full of encomiums Mr: Gwillim tells me on my management of my hoop - & greatly admired my dress which was excessively pretty all white crape [sic] sattins [sic] & blond lace. - I shou'd have gone again next Thursday if I had staid in London as it [is] expected you shou'd take leave if you have time. - It was a remarkably full drawing room & ~~very~~ every body very fine being the first show after the mourning. - The Bishop of Ely was with me & extremly [sic] (6) goodnatured in going about the room to enquire who every body was that I wanted to know, upon the whole therefore [sic] I was extremly [illegible] entertained. - Mr: John Yorke the Bishop's brother whom you have seen - has made me a present of a most magnificent center for my Plateau of cut glass & silver. He had it packed at the silver smiths. -I have the pleasure to tell you that we are all well & in good spirits but we were very low all yesterday Mr: Gwillim was much affected at leaving London, so suddenly I never saw him lower but he has quite recovered then to day to add to our lowness yesterday we were in the greatest fright all the way we came - General Stewart the comander [sic] in Chief was befor [sic] us, & indeed every person - the horses were tired down on the road. The last 10 mile stage one of the horses had been twice before the same day, with us was the third time & the poor thing wanted to lie down all the way, tho it was a very fine horse but you may suppose it did not lesse[n] our fright to find ourselves so late, & that our [missing?] surprize was great to hear that whilst we had been labouring to get here the ships were moving back again. --The Ethiops mineral<sup>1</sup> I began to take when Ned was in town did me great good & I have been as well since so ever I was. ---

I send this in a parcel to town to Hetty. & shall write again soon to you. I beg to hear from you, you may write without fear as we cannot go for sometime. -

Give my love to Ned & Nancy & all the Boys I hope you are all well which I shou'd be glad to hear - We have 5 letters pacages [?] etc - come to us as nobody had delivered us our letter etc when we set off. --

Your dutiful daughter.

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<sup>1</sup> Ethiops mineral was a black solid of Mercuric sulphide, used medicinally as an anthelmintic (deworming) and tonic. See *The Comp/eat Fami/y Physician: Being a Perfect Compendium of Domestic Medicine* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1800).

EGwillim.

Portsmouth. 21st: 1801

**Letter\_002\_MS\_10-1801: Mary Symonds to Esther Symonds, 14 October 1801  
(Mss.Eur.C.240/1, ff. 4r-11v)**

(1) My Dear Mother

I hope you have from time to time received several letters through Hetty which I have written during the passage out & since our arrival here. Betsy & I had written a large packet which we intended to go by a Ship which should have left this place some weeks ago but She is still here under repair. In my last I could give you very little more satisfaction than by saying we were all arrived safe and well as we had not seen any thing of the country. I have now the pleasure to say that we like it very much and I think it will agree very well with us upon the whole Betty has since she embarke[d] at Portsmouth had better health than I have known her to have for years before and I was never better in my life. Mr Gwillim has indeed been a good deal (2) teased [?] but he has no serious illness he suffered a good deal from Sea sickness on his passage and since he came here he has had the Prickly heat which is a very violent Eruption and itches violently but all the People here congratulate him and say it is considered as a most favourable symptom and that persons who have it at first generally enjoy very good health here, besides this he had an accident which was very troublesome to him his servant set a jug of boiling water on the ground behind him when he was dressing he stepped [sic] back suddenly and it fell over his leg and scalded him very badly but Betsy immediately applyed [sic] a great quantity of oil to it and when the Surgeon came to see it he thought it looked so cool and well that he chose to continue the same application and it healed very fast but he was obliged to keep himself on a Couch for a fortnight he is now quite (3) well and has no other complaint but the bites of the gnats ants and other little insects which abound this month but we are now every day expecting the rains to set in which destroy all these little plagues and we are told that we shall then have four months of fine cool weather just like fine spring weather in England. I think this is a most beautiful country here are a variety of fine trees and a delightfull [sic] verdure we drive out every morning from five to seven o'clock at which time it is quite fresh and cool here is the greatest variety of roads that can be made in a flat country and which ever one takes one is sure of a fine avenue or a beautiful lane shaded by the fall Bamboo intermixed with the gum Arabic tree which abounds here and is the most elegant tree that I ever saw, the largest trees that resemble English foliage are the tulip tree the Banyan and the mango these I mean are common in the publick roads but we have a great number very fine in the Gardens.

About half past four (4) o'clock in the evening one can walk or ride out again for an hour and half very pleasantly. We have a great many native vegetables which are very good but altogether unlike any thing in England. The fruit also I think very good the mellons are not equal to those you have but the Pine apples are excellent the mango the plantain and the Calacca<sup>2</sup> I like very much the last of these makes a tart very much like goosberries [sic], having an agreeable tartness in it. There is a vast deal of visiting in this place which is very pleasant when one is quite at leisure [sic] but I assure you it is difficult to do anything for the houses are all open so that people come in unawares unless one shuts oneself up in ones bed chamber.

Dinners and balls are very frequent and dancing is much pleasanter here than you would think it could be in so warm a climate as the rooms are quite open and the evenings are very cool and pleasant (5) in most of the dining rooms they have two men who stand in the opposite [sic] corners of the room with very large fans made in the form of flags they are much ornamented with painting and brass they are made of a sort of grass which when damped gives out a very agreeable perfume these cool the room very much, most Ladies have [words crossed out] servants who fan them during dinner and stand behind their chairs for that purpose so you see great pains is taken to prevent our feeling any inconvenience from the heat. The Kitchens and other offices are built at a little distance from the house. These people are very excellent cooks but they have a very odd way of cooking all their utensils are very simple but elegant in their forms. The kitchen is a long narrow room with large arches in the wall formed like the mouth of an oven about 2 feet deep on this place they light a fire of sticks for roasting and the spits are turned by boys (6) who are apprentices to the cook. The boiling is generally done over Charcoal fires which are lighted in earthen pots and stand out in the garden on any convenient place.

They boil and stew every thing in earthen vessels which they have of all sizes and various pretty shapes. These cooks are also very good confectioners and mak [sic] all sorts of mixtures of eggs milk and sugar as good as possible custards trifles &c The milk is remarkably rich here and eggs are very plentiful [sic]. The price of fowls is about 10 pence a couple for such chicken as you generally boil at home but they have here two other sorts of fowls the capons are as large as a very fat hen turkey and the other sort of full grown fowl is about the size of a Dorking fowl<sup>3</sup> which you have in London. The largest size turkeys here are the most monstrous things you can conceive and look like a mountain on the table: provisions are in general very cheap and so are the servants wages but the quantity of food you are obliged to put on your table and the number of servants you (7) are obliged to keep make houskeeping [sic] quite dear enough the servant who dresses your hair would

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<sup>2</sup> *Carissa carandas* {Robert Wright, *Illustrations Of Indian Botany*, Volume 2, 1850).

<sup>3</sup> The Dorking is a British breed of domestic chicken. It is named for the town of Dorking, in Surrey.

on no account empty a washstand bason [sic] you must keep one for every purpose yet it is in this respect much worse in Bengall and other parts of India than it is here. We have a Butler to order the dinner a Compadore to go to the market to buy it he has two servants to carry it home the Butler has a second Butler under him & a man to write out his accounts and a servant to clean the plate. Each horse you keep has two servants who do nothing but attend to him, and if you keep Poultry there must be one for each sort as the same woman who takes care of ducks never interferes with the chicken &c The gardens here are very handsome as we have a great variety of beautiful Shrubs that grow very high and blow very profusely many of the fruit trees have extremely [sic] handsome blossoms and with their thick foliage conceal the long base stalks of the palm trees shewing only their gracefull tops which form a fine contrast in the groves and are constantly **(8)** waveing [sic] their long branches in the most stately manner. The great abundance of sweet scented flowers give rise to many pretty customs amongst the natives here whenever they mean to compliment they present flowers to you, not plucked with leaves and stems as you gather them but pipped out as you may do cowslips or jessamine, sometimes white and sometimes pink flowers they use for this purpose, when they have pipped them they take the fibres of a plant which are as strong as a four penny thread and they string them upon these as close as possible passing the thread through the bottom part of the flower pip so that it forms a rope of about an inch in diameter this they present in wreaths of a yard or two yards long. At the time the Nabob was enthroned these wreaths were presented to all the company and the Nabob himself placed them around the neck of the principal persons he also presented them with a small parcel of the Beetle nut which the natives [word crossed out] chew done up in the leaves of a tree **(9)** gilded over. They strew flowers on the graves of all their friends occasionally and when any person of consequence dies they weave a cloth in this manner to wrap round the body they take more wreaths of flowers as I have described and plat them into each other exactly as a weaver does his threads fixing them into a frame or loom for that purpose. The tombs of great persons are very handsome buildings and I am told that the inside of some of them is kept constantly hung round with flowers and that 6 or 8 men are employed in one to renew [word crossed out] them dayly [sic]. We were last night at a grand ball given by a Mrs. Chinery at which there were about a hundred and fifty persons they danced in the house which was finely lighted and dressed with flowers, the supper was in the garden where a table was laid near 3 hundred feet long upon carpets. Over the table was an awning of green cloth bordered supported on each side by collumns [sic] of of large Bamboo round each of which an immense qantity [sic] of the branches of trees and flowers were bound so that it had the appearance **(10)** of a beautiful long bower it was lighted by above an hundred wax lights all burning in cut Glass [?] shades altogether it had a very brilliant appearance. Balls of this sort occur every week but the suppers are generally in the house. I am endeavoring to

make a set of drawings of the different Casts and descriptions of the natives of this country to give you all an exact idea of their dresses, but I fear I shall not have more than one or two to send with this as the ships I am told will sail sooner than I expected and it is difficult for them to suit their time to mine to draw them but as another ship is expected here dayly [sic]; which will leave this place in a short time for England I hope to make a packet by her. I have written my letter on India paper for two reasons first that it is much cheaper than Europe paper and secondly that I think you will like to see what they make here, it is poor stuff. If you can get some muchrooms [sic] at any time a little ketchup or a few preserved apricots **(11)** we shall be much obliged to you for them, the two Gammons of Bacon Ned was so good as to give us have turned out very fine; one and the half of the other have been dressed for different companies here they were much admired and eat at Lunchines [sic] clean to the bone, Sir T Strange & Mr. Sullivan the other Judge, come every day whilst the first lasted. I hope the dear Boys are all going on well; by the time you receive this you will have another stout lad I suppose ready to run amongst the party. I hope you will have this pretty soon, as The Admiral Rainier goes home in this fleet and therefore [sic] it is expected They will not be delayed any where on their passage. If I had time I could lengthen out my letter to a quire of paper, as it is I fear you will be tired and I must close it this mornng; as the ship sails tomorrow all sorts of English pickles are greatly valued in this country not only by the Europeans but also by the natives who steal them from you if they can get at them in any way and eat them privately, their **(12)** laws forbid them to eat or drink any thing which has been touched by an inferior {so that the cooking for them is always done by one of their own cast, this they strictly adhere to in all things they are indifferent about but their passion for these pickles is so great that they codescend [sic] to eat them tho made by us whom they account the lowest of all and class with the kamars or outcasts [word crossed out] one cannot trust the jar of Pickle even with the Butler but I am obliged to give out a little at a time in a saucer and to observe that it is brought to table for they cannot resist they have no vinegar in this country but what is brought from England & for that we pay about 6 shillings a quart as they could not afford to make them if they knew how. The three little figures I have sent are an Ayah or Ladies Portuguese maid A little Moor Boy who is the sort of servant generally kept to wait on single Ladies at dinner, and Fanny Lackey [?] whose business is **(13)** to put water in the Bedrooms and to sweep the floors of them, the sweeping she performs with the little rod or Broom in her hand and in the other hand she has a dust shovel which they call a fan it is made of chip or cane of which materials they make a great number of usefull & Elegant utensils; footstools dinner trays Baskets in the form of Boxes to hold milinary or cloaths of any sort, and they look very ornamental in the rooms as they colour them, and plat them in very pretty figures, they also make mats for the floors with cane which are very dureable [sic]; most of the houses are entirely covered with them, as the floors are of chinam that is a

sort of stoco [stucco] they colour it to represent marble of different kinds in squares this has an elegant appearance but the colour comes **(14)** off on ones cloaths very much when it is not matted.

They also make Blinds of the cane which are painted green to prevent the glare of light from coming in too strong the fronts of the houses are quite open a house generally consists of five rooms or halls of an equal size in the centre; the first {to which you ascend by a very wide flight of steps, is called a Veranda the rooms are divided only by Collumns [sic] or in arches so that the whole of the sitting rooms lye [sic] open before you when you enter. Besides this you have two wings of 3 rooms each; these make chambers and Library. and If you have gentlemen visiters [sic] they sleep in Bungaloes [sic] which are small very pretty houses built in different parts of the garden. Mr R. Clarke has one of these which is very comfortable and pretty it **(15)** consists of a dining room with Verandas on 3 sides of it a Room over that and on the top of all a little slight room with a thatch or matted top and the sides are all round of Venetian blinds in this he sleeps as present and think it very cool and pleasant but when the rains set in the lower room will no doubt be better none of the windows in this country are glazed they are very large and have fixed Venetian blinds very strong which fasten like shutters you shall have some sketches to give you an Idea of the houses very soon I hope and of many other things as I shall not suffer myself to be Idle where there is so much matter of [word crossed out] curiosity which I know my friends will be glad to have related and drawn even in the slightest manner. I beg you to give my compliments to all who do me the favour to enquire after me. And most affectionate remembrances **(16)** to Ned Nancy and the dear Boys.

I remain my dear Mother

Your dutifull & affectate daughter, Mary Symonds

Madras

October 14th, 1801

**Letter\_003\_MS\_10-1801: Mary Symonds to Hester James, Madras, 14 October 1801**  
**(Mss.Eur.C.240/1, ff.12r-13v)**

(1) Oct. 14, 1801

My dear Hetty,

I have sent a long letter for my Mother directed to you and left open that you may read it before you forward it. I send 3 little figures which I fear my Mother will be disappointed to find of as small a size as they will require her best spectacles to discover their ornaments; the necklace bracelets and earring of the lowest servants are of the finest gold some of the better order of women are quite loaded with gold and jewels, but in these ornaments consist their whole wealth they call them joys some wear large rings in the nose and have their toes and fingers [word missing] with rings They have no (2) furniture in their houses but an Earthen vessel to boil their rice and curry in and some chip baskets. Their whole dress consists of a long peice [sic] of cloth or muslin which they wrap about them in an Elegant manner. If I had drawn the figures of a larger size you would perhaps have had some difficulty and expence in getting them through the India house or else I must have troubled some person to get them on shore and so have used that interest which would convey a better thing. If you chuse [sic] to keep the whole collection as I send them you must copy [sic] them for my mother or else desire her to return them to you-I could wish you to shew them to G. Samuel and tell him that he shall have some houses and Choultries<sup>4</sup> and pagodas very (3) soon that is to say we propose seting [sic] about them after the rains are over when for 2 or 3 months we shall be able to sit out of doors several hours in the day as the weather will be cool and clear. I hope now we are settled that I shall be able to send something for the curious by every opportunity.

If you are in the habit of making the preserves as we did formerly, it will not be taken amiss that you add a few pottles of fine high flavoured strawberries into your stewpan for us as that they turned out I think finer than any other of our prese[rves] but they are all very good, and great treasures here. They were only boiled into jam the same as Raspberries with a good deal of sugar, be sure give my kind love to James and tell him I dont [sic] expect him to [word missing] all the stuf [sic] I have scribbled indeed (4) I think he will not attempt to forestall this budget but send up to you as soon as he sees the length of it.

Believe me to be my dear Hetty Yours most affectionately

Mary Symonds

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<sup>4</sup> Choultry is a resting place, sometimes a *loggia*. See Hobson-Jobson, 211.



Madras

Oct.r 14, 1801

Ps we did not forget the third of this month and we had a goose of Michaelmass day.

[Note at Bottom] Mrs. James

**Letter\_004\_EG\_10-1801: Elizabeth Gwillim to Esther Symonds, 17 October 1801**  
**(Mss.Eur.C.240/1, ff. 14r-18v)**

(1) My dear Mother,

Since we came here Polly & I have changed characters she has become the writer as I have had much domestick business you must not therefore be surprized to see so little of my hand, Besides I have had a good deal to write to Lizzy Thoburn which no one else cou'd do, about seeds & plants I have sent many sorts but like enough nothing new. I think you woud [sic] like this country very much there is nothing to complain of but that it is a little too hot. There is perpetual summer the trees & grass have almost constantly the fresh verdure of May. A few weeks of dry weather dries up the grass which is always short but it does not make it very brown & one night of rain with this heat turns up a fresh crop & every place is like green velvet: upon the trees this drought has no effect, as it has with you. Philosophers have a way of accounting for this, but I do not well understand it myself. This freshness is not preserved by dews or fogs for we have neither. The trees are large & tall & the whole place is like Parks & gardens with every beauty that can be in a flat country, Neither plants nor trees have their leaves eaten by insects nor curled up by them as yours are with what we call blight: they are perfectly clean & fresh and most of them bloom all the year. -

I never write two lines without an interruption all our rooms are open here & great folding doors thrown open; it is living in Publick. The houses may properly be called garden houses they are like handsome s[u]mmer houses in English pleasure grounds but with more apartments, every body (2) walks in & presents himself before you that chuses unless you particularly direct to be private, as a part of a history of the manners of the place I will tell you that I was interrupted about since I now sat down - The gardener or Maistry as they call him, the head man - with three under him & two boys in regular order the youngest first & the gardener last walked in to the front of the house & into the hall where I am sitting & after making a Salam that is putting their hands to their foreheads & bowing to the ground they stand upright before me. They cannot speak a word of English nor I of Malabar which is their language - Therefore their entrance being observed by the servants who are lying about me comes forward for an interpreter, he being greater than they like other folks in office talks to them in a loud voice lowering it to me in a most farcical manner. He explains to me that this is a Feast day for praying the God for all irons employed in tools & that they are desirous of two days holiday to go to see the God & request me

to give them a Rupee & half that is about 3s: 6d. or 3s: 9 to buy a Sheep to kill before the tools spades &c which are for that purpose carried to the back part of the garden where the sheep is to be slaughtered cooked & eat. After this they generally spend the night in a sort of revelry, going to the Pagodas & making musick more horrible than any noise was ever heard, seeing dancers & juglers [sic] & so forth. These kind of Feasts occur frequently

and are their days of recreation as well as of religious ceremony. Indeed religion & amusement seems to be always united with them. - When I had granted their request. The Servant desires to know if I will say any more to them & finding I have done he says most authoritatively **(3)** salam - Poh, that is bow & go. & this they call making a salam for a sheep - The carpenters I understand made their salam to Mr: Gwillim this morning & are also to kill their sheep. - When Mr: Gwillim new Palankeen came home we were obliged to have two sheep killed before it cou'd be used.

There are 13 Palankeen men 12 bearers & one for a cook who performs this business in a shed where they sleep at the back of the garden They modestly requested only a Rupee a piece for the two sheep but when they came they looked so long legged & lean that Mr: Gwillim gave them another rupee for pity & desired them to change them for fatter ones.

They make stews of it, so lean does as well as fat. They call their stews Curry from the name of a leaf they put in them. They eat boiled [sic] rice for bread & the vegetables they stew with the meat. They drink no strong liquor: water is their beverage; but it may therefore be allowed them to pepper their stews very high, they eat very little animal food & the spice [words crossed out] is necessary to warm their stomachs - Medical people begin to find that Europeans do not require to have their dishes seasoned so highly as they used to have them - The spice being to the natives what our wine is to us, it is not necessary to take both.- It is curious to go through their markets the provisions are almost all vegetables [words crossed out] They have indeed a good deal of fish but in a street a mile long where every house is a shop or has a standing before it, chiefly vegetables [sic]. There will not be above one or two butchers with a kid or two cutting up, or a sheep. -

The different sorts of people here **(4)** were not easily explained to me before I saw them, but they are easily distinguished when one sees them not indeed the minute divisions of Casts for they do not know them all themselves but the different Nations - The Population of this place with its' towns & villages in a square of about 7 miles each way is not I shou'd think much less than London The people [word crossed out] seem to swarm in the roads & what makes it appear strange is that there is no appearance of dwelling places for them - our Garden houses stand in the middle of our Gardens & are seen from the road The Pagodas rise amongst the trees & are shaded till you come near them. The ~~Choultries~~ Choultries are low buildings mere Porticoes with only

sometimes apartments at the back They are of stone & richly ornamented with carved work, but the exuberance of foliage conceals all but the front. This gives them an air of solemnity that is a [word crossed out] beautiful contrast to the general gaiety of the country: & the fresh verdure the constant shew [sic] of blossoms, the [word crossed out] groups of people with their light graceful dresses & over all the bright clearness of the sky gives the whole place an air of cheerfulness that I have never seen equalled. Neither the ~~Mosques~~ Mosques nor these however rise high - Their dwelling houses in the towns are seldom more than ~~one story high~~ a ground floor & there are rows of trees generally before the houses on each side the street besides their gardens at the back so that these are not seen till you go through them. The Villages are still more concealed [sic] they are for the most part in the groves of Cocoa palms, in the neighbourhood of some Chouldry or Pagoda both which are very numerous. They consist of a set of houses made little other than larger bee hives of the palm leaves platted & thatched with the same or with Palmyra leaves (5) another kind of Palm. These Villages have their thousands The Pagodas are places of worship of the Gentoo & the Choultries are for the reception of travellers & built by them - The Mosques are as you know the Moormens place of worship - We have Portegueze [sic] Armenian & English Churches in the towns. I generally, as I have heard most people do, call the Indians Gentoo - but the Gentoo, Hindoo, Malabar & Bramin are all one set these names being only distinctions amongst themselves implying their employment or at least a [word crossed out] set of employments that may be used by that cast of people - thus the Bramins are the Priests but they have also other trades they may perform. but none other can be done by any one than such as belong to that cast to perform he may make different things & all may be servants to us or to one another, may be poor or rich - but a worker in iron must breed his son to it, & so must a worker of leather &c. These people are the original inhabitants of this country & tho' they have been invaded & governed by more warlike people they are still ten to one at least of all the other nations who enticed by their beautiful country have been endeavoring [sic] to destroy them for these thousand years last - their extraordinary Laws & their numbers have done that towards preserving them that their courage wou'd not have led them to attempt & they go on [word crossed out] Praying the God sowing rice, weaving cloth & eating curry just in the same way as they have done these three thousand years. They are the mildest people in the world - They are not like the Moor-men, a ferocious people enervated by luxury, by turns voluptuaries & slaves, but a mild, patient people possessed of every useful art but that of defending themselves from their enemies - They seem to (6) have no pleasure in or thought of revenge otherwise one might say they have had the satisfaction to see ~~one sort of invader destroy another~~ their invaders either sunk in to idleness & luxury or destroyed by each other, whilst they have lost nothing they value -

The earth produces abundantly & with so little labour what they require & much more that they do not feel much wrath when others ~~par~~ take of that with them, which might only otherwise be wasted foreign delicacies they never acquire - It may seem an absurd distinction to say they are not effeminate [sic] but feminine in their manner - not depraved but gentle - they have the virtues & the vices of us women patient - mild & attentive, they are pusillanimous, they are cowardly & deceitful - their frauds are like those of children & they have neither shame nor fear when they are detected, they seem to know no power to resist temptation & [word crossed out] therefore [word crossed out] to have no shame of doing ill & as to fear they themselves never appear to have any resentment of good or ill & if punishment has taught them to fear it only gives rise to new frauds [word crossed out] without preventing them from doing amiss - [words crossed out] They are a small people with soft voices, not squeaking, of a fine brown colour not sooty black their features delicate & their hair waving not curled, their teeth are white & their mouths red with chewing beetle [sic] their noses small & neatly made rather low bridged except in some casts the Bramins have higher noses, I fancy that I know [w] them at first sight - it may be mere fancy in me but they know one another's cast by the features which is not wonderful as they never marry out of their cast. -

Their dress is always white with borders - sometimes a red turban - The Moormen are a handsomer people taller higher noses & a grander air (7) about them & their dress is richer their full trousers [sic] or Peticoat [sic] is of striped sattins [sic] or mixed with gold & their turbans are more shewy [sic] - Their Government may now be said to be done away they are in our power but the people are numerous particularly here on the coasts - They retain little of their ferocity of their character in their expressions of their faces, but enough to give them an air that distinguishes them from the Gentoos mild looks. I could not mistake them - The Moor women are particularly shewy [sic] they and the Gentoos are covered with gold ornaments & have indeed all a carriage that would be admired in our best stage figures - The people calling themselves Portugueze [sic] are as well as the Moors as dark as the Gentoos - These are a sad set - They pretend [sic] to have descended from the Portugueze [sic] but it is not so in many instances they are the refuse of all sorts are a sort of Christians who yet partake of all the [word crossed out] superstitions of the natives & know nothing but profligacy - They are not so numerous as the Moors by now one in ten indeed - the women wear a peticoat [sic] & some of the men affect to wear European cloaths [sic] --

The next people are the English whom I soon discovered not to be more than one to a thousand others but I am told we are not near so many - Is not it a strange thing to see ourselves thus masters of a place? - you never meet an English person but in a carriage or in a Palankeen -

The Sepoys that is the black soldiers have all the manners of ours even now when I see them so often regiments of them whether horse or foot I cannot help being surprized when I pass them & look back at the black faces drilled by our people they have so much the same air & they think so much of themselves that there is no danger of their befriending their country men - I used in my (8) morning rides to pass the Camp we had here for some time & I was much diverted to see the Corporals drilling the awkward squads - & young beginners. so completely Corporals exactly the airs & affectation of those in the Park. -

I sit to write exactly opposite your picture with Hetty's the two Thoburns & Nancy Green - I seem to be talking to you. Having seen no land since I left England I cannot persuade myself I am so far off. I sent a letter off in a hurry to Lizzy Thoburn when I first landed & I have just had it back so I have it sent with these things Polly also sent letters the worst business of all is the writing - The ship we sent those by had an accident & did not go. - I long to hear from you. I begin now to get settled & feel at home the weather is become cooler than it was - It is like a fine warm Summer in England, I do not think it too hot. When we came the land winds prevail'd which are very hot & unpleasant. This Climate affords many Pleasures & if there were not some drawbacks we shou'd be all coming here - The Moon light nights are charming - [word crossed out] I long sometimes [sic] to have you with me to see one -~~The~~ when the fine warmth of the night & the sea-breeze cooling the air invites us to sit out on the terrace before the house - The moon so bright shining on the trees, the grasshoppers chirping & the Sepoy tinkling his little wild tune on a sort of guitar on the one side of the garden - The Sea roaring at a distance (which I hear as I lie down in bed). The [word crossed out] Tubereuses<sup>5</sup> & sweet flowers smelling pleasantly and all these without the least fear of catching cough or cold. -

When I am telling you one thing I find other things necessary to the story & that makes me make sad digressions - you do not perhaps know. as no servants sleep in the house that (9) everybody has 3 or 4 Sepoys to keep the garden they keep guard by turns night & day go home to their meals & sleep under the trees or on the steps of the door. It is a kind of Terrace the length of the house of 8 or 10 steps up & [?] Ballustrades [sic] on the side on which we put China pots with flowers & lean over to listen to the surf of the Sea. It rolls in here prodigiously like it does at Borth sands<sup>6</sup> which Hetty will know & I hope she will read this before it comes to you for I mean it for both - I hope soon some conveyance will give me an opportunity of sending for I have been much hurried this time We expect the Georgina Packet daily & that will be in England before the L[ord] Thurlow which this is intended to go by. I am very much obliged to Ned & Nancy for the

<sup>5</sup> *Agave amica*, formerly *Polianthes tuberosa*, the tuberose

<sup>6</sup> Borth (Welsh: Y Borth), is a seaside village north of Aberystwyth in Ceredigion, Mid Wales.

bacon & we have half a Gammon now I have desired Polly to say how useful it has been; only old Bacon will carry, this came as nice as it set out. -

Since I wrote this I have been invited by the servants to see the ceremony they [words missing: letter damaged] their sheep killing - We have a great deal of [words missing: letter damaged] here called go-downs - In a small room where the [words missing: letter damaged] keeps his wood & does his work this room being in a small square or court yard - the ceremony was kept in the room they made up a small kind of temple like a scene in a play little pillars with flowers twisted round shaped it, others crossed it at the front on the top long leaves of the palm were set which bending forward formed an airy kind of Pediment to every point of the leaf as it bowed over some Oleander flowers the pillars dressed with all kinds of flowers the ground spread over with leaves & all round the spades hoes & iron tools of every description rollers &c. bound round with flowers suitable to their forms & all aranged [sic] very prettily on the floor of this little stage as one may call it first a pyramid of fruit & palm leaves with the flowers of the Palm long spike which bent over looked like a fountain then placed beautifully [sic] flowers fruits & sweet-meats of every colour with two **(10)** lamps & two candles - & a fire in front burning on a Planten [sic] leaf on which they strewed Benjamin<sup>7</sup> continually - The Head Carpenter & Gardener without their turbans & a Bramin also bare headed doing the ceremony - the Bramin on his hams sitting chanting a long time & occasionally snuffing up the smell of the Benja[min] the others tending it & all the fruit roasting a little with the fire - all the rest of the people standing without the place now & then devoutly bowing & holding their hands together as we do when we pray - at last the fire goes nearly out the Bram[in] is in a sort of ecstasy [sic] & the people are desired to enter the place one at a time they fall down flat on the floor & holding their nose over the expiring fire snuff it up eagerly & rise & go out this done the Bramin puts the leaf leaf [sic] of fire not yet extinguished, into the Carpenters hands, the motions restores the flame a little, he brings it outside the door where all crowd round him & hold their hands over the flame & snuff it. Then he puts it out by crumbling it [words missing: letter damaged] & each person making a salam receives a [words missing: letter damaged] ashes which he ~~receives~~ receives with great devotion [words missing: letter damaged] [i]n his hands smells to [word crossed out] & rubs it on his forehead making that white & what remains on his breast - Fire works were then lighted & let off & the ceremony ended by picking out a plate of the things which they presented to us when we departed - I shou'd have told you that the two poor sheep were all this while tied up to a post in front of this altar for such I consider it. - The festoons of flowers that ornamented it were excessively pretty, but the sheep are not to die till tomorrow morning the altar therefore remains.

<sup>7</sup> Likely *Ficus benjamina*, the weeping fig

--

I have a thousand things to say to you of love to the children, but as you know our love for them & ~~de~~ are I dare say desirous to hear how we like this strange country - I run on telling you what we see rather than in guessing what you are at which I hope soon to hear may God bless & preserve you & believe me your dutiful daughter

Give our love to Ned & Nancy. - Eliz: Gwillim

**Letter\_005\_EG\_10-1801: Elizabeth Gwillim to Hester James, October 17, 1801  
(Mss.Eur.C.240/1, ff. 19r-19v)**

(1) My dear Hetty -

Some awkwardness may arise which you must excuse as I can manage no better at present not being as yet acquainted with any person belonging to ships the Gentleman who brings this brings also two trees & a basket & packet of seeds for Mr: Whitley - His name is Livingston if he should call he is a surgeon I was introduced to him to do me this service & am in hopes he will come out again - He thinks he can take on shore two shawls for me but this is not always to be done, if he finds a difficulty they must be let go to the India house<sup>8</sup> & he will tell you how to get them out or will employ a person to pay the duty - If this is done Mr: James will please to enquire the expense, pay it & charge it to Mr: Gwillim - I wou'd have sent over more shawls but for this difficulty. If paid for let me know what for if not heavy it is worth while to send them they are both orange colour one will make you a square & James a waistcoat & the other will do the same for Mrs: Gwillim & I will beg you to send it to her for that purpose - This is a bad time of year for getting them as they come from Bengall [sic] & no ships have lately come - There is no square shawl to be had you will take which you like. -

Tell Mr: Whitly my seeds wou'd not grow - English seeds seldom succeed [sic] - The Cape seeds are hung up in bags in a basket & hung up in Cabins & they do here - Swindons seeds<sup>9</sup> from England grow & begins to be in great repute & are done in varnished past board - I have sent him some in both ways. I hope they will grow - I wish I had brought a 100 more out of Mr. James shop in scotch muslins & Cambrick Muslins, - Give my best love to James I know not if I may [word illegible] to any one else but I hope so - I long to hear - Believe me ever

<sup>8</sup> East India House, in Leadenhall Street, London .

<sup>9</sup> N. Swindon, Brentford nurseryman.



Most affectionately [word crossed out]

your's EGwillim

Gardens

Oct. 17<sup>th</sup>: 1801. -

(2)

M<sup>rs</sup>: James

No. 39 Bishopsgate Street within

London

**Letter\_006\_EG\_01-1802: Elizabeth Gwillim to Esther Symonds, 23 January 1802**

**(Mss.Eur.C.240/1, ff. 21r-32r)**

(1)

Madras

My dear Mother, Gardens Jan[uary] 23d: 1802

I received six letters from Hetty written in May which is the only account I have had from England since we left it. Those letters were written in great haste but were a very pleasant relief to me as it appeared you were recovered from the illness you had when I went away - It was the greatest surprize to us to learn that she had not then lain in I trust in God she had a good time but it is very long to wait to hear of an event which was so near. It is now eight months since those letters were written. I wish we were as well off for private intelligence as we are for Publick The Newspapers come here over land & we have had them constantly at four months after their date which considering the distance & that when the World is at peace we may have them still quicker is a great matter. The time of our arrival in this place ~~was~~ unfavourable to us in ~~one~~ respect to hearing from or writing to our friends & I dare say long before this comes to your hand you will have thought it strange not to have heard. But besides that the season has not permitted us to write for some time, some accidents which prevented ships from calling here on their [word crossed out] voyages to England have been (2) I left this blank in a mistake being interrupted (3) one was ~~stayed~~ detained on some occasion & another which was to have taken up Passengers here in November & by which many made up Packets to send - was after all obliged to go another course for fear of some Privateers. ~~which~~ These Privateers were soon after taken. - I wrote as we all did

to you by the Thurlow.

& from that time to this we have been constantly told to prepare letters, but so many disappointments have followed all the promises that nobody is inclined to begin & I think it likely enough that the first ship that calls will find nobody prepared. I am however so desirous that you should know something of our going on that in spite of the small hopes I have I am determined to begin. - The months of Nov[ember] Dec[ember] & January are what is called here the [words crossed out] Monsoon, that is the rainy season. The surf of the sea is very great on this Coast & therefore during this Period it is thought unsafe for any Vessels to lye [sic] near the Coast. For this reason at the commencement of the Monsoon the flag is struck, & not set up again till it is over, to indicate that no ships are to remain in the Harbour or Roads nor to come into it. As great numbers of Vessels of different sorts are constantly lying here, [word crossed out] at other times This circumstance of itself gives the natives & Settlers a Melancholy idea. Indeed it produces a great change in the (4) appearance of the Beech [sic] which generally presents a most lively busy scene. The Country ships that is the Coasting Vessels have begun to come in & with a few ships of War we have near a Hundred; but these make but little shew. When we came the Roads were crowded with ships of a large size, & we expect every day to see them again in the same state, and for nine months in the year frequent opportunities will occur of writing, There are so many things you will be likely to wish to know of this place that I believe it matters not which I begin with as we have now been here 6 months you will expect to hear something [sic] of the Climate. When we first landed 26th: of July we had land winds with Sea Breezes in an Evening, but it was thought late for the Land winds to continue. The Natives count the season of the Land Winds a healthy time & I believe it may be so to all people who are careful & patient they prevail April, May, June & July. This wind is a strong breeze & in the degree we had then very pleasant to me at first but we soon found the effects they are said to produce, sometimes the one & sometimes the other They give sometimes [word crossed out]-people a dryness of the skin as if sand had been blown on it, & I found it impossible to keep my hair from curling to a [word crossed out] perfect frizz, at other times as it blows over you it draws out so great a profusion of perspiration that you get your clothes quite wet (5) but what is remarkable is that this wind which is in itself so hot makes every thing else cold, of course this sweat is as cold as Ice, & what is the consequence of being in cold water may be easily guessed it gives cramps in the legs [word crossed out] spasms in the back & neck, & young men who go to sleep in liquor, in the open air, which from impatience & fool-hardiness they frequently will, get occasionally such cramps & spasms as are never cured. This effect of producing sweat is most common in sleep & therefore all prudent people shut up the windows on that side whence this wind blows & in day time close the Venetians to keep out the light which is the best way of

keeping out the heat. The Sea breeze generally sets in of an Evening and is ~~which is~~ delightfully refreshing. We none of us found any bad effects. In September & October the heat of the Climate is considerably abated but they told us we shou'd suffer much from the flies which wou'd swarm in every thing but I found the account much beyond the truth. The trees plants & the air are all extremely free from insects, but they come to the candles in an evening, they are chiefly the common small black fly but these I never saw more numerous [word crossed out] here than at Brompton, there are no Blue bottles or Wasps nor any stingers, there are small moths of various kinds (6) from an almost invisible size to the bigness of a sixpence, a few small things of the Lady-fly kind of different colours, but very rarely any beetle that is large comes into the house.

The Grasshoppers are the most impertinent & they are of all sizes & colours [word crossed out] but 'tho' very pretty their noise is extremely troublesome & sometimes when they hop upon one's arms or face one is not quite sure that it is not a more offensive insect, a fright however soon over, for they are too busy a race to remain long in a place & I believe few people are afraid of or have much dislike to them. one other tribe we have that come occasionally to the candles & these are very curious. They are the white ant which in their first state burrough [sic] in the ground to the quantity of bushels, in this state when found and they are watched for, they are dug up & sold in the Bazer [sic] (market) as we sell elvers or shrimps - They are esteemed a great delicacy, & all the people of the country are very fond of them for stews. ~~They~~ A nest of them as you may suppose frequently gets to a state of perfection & come out unobserved & they then fly about as other insects do They are said to have their wings only one day; ~~but~~ what truth may be in this I cannot say, but this I have observed that tho' they fly into the rooms in hundreds they all leave their wings behind them but walk off (7) without them perfectly (to all appearance) as well as ever. They generally alight & run about the table seldom using their wings more than to obtain a place to walk on, & in walking they shed their wings, just as the petals wou'd shake off a bunch of May flowers - I cou'd get a paperful of these wings which are thin & brown. This is a sketch of the insect [drawing of insect] - ~~These are~~ I have now given you a list of our anoyances [sic] in the insect way & I suppose I shall have no occasion to add to them as Sep[tember] & Oct[ober] are the months in which they come, In Nov[ember] they all disappeared & even the grasshoppers are much quieter - In these months, the air is generally cooler but not so fine a sea breeze at night we have too occasionally heavy showers of rain which gives a freshness to every thing & makes the day very pleasant. We have had only one thunder storm since I came here which was at this time. I do not think it was more violent than I have seen in England, but it lasted great part of the night. No accident happened that we heard of Lightening [sic] seldom does harm in these hot countries. Before the Monsoon it Lightened every night as soon as ~~it was dark~~ the sun set. The clouds have

the most fantastick [sic] forms & the lightening [sic] shoots from different parts of the Sky in the most beautiful manner. It is perfectly harmless & therefore even I look at it with the greatest pleasure, indeed we are so much used to it in going about from house to house of an evening (8) that I look upon the sight of it as great part of the pleasure & if the lightening [sic] has not been bright I feel as much disappointed as if ~~the~~ I do in England if the sun has not set finely. One Evening at a Ball at Lord Clive's<sup>10</sup> where there are very large Glass Lusters, the Lightning shooting through the windows upon the cut glass lighted, up as they were, with the Dancers under them produced one of the finest effects I ever saw. --

In November the Monsoon begins, & every body rejoiced that the weather wou'd, after the rain become cool; but tho' it disagreed with few Europeans [words crossed out] I was much disappointed The rain is heavier than your's in the same season & with it little abatement of heat, at least not enough to induce one to shut one self up or to put on additional cloathing [sic] both which ought to be done, for the rain with the heat makes the damps [sic] so penetrating that every place is full of it, it is exactly the effect of a very sudden hot thaw & gave me the same feeling & the same complaints I have in England when a great frost breaks up violently. - I got a crick in my neck & rheumatick [sic] stitches in my breast exactly the same as your's & I was plagued with them at every turn till I found myself obliged to take to all my English cloaths [sic] again. My flannel Peticoat & Jacket a Shawl to go out in & a good Blanket on the bed & had I been aware to have done (9) [word crossed out] this earlier I shou'd have saved myself much pains - Flannel is most valuable here - The Natives beg, buy & steal it. Even Mr: Gwillim sleeps in a flannel waistcoat: The seasons in this place hitherto are exactly like England with the difference of the degree of heat - The changes are very similar & with regard to the absolute degree of heat one's feelings are not to be regulated by that; for when the pores are so open as they are here the least check has the same effect as very [word crossed out] cold weather wou'd have at another time. Nov[ember]-~~Dec[ember]~~ brings here exactly the same effects as in England, People who are Gouty are laid up here as duly at the end of Oct[ober] & beginning of Nov[ember] as they are in England & it continues in the same way. All the Servants & people exposed get coughs also, & for two months our servants have been coughing quite as much as every I heard a family in my life. I do not believe there were at one time two in ten that had not a cold or cough. - They call what we have had a very mild Monsoon & I think it must, we had heavy rains sometimes for two days & nights without ceasing but no wind of consequence enough to call a storm nor any thunder-~~but~~ and the ships might have staid [sic] here all the Monsoon with great safety: but this is

<sup>10</sup> Edward Clive first earl of Powis (1754–1839) was the son of Robert Clive. He served as the Governor of Madras between 1798 and 1803.

not to be relied on [word crossed out] accidents have happened. Between the rains are generally 4 or 5 of the sweetest days that can be imagined & then again 2 or 3 days of rain. This is the great Gardening time, and as the rains of the spring & the return of the sun warms your climate ~~gives you~~ in England **(10)** the sweet temperament [sic] of May & June, so here by the rains & the retiring of the Sun we are cooled to the same state & the latter half of Dec[ember] & this month are like one of the finest seasons in May & June - whatever ~~of the~~ plants we have, which cultivated in England [word crossed out] either flower, or are fit for food - in June are ready here at this time. Christmas day is kept exactly like May day & every house & ever person is dressed with Garlands of flowers [words crossed out] boughs are fixed to the entrances of the houses, & people entertain their friends with green peas. French beans are here ~~always~~ all the year & are very good, of our kind: but their hedges are all full of a wild sort, or indeed, sorts, for there are several, little inferiour [sic] to our's, & tho' to be had all the year are now more abundant: They climb up every tree & bower over the hedges which are covered with the profusion of their flowers - sometimes white but more frequently pink or laylock [sic] & very beautiful. These beans are some of them shelled & boiled [sic] as broad beans & are not bad - others are used as we use our's but they are as broad as two fingers ~~but~~ however they cut them [word crossed out] as small & they are so much alike that I eat them several times without knowing nor shou'd I have known if I had not been told - but I thought them drier more meally - We have Potatoes only half the year, the New Potatoes are just come in they do not grow here but are brought from the Northward. -

I have eaten Asparagus **(11)** several times but they are miserable small straws They are very sweet & wou'd no doubt as a few do occasionally [sic] grow to a good size but they have been but lately introduced. Turnips & carrots are always to be had but they are small, the Cabbages are chiefly what we call cutters or cabbage plants but people who attend to their own gardens have cabbage but no broccoli or ~~eahi~~ Cauliflower The Endive is large & as white as snow, beet root small Lettuces small, Mustard, cresses, Radishes, mint in great abundance [word crossed out] onions, cucumbers, & spinach, sage also is good - and Parsley grows very well but the seed ought to be fresh from England at every opportunity for the seed will not do a second time - It is excellent the first time but the second it becomes like Chervil & after two or three times as rank as fennel the seed I brought out wou'd not grow it got damp by some means, but a Gen<sup>n</sup> [Gentleman] who came in the same Fleet brought some & I have had parsley from him & he has given me a bed ful [sic] of roots which do well - As the Parsley becomes fennel so the fennel gets as strong as anniced [sic]. - Thyme & Marjorem [sic] I have not seen & lost what I brought out dried - Here are an infinite number of vegetables of this country of some of which I

am fond - Yams a large coarse kind of Potato & a very small sweet potato like frost bitten ones. - Greens & Sorrels of several sorts but what the natives chiefly use are the seed vessels of plants - almost all the plants & trees of the country are of the pea or bean shaped flower & ~~yield~~ produce Pods of various forms & these they use in their stews either shelled or young. The Tamarind [sic] is a large tree of this kind & is [word crossed out] as agreeable to them as any other **(12)** bean for they generally put lime juice into them or the acid of tamarinds. They [have] several things of the Cucumber & Gourd kind which are excellent stewed - & some other seed vessels. - As the Hedges & trees yield them so many things you may suppose their labour in gardening is not much - but they keep their beds neat enough for some few greens. Their Gardens look more like shrubberies with these flowering trees, which blow like laburnums & the bladder Senna, but some are very handsome which you have not seen & all blow profusely & have the lightest foliage waving in the air. - This country is now truly [sic] beautiful here is no spot uncultivated but is either used for Cocoa nut groves, mango groves, (or Orchards, you would call them), - pleasure grounds, gardens or Rice fields - The Rice looks exactly like thick crops of wheat & as yet I should not have known it without plucking it, it is at present green - some [c]rops of Millet are cut in & some other small grains -

The Sea is a fine object on one side & on the others there are ~~fine hills~~ two ranges of hills, the first begins 7 miles from the Sea the houses are on the plain of this space & the Rice fields & towns intermixed - The roads are cut into so many directions & windings to the innumerable houses & villages that I have as yet not the least notion of the plan of it & the servants tell me "If my Mistress every day go out for one year she will every day see some new road". - I therefore when I go out in the Carriage tell them to take us anywhere for a pretty ride & sweet scenes we see as can be on a **(13)** flat country - The houses are all beautiful Palaces of white marble embossed [sic] in lofty trees - The inclosures of the rice corn fields are very irregular some small & others like common fields in England with groves & plantations of tall trees & flowering shrubs, of every form more [word crossed out] various than you can guess from the great leaf of the cocoa Palm each one of which is a load for a strong man & which he binds up & carries on his head or shoulder like a deal plank - to the fine cut [word crossed out] Mimosas of many of which are as [word crossed out] light & thin as a piece of lace (The Gum Arabica is the finest of all.) - These groves & corners & the full Hedges ~~look~~ give a remarkable richness to the look of the corn fields - Never were seen such beautiful hedge-rows as are on each side the roads & dividing every field & garden. & the plants for Hedging are as various as beautiful. Every body chuses [sic] for himself - some are of Ivoryy [?] a plant so exactly like hawthorn whether it grows in the Hedge or runs up into a tree that, without plucking it you could not know & therefore the English are fond

of it for their fences, however it has no thorn & the flowers are more like Mignonette [sic] in appearance & smell - The hedges have all trees of various kinds growing in them - another favorite hedge is a plant that has no leaves or rather nothing but leaves it is extremely [sic] verdant, thick, bushy & tall & like lace work - Bamboo, plaited into another rich looking hedge & throwing itself upwards rises (14) in plumes like light feathers, 60 or 80 feet high. - some people like the American Aloes which have not that stiff look you might imagine for having trees in the rows the various kinds of Bind weeds that every where abound [words crossed out], hang down & cling about from the branches of the trees to these strong plants where they find support, & form the most fantastick [sic] festoons - Convolvuluses of various sorts & beans with many wild Gourds - these binding plants profuse of flowers, clinging about the Indian plants of large size are to me the most beautiful as well as the most novel kind. There is a plant a kind of Bread fruit yielding a large fruit as big as a pine apple & with leaves not unlike a pine apple but soft & pliant & bending down - this has a wildness & grandeur in the look of it, particularly when it shoots up into trees, that is most delightful to a stranger - Wild sugar Cane & the Prickly Pear or Indian Fig are also used for hedging, - I think Edward James wou'd not be sorry for a ship load of hedging stuff if he cou'd make it grow - Of these plants in a short time a hedge may be formed that a Tyger [sic] cou'd not pass, for the closeness & strength of the thorns.- [words crossed out]

We have four Rivers in this place ~~neither~~ none of them navigable within some miles of this place & then only for boats - They are very shallow streams, but broad when there has been rain & the banks rich with wood (15) in many parts, they wind about this plain in a most irregular manner & there are a great many Bridges over them, besides innumerable fords which being causeways well made in the dry seasons are quite safe & we seldom go out to dinner without passing one two or three of these. These Rivers run into the Sea at this place some of them come down the country 40 or 50 miles, & they enliven the country exceedingly The great beauty of this place is that if you quit the sea side you have always a river on one hand or the other, or else a tank, by which you are to understand a Lake, partly natural, but aided by art the dams being carefully kept up; Some of these tanks are many miles long & are very fine pieces of water - many of the houses are built on the banks of them with flights of steps to the water. Agriculture is carried on here in a manner just the reverse of your's and so is Gardening, for as you raise beds for the vegetables & leave a sunk path to walk round [sic] them, here they sink the bed about a hand-breadth, & the path round [sic] is raised. This is in order to retain the water which is of course much exhausted in the day. --

As you are a great architect I think you will like to hear something of the buildings here which are much talked of but I hardly know how to begin a subject so various - The Houses of all

Europeans are nearly equal as to goodness & size in what situation soever the dwellers are, for building is cheap & young people generally build & these are let out afterward or sold - They are all like Pictures of Italian Palaces with flat roofs or balustrades, I hardly know what to compare them to that you know for they look like Marble & are all **(16)** built with columns but it is a lighter kind of building than our fine churches in London & much more beautiful architecture than the inferiour [sic] ones Lord Tilney's house is like a great many of them with a double flight of steps outside, but many are only Pavillions with nothing above the ground floor which is the case of the house we live in, they are the prettiest houses, but the upstairs houses as they call them have more air. These houses are built of brick & cased over with the Chunam, This Chunam is a finer lime than the Plaster of Paris it is made of the small white shells which this rough surf occasions the Sea [word crossed out] to throw up in great quantities - To prevent them being carried back with the tide there are fishers who with a peculiar kind of net drag them out of the surf they are then carefully cleaned & burned. The Stucco made of this lime & called Chunam bears a pollish [sic] almost equal to white marble, ~~but~~ as is generally said, but I think it is more like the pollish [sic] ~~of~~ or glaze of very smooth white China The walls, Colums [sic] & ballustrades [sic] are all polished. The walls of rooms are somtimes [sic] painted as Stucco rooms in England of pale green blue & c & [word crossed out] retain [word crossed out] polish Some people colour the Chunam for the outside of the house of a light grey in imitation of the grey granite of the country leaving the colums [sic] pilasters & c & c white - The floors are also of this Chunam coloured according to the fancy of the owner; & here it so exactly resembles marble pavements, that [word crossed out] I shou'd not have known it - our house has black squares & white ones for the [word crossed out] sitting rooms & c & the other rooms a light tint much used some have Dove & Black squares or all dove which is neat they mark it in squares so deep that **(17)** it wou'd decieve [sic] anybody. We have folding doors in all the rooms which are half way Green painted Venetians the windows are all Venetians & no glass but we can thus exclude the light & yet have air from room to room through the whole house but they are generally all open, & there are always as many doors as windows - never any plain wall or side of a room but only Piers between, these have girandoles, or glass shades [word crossed out] The rooms will not admit of much furniture. - There are Verandoes [sic] at the back & front of the house & in these the dinner & c is generally laid the Other rooms are called [word crossed out] halls & are used as drawing rooms or sitting rooms - The dinners look very pretty laid out in these Verandoes [sic] open to the Garden & well lighted up. There is a balustrade between the Columns on which they set flowers & c The first dinner I saw I thought ~~the~~ it wonderfully ~~pretty~~ striking particularly from



the immense number of servants waiting with such extreme stillness & so delicately dressed all in white muslins & white or figured turbans & large gold earrings [sic].

Besides ones own servants every body who dines ~~with one~~ brings one or two with him so that if we sit down twenty or three or four & twenty to dinner there are at least thirty servants waiting at table, The greater part of ~~these~~ people will come in Palankeens & each Palankeen has from 9 to 13 men & two Lanthorn men. These set the Palankeens under the trees before the doors & lie down to sleep or talk 'till they are called if it be all night the Carriages wait in the same way, & they altogether form very pretty groups under the trees. - I think nothing of the kind can exceed the beauty of an evening ride to see all the houses lighted **(18)** up & people dining or dancing in the Verandoes [sic] with the attendants lying about the garden, particularly at a Ball when if there are 150 people or 200 which is generally the number, there will be 400. 500 or more of these people in their muslin dresses scattered under the trees before the house. The Fort is very handsome from the Fortifications it has several handsome squares in it & the buildings are all in the same stile [sic] as the Garden houses, ~~but~~ higher but with flat roofs - The Church & some publick [sic] buildings rise above them. In a view it looks like prints one has seen of views of Grecian Cities, all Temples & no middling houses. --

The Black town is the most curious in a view, it presents such a variety of objects: streets full of palaces such as I have described - English Porteguese [sic] & Armenian ~~Church~~ Christian - Churches - Hindoo - Pagodas & Moorish Mosques, & tombs - & when you go through the streets the various business carried on & the lower buildings which from the extent of the town are equally curious - It is very large & the streets have at the corners names written up in Malabar & English & the houses numbered. The houses of the Natives make no shew [sic] but look neat enough where the streets are regular which is pretty much the case. The Streets are not paved but broad, the people walk on the middle way the sides are raised one two or three feet with steps up at every house but the space before every house is [word crossed out] appropriated to it & not intruded on by passengers- The roof of the house overhangs about 3 feet in the way of our pent houses & over shadows a solid raised part like a Balk<sup>11</sup> on which the **(19)** people sit by day & where they frequently sleep at night - The door is small & low with a carving in wood over it & the wall of the house has no window to the street, but is painted according to the fancy of the owner- either with ~~Tygers~~ a Tyger [sic] hunt or dancing girls - flowers in borders or plain stripes. These paintings are in water colours painted on the white

<sup>11</sup> A balk is "an earthen ridge dividing areas of land" (James Stevens Curl, *A dictionary of architecture and landscape architecture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).)

wash, just in the stile [sic] & with about as much skill as paintings are done on the walls of rooms in our farm houses to imitate paper. - [word crossed out] When you go in at the door there is a short dark passage with a seat on each side of the same plaster as the wall on which they sit or sleep at night this brings you into a little square of about ten feet each way which if it be - [legend to drawing of house: doorway to the yard; sleeping room &c; pillars; sleeping room &c; seats; Verando [sic]; yard shaded with a vine frame; Verando [sic]; seats; sleeping room &c; sleeping room &c; seat; seat; this place has sometimes pillars; entrance] a small house is [word crossed out] shaded by a - vine frame covered with some kind - of gourd which gives a shade. In this - place all the cooking is done on pans - of fire &c & at night they sleep on the - seats in the open part or verandoes [sic] unless it - rains when they use the close dark - rooms; for to exclude the heat they - also keep out the light. If the - house belong [sic] to a richer person - they have a small staircase which leads up to the same kind of place above in that case these Verandoes [sic] above have carpets on them & here they sit to do their work or to keep their accounts & use these upper dark rooms for sleeping & the under **(20)** parts are for the servants for cooking &c In such a house therefore the square wou'd be paved & no tree over it but the cooking & slop water thrown over it which is drained off but serves to keep it cool. - beyond this square there is another, which is a kind of yard where the Cows &c are kept & sometimes a Garden beyond, but their gardens are more frequently a mile or two from the towns in places appropriated to that use.

These kind of houses are much cooler than our large houses they have a very thick wall & the light coming down in the middle does not heat it as ours are heated which are exposed all round [sic] - They never sit in a draught of air They indeed lye [sic] down in the open air before Choultries &c but being in a house or near buildings which bring current of air they always get a wall at their backs, generally on three sides of them; but the Europeans think the more air the better & build their houses like lanthorns so that one can never get out of a draught of air & the rooms are too hot & too cold at the same time They are certainly beautiful buildings, but many regret that they have not the coolness of the native houses. I have drawn a plan on the back of this of a native house [missing] & have made rounds where the pillars are which are always used within to support it but not always on the outside. The workmanship is always neat The walls are brick work stuccoed - (Chunamed) over & the roof pantiles without, within not ceiled but of fine wood **(21)** the colour of Oak varnished & carved. - the pillars are of the same wood very slender & with such a capital as you sometimes see supporting an oak gallery in a Church & indeed their Verandoes or Galleries are very much like those in a Church. -

Of their utensils I shall tell you in another place but this is grown too long a letter & as many ships are going I shall send some by each & this as it is shall be one I shall direct my letters to [~~word crossed out~~] Hetty whether they are to you or to her & leave them open for as there are so many things to tell you about I shall not like to say the same thing twice I dare say you have thought me a very negligent correspondent but when I was on board ship I did a good deal of drawing of such things as we caught &c & I left Polly to write, when I came here I had to go about looking at houses & arranging it when I got one - lastly I did not like to send my letters at the same time with hers as a ship was then about to sail which being over laden sunk in the harbour, but no person was hurt. It was full of Rice intended for your use in England - My letters were brought me back many weeks after some I sent with those by the Thurlow which I hope you will have in March, & some I kept hoping to send better Editions by other ships which were then expected to go. How I have been disappointed I have related in the first part of **(22)** this tedious letter. -

In order to finish this so far as it goes I may as well fill the paper by telling you what I had omitted that the white ants have in each nest one as large as the end of a finger which is called the Queen ant. As soon as a man find [sic] this he pops it into his mouth her Majesty being esteemed a particular delicacy. She is said to taste like a lump of thick cream or marrow. - In fact these ants have little to do with the common ants & seem more like bees, but without either their virtues or their mischievous stings-----we have two kinds of ants which infest the houses a large black [drawing of ant] kind & a very small red sort [drawing of ant] these are only kept out by constant sweeping for if we do not sweep the house they will & if you leave ever so many crumbs on the floor they are soon carried off - the red ones bite one a sharp bite & eat every think [sic] of the sweet kind to prevent which we put the beds to stand on little square stones grooved & filled with water over which they cannot pass, tables that contain anything sweet have the feet set in four China basins made strong & shallow for the purpose. -

we have just had our letters by Captain Nash which have given us great pleasure but that shall be the **(23)** subject of a new letter - meanwhile I remain

your dutiful daughter

Madras

EGwillim

Gardens

Feb. 5th: 1802

**Letter\_007\_EG\_02-1802: Elizabeth Gwillim to Hester James, 7 February 1802**  
**(Mss.Eur.C.240/1, ff. 33r-38v)**

(1)

Madras Gardens Feb[ruary] 7th 1802

My dear Hetty,

To you who are our best & almost only correspondent we owe a thousand thanks, your letters & those you have inclosed [sic] to us are all we have seen since we left England. The two Mrs: Clarke inclosed [sic] for you came to us in Nov[ember] by the Apollo were a most acceptable treasure tho' being dated so early as April 18th & not bringing us news of your delivery we [word crossed out] were still in a state of anxiety - Before you have this you will no doubt think us negligent in writing, Now it has happened I have related fully to my Mother & I shall leave all my letters open that you may if you are so disposed read them or any part of them: As to my Mother I look upon my letters to her & you as the same & shall direct them all to you, as I know not how they may be to go, but by way of variety I shall sometimes indulge myself by fancying I am talking to her & sometimes to you Her picture & the miniatures hang over my dressing table where I write so I have all my friends before me see here we are pray [drawing of dressing table and miniatures] look at us - I have made my poor mother a shocking face but it is a hasty piece & she must excuse it Nothing I brought out has been admired equal to my mothers picture -- Now sitting as you see me, I give you & James joy of the little Tom who I trust in God will live & be healthy. I shou'd have been glad to have heard that you had taken a lodging at Brompton for this & you & Mr. James' occasional visits **(2)** for I fear if you did not go (& the 29th of August your last date was late, [word crossed out] in the summer) I fear you will not have borne two winters without country air I never cou'd stand it & I attribute my illness before I left England to attempting it. -

We were extremely glad to hear you had the two young girls with you whose company I think you must have needed to enliven you; Mr: James's return of his Rhumatick complaint gives us much concern I hope it will not become a frequent visitor to him. - I entreat you will not waste a line in making excuses for him in not writing I know him much too well to be at all surprized [sic] & can form a compleat [sic] notion of him after the labour of the day sitting down to write a letter & the pen dropping as the book used to do out of his hand. I had written a long letter to my mother on which I shall write No 1. before the fleet arrived - We heard of it as it passed Ceylon & the Coast some days before they anchored & you may judge we suffered great agitation - Mr. G.

desired me to agree with him if the letters came late not to open them till next morning - They came on an evening & were brought to him but he cou'd not rest, fortunately they contained no ill news except that I shou'd have been glad to have heard a better account of my mother. She bears the Winters very ill. ---

As you have named this boy Tom I hope you will soon have another to call Harry for I opine it was rather a disappointment, tho the reason, the presence of so great a stranger as his uncle Tom was a most unanswerable one. - I wrote a letter for my mother & you jointly - a letter to Lizze [sic] Thoburn & sent some that had been returned to me from a ship that sunk in harbour - together with seeds for Mr: Whitley by [word crossed out] **(3)** Mr: Livingston surgeon of the ship Lord Thurlow I hope you will receive them safe in March - He undertook to carry two shawls for me directed to you. He told me he thought he cou'd get them on shore for me but if he found he cou'd not rather than they shou'd be taken he wou'd put them in the India House from whence they cou'd be had by paying the duty which I requested him to ask Mr: James to pay him having no other mode of paying it - if there shou'd be a necessity I shall beg the favour of Mr James to charge it to me I shall be glad to know what is paid that I may guess whether it is worth while to send things or not. The cry here is that it is by no means worth while to send shauls [sic] or anything else to England if you are obliged to pay the Duty - and as yet I know nob[o]dy to get to carry things for me that will run [?] them. Everybody that goes home likes to take all he can for himself duty free however ships will be going now very frequently & by sending one now & then I shall be able to ~~get them~~ send you some to keep you warm. I am much vexed that in my hurry I forgot to give Mr: Livingston a letter to introduce him to your attention - As a selfish reason because he expects to return here immediately & wou'd take care of anything to me as another & better because he is a very respectable young man & was introduced to me by a friend of ours with whom we were very intimate on board ship. a surgeon who came out to settle here. If he shou'd not be gone when you get this you will easily find him by enquiring at the India house - That is if you have any thing to send you wish taken care of. It is of particular consequence to entrust seeds to some persons care but of **(4)** all that I shall write to Lizzy. Mr: James said something [sic] once or twice about sending shawls over & therefore I shall on a seperate bit of paper set down the particulars relative to the purchase of them here & also of the Muslins of this country for Bengal Muslins are as dear here as in England indeed dearer, unless you get some friend to chuse [sic] them for you in Bengal where you must take more than you want. - The one shawl I sent was for Mrs: Gwillim & the other for you - I have bought some more for friends & shall send these & one for you as I can get them carried one at a time. The regulations with respect to sending the manufactures of this country are really absurd at least carried to an absurd

length & I find the strictness here is much beyond that in England I cou'd for a very little money send you things that wou'd delight you if they wou'd let them pass but they will not allow even made up things to be sent. I wish I cou'd send you the Counterpane of my bed - which cost me about 40s & is 4 yd each way - you never saw anything so rich as the painting The town of St: Thome about 3 miles from this along the sea beach is full of Manufactures of chintzs & counterpanes or Palanpos as they are called -- with painted clothes for women of the richest patterns [sic]. I call them painted for so they literally are one person draws all the outline & others put in the colours sitting on the ground & they will come to your house & paint you any pattern you like on a sheet or what cloth you chuse [sic] to give them. I need not tell you how permanent the colours are They indeed get brighter the more they are washed tho they lay all (5) cloaths [sic] to dry here on the sand which takes out all English colours. Coventry blue thread in marking does not last above 4 or 5 washings - the borders of printed handkerchiefs disappear. Port wine goes clean out the first washing & brown cotton stockings are no longer brown after one washing. I think you wou'd envy me if you saw a washing of cloaths [sic] come [word crossed out] home it looks all as if it was quite new [crossed out] the stockings are folded the same & I shou'd buy them in any shop for new but for seeing the marks. How they iron or how the [sic] fold I cannot guess but you might sit upon a dozen of gowns as they come folded up without - disturbing a fold & yet when you open them there is not a tuck nor hem that is not picked out as if it had been just made whatever shapes the gowns are it is the same - ruffling & gimp & fancy sleeves gatherd [sic] up in places - they iron amongst it all or press it in some way or other that it seems just made & as white as snow. The cloaths [sic] I had washed when we first landed covered half a room over & quite astonished me when I saw it brought home for the old brown kitchen dusters & callico [sic] towels which I cou'd never have washed in London to look decent & which were besides mouldy by lying in the ships, were brought us white as any piece of new muslin. The heat of the sun bleaches every thing out at once, but I think it also rots [word crossed out] the things but particularly linen - the English muslins & callicos [sic] wear admirably well, better I think than the Indian ones - but linen cloth is worn out sooner than you cou'd think - They beat it on the pieces of rock in the rivers where they wash & the linen cut directly as to hems whether of callico [sic] or linen about 4 or five washings beat them entirely out, & they must be done again. (6)

They say here that the Washer men beat the linen & whatever they know to be European articles & that they sing all the time they beat- Europa Europa Europa - The Moor people have very pretty manufactures The Gentoo people are most fond of white with colourd [sic] borders wove in - but the Moorish people delight in having all the richest colours that they can put together their [word crossed out] [word crossed out] Trowsers [sic] which are as full as peticoats [sic] & the same only

divided are made of Sattins of the most elegant stripes & patterns whether for men or women over these the men wear shawl or sattin [sic] short pelices - or worked muslin jams like childrens jams<sup>12</sup> shawls round [sic] the waist over their shoulders & on their heads - & the women wear over their drawers colourd [sic] muslin or gauze robes with, broad gold borders & a piece of the same gauze also bordered with gold wove in - of the size of a long shawl which they hang at the back of their heads, & spread over their shoulders in any fanciful way - It covers them but does not conceal any part of their dress. Their choulies or little bodies [sic] are also of the most shewy [sic] colours & patterns - I speak now of the common Moor women one sees about other girls of the town, as we shou'd call them, or dancing girls, or the wives of common people, for the wives of great men are finer; but these I shall tell you in another place - The Moorish shop keepers who sell these things, spread them on Matts [sic] before their doors as Earthen ware is spread in England - They sleep or eat in the middle of the day but about 4 oClock in the Evening [word crossed out] an assortment of goods is spread out & high market begins. The streets are crowded with (7) people buying and all are full dressed at that time of day - I wou'd give any thing if I cou'd send you some of their dyed Muslins or gold gauzes but, they will not let a bit pass - several people have tried to get some sent but I have heard of no one who has succeeded - Spread out, these manufactures look most splendid Our house is ~~about~~ near two miles from the Fort & the Fort is built close to the Sea The Walls &c are [words crossed out] very handsome with barracks under them at low water you can walk under them. The beach is like Borth Sands or Barmouth, but the Horses here have not strength enough to draw you a Carriage along the sand, you must either get out & walk or go in a Palenquin [sic]. The ground on which the Fort is built stands out a little to the sea & the shore hollows in, in a slight curve from the Fort to St. Thome, a large town - & you see the one place from the other as Aberystwith [sic] appeared [sic] from the rock. It is three miles from the one place to the other & as I am fond of the Sea I take the Palankeen [sic] & the Men always walk in the first breaker, for as they wear no shoes nor stockings, they feel no inconvenien[ce] in doing so. I fancy myself in a boat or a Bathing Machine - There is no land to be seen. The breeze comes fresh & the Sea is so much alike in all places, that I can hardly persuade myself I am so far from you when everything looks so exactly like the place we have been in together. - The Sea appears to me to come in exactly as it did at Barmouth, rolling in with a monstrous surf which however extends farther out. There (8) is the same fine sand dimpled over with the same kind of shells. But I never saw any sea-weed nor any of that Jelly-like substance which we used to find in Wales & which I suppose [word crossed out] is produced on the rocks as

<sup>12</sup> "JAM, s. [jammah, Indian] A long muslin dress for children." (*Encyclopaedia Londinensis*, vol. 10 (1811), 676.)

sea weed is, & we have no rocks here near the sea - The ships do not anchor before this part but passing this & the Fort, they anchor between the Fort & the Black town & on that side the land retires back very much There all ship business is carried on. On this side we have nothing but fishing which is most amusing to me. - I dare say you have often heard of the ~~Catty~~ Cattimarans [sic] used by these people - Catty means a bundle & [word crossed out] Murum means wood, & therefore Cattimarans [sic], as we call them, are bundles of wood<sup>13</sup> & by the way Mrs: Edward James is very fond of calling old maids, old Cattimarans [sic] & you may tell her that when she [word crossed out] has a mind to be affronting she need not use a foreign language but say at once you old faggot. -The surf is so strong that no boat can stand it therefore all the fishing is done on these Cattimarans [sic] they are made by tying the trunks of three or four trees, each about as thick as a man, together, with ropes made of the bark of the Cocoa Palm - They are seldom above ten feet long & only tyed [sic] in a few places so the water comes through of course - Each of these has in general, a man & a boy or two men but some times only one. - one only rows at at [sic] any time he uses only one stick for that purpose but sitting as a Taylor [sic] does he dips in one end on one side & the other end on the other (9) side as quick as lightening [sic] - what he uses is only a straight lath - The nets are laid on the place before their feet & they are themselves naked except a small piece of linen. They meet the surf with the greatest indifference tho every wave buries them for a second or two - They appear in another place stretching their nets or drawing them in without seeming to have been interrupted I have watched them for an hour together thus appearing & disappearing by turns - There are hundreds of these always out as far as your eye can reach & some times the surf appears to extend as far one sees only white waves & these spots, as they look, popping up & down. I frequently make the men set down the Palankeen [sic] which they like well enough to do for they are all fond of the Sea. - If a Cattymaran [sic] comes to shore which they generally do we buy fish of them & by this means I have seen a great variety of fish that I shou'd never other wise have seen for they never bring from the markets any but a few particular kinds - all the rest go by the name of Palankeen [sic] boys fish, which is indeed all the name I can get for any of them - Many of them are very nice & more to my taste than the other kinds but they are smaller sorts of fish much like little trout & lasprings<sup>14</sup> & there is a small kind the same as white-bait [drawing of a fish] about a penny a plateful [word crossed out]

<sup>13</sup> "CATAMARAN , s. Also CUT- MURRAM, CUTMURAL . Tam. *kattu*, 'binding,' *maram*, 'wood.' A raft formed of three or four logs of wood lashed together. The Anglo-Indian accentuation of the last syllable is not correct." (Hobson-Jobson, 173).

<sup>14</sup> "The Smolt, or young Salmon, is by the fishermen of some rivers called a Laspring." (William Yarrel, *History of British Fishes*, vol. 2, (London, J. Van Voorst, 1836), 15).



These they dress [word crossed out] very nicely they stick them on bents through the head & then fry them quite stiff & they look excessively pretty & eat the same as white bait. There is another kind much more like an Anchovy then [sic] our sprats are & I think they are anchovies besides these there are many curious fish - such as the ~~Ink~~ Ink fish & others which I shou'd not like to eat but I buy (10) for about 8 pence or 10 pence as many as I like for my self and a days provision for the nine Palankeen [sic] boys who are ready enough to run with me along the Beach to St. Thome & back for such a treat. Mr. Gwillim has not failed [sic] to eat fish above one day in twenty since he came here. We have no lobsters here but we have Prawns as large as the tail of a midling [sic] lobster & exactly the same but there is no inside to them, but we mix some crab with it & it makes very fine lobster like sauce. We have shrimps all sizes & another thing very unlike any creature I ever saw The first I saw at table I thought they had been made in sweetmeat & varnished. They are very nice but so little to eat & take so long a time to get at that little that they are not ~~much~~ worth much: however they are sweeter than any of the other kinds they are neither crabs prawns, nor lobsters they [have] no tail nor claws large enough to eat & only a body so what is, is like the inside of a lobster - They boil to a pale pink The children catch these & small crabs along the shore as they run about the sand; whilst their fathers are fishing - these things look very pretty in a dish & make fine soup [drawing of sea creature] or Curry. - Mr. G enjoys it exceedingly when we get any new fish or vegetable which by going about I bring home -- We talk a great deal to the servants some of whom are very good & intelligent, indeed they are the only people to enquire of for few of the white people care for any thing but having it all as like home as possible & have no pleasure in enquiring into the customs of the people or the Production of the place, unless they are likely to turn to account The men like money & the women like visiting - The greater part of them wou'd not turn up their eyes to look at an (11) object that they wou'd make a party & go twenty miles to see in England. Mr: G. asks them why they did not bring us any fish we have got by accident. They always say "Gentlemen cannot eat that fish" - Then he [word crossed out] [asks] them if they can eat it, yes they say, black people very much like that but gentlemen can't eat, no custom, to bring gentlemen however [?] - but they are extremely pleased to see you eat any of their kind of things & since they discover our wish [to] try it all they are constantly bringing some new kind of Vegetable, many of which are very excellent - of fruit for tarts they have a great variety quite as good as goose berries or apples. - There is certainly one very pleasant thing in the servants they all enter into your pursuits they are constantly bringing me flowers & insects & pointing out things to me as we go along. - They have some extraordinary notions of grandeur, Hares are very plen[tiful] [word missing] here, but rabbits are dear, a hare costs about [words missing] & a rabbit eight shillings for there are none but [word missing] some gentlemen keep &

so far as I find must be stolen before you can buy them. - We by means of some directions got the hares dressd [sic] so much in our own way that I wished to have one for company & desired among the rest it might appear cooked in that stile [sic], however it was not brought, & as I had observed the butler was disturbed when I told him to [word crossed out] get it - I enquired why it had not been done - Upon which he said he was very sorry but the Cook & he had both agreed that all the company wou'd laugh if a Country hare was brought to so handsome a dinner, but he promised me the next time he wou'd not fail to get a rabbit. They always call them by way of contempt Country hares & I believe are perfectly convinced that it is from stinginess that I order them & I have never so far prevailled [sic] as to have one for company. (12) They have a great pride in setting out the dinner because every body brings his own servant with him & it is matter of conversation - They spare no pains in dressing it with flowers & my plateau & figures are just to their taste. I am glad I brought out China desert [sic] set for here is so much glass that tho' it costs so much they do not value it & here is no china except mine & a few things Sr. Tho<sup>S</sup> Strange has - both that & my Wedgwood have been admired beyond everything, For except Lord Clives I do not see any Wedgwood but what looks as if it had been bought in Covent Garden. As well for pattern as shape.

Mrs: James

No. 39. Bishopsgate Street

Within

London.

Well I will put no more in this letter as I do not know how they are to go. This is only preparing for opportunities - I have drawn a few birds & the Cochineal insect & plant but I have not [been] able for one thing or other to do any Landscape drawings yet. I hope I shall but the views are quite beyond my sketching powers - Visiting, & very unwell in the Monsoon & every time I go out I come home just tired as if I had been at an exhibition of pictures. There is so much to see that makes me want to read that I may not tell you things wrong to have to unsay With love to James & little Tom yours EGwillim

**Letter\_008\_MS\_02-1802: Mary Symonds to Hester James, Madras, February 11, 1802**  
**(Mss.Eur.C.240/1, ff. 39r-46v)**

(1) My Dear Hetty,

I have written several letters to you since my arrival in this country or rather have scrawled over several sheets of paper and I fear I shall go on in the same slovenly manner for I cannot persuade myself to begin to write till the ships are almost ready to sail and when I do begin I find I have so much to say to you that I have no patience to write well. It was a great satisfaction to us to receive a letter from you by the Apollo tho' the information we gained by it was not so satisfactory as we hoped it might have been by the time it was dated for how you could have kept up till so late in May I cannot conceive. We had great pleasure in hearing of Miss James and Miss Turners[?] spending the spring with you as James must have had fine walks and plenty of amusement in shewing them the Lyons about London.<sup>15</sup> I have seen them both, but it is a long time since I saw Miss James it was when she was at scholl [sic] at Miss Williams's, she was then a very handsome girl and I dare say she is much improved since that time. Your new drawing room will be an additional inducement to me to endeavour at improving myself in drawing. I am at present incapable of giving you any satisfactory representations of this country or of the people and consequently cannot send you any thing that will be worthy of a place on the wall. but my anxiety to give you an accurate idea of these people makes me send you some little daubs from time to time by way of illustration to our letters. Now we are pretty well settled I hope to get a good deal of time for drawing and as we have peace with France I suppose our opportunities of sending and receiving letters will be much more frequent, this letter will be sent by the Sir Stephen Lushington (2) she was one of the fleet we came out with. I sent a letter to you on our arrival here, by a Mr. Williams who went home in the [\*\* left blank\*\*] he was a Shipmate of ours when I entrusted my packet to him I believed him to be unfortunate in being obliged to return so soon but I afterwards learned that he is a most abominable fellow I hope he did not contrive to scrape any acquaintance with you. Captain Mash arrived here yesterday, Feb. 5th and I have this morning had the pleasure of reading two letters from you (the last of which is dated August 29th) one from my mother, one from Mrs. Morgan some from Mrs. Chambers, &c. &c. I thank God heartily for the comfortable news you tell me of your own and the dear little boy's health indeed your letters are much more pleasing to me than all the publick news in the World so do not waste time and paper in apologies on that account. a packet of newspapers when ever you have an opportunity of sending them will afford us a great deal of amusement and give us all those particular circumstances, most of the great events which take place in Europe are sent here over Land to the Government and to several great merchants houses who have regular corrispondence [sic]. A chit chat latter which seems to place us amongst you all, is what we most desire to receive. I intreat [sic] you to continue your present plan of telling

<sup>15</sup> 'Lions of Londons for Country Cousins', an expression denoting the sights of London. See: British Library <http://access.bl.uk/item/pdf/lsidyv32bfe0fb>

us all that occurs for if it were not for your letters we should feel ourselves quite friendless and forgot; not a word have we had the Brompton family,<sup>16</sup> nor have Sir Henrys family troubled him with any heavy packets. a little of Mr: Johns<sup>17</sup> humour would be very acceptable and would enliven us much, I am very happy to hear that he is about to be married, if it is true I suppose you will see the lady and pray give us some account of her **(3)** for I dare say he will not give himself the trouble to gratify our curiosity with any particulars and I have reason to think he will not even give me an opportunity of congratulating him. you will now be able to judge of his true character, he used to appear very differently at home and abroad, if he receives his friends in the same cold manner in his own house as he used to do in his fathers I suppose it will no longer be attributed to the restraint he is under from those he lives with.-notwithstanding all his uncertainty I have however a great regard for him and wish him all the happiness in the world, and should I ever be fortunate enough to have a house in England he will be a very wellcome [sic] guest. I intend writing to G. Samuel by this ship because I think he will be glad to hear from me tho he has not asked me to write his time is very precious and therefore [sic] I shall not expect to hear much from him. --

You have not mentioned Mrs. Burnsides death in any of your letters nor does Mrs: Shepheard say any thing of it in hers this I am much surprised at as I saw it in a newspaper of the latter end of April 1801, which was you know soon after we left England. I often wish to give you some Idea of our acquaintance here but at (sometimes?) it appears a very difficult undertaking and at others a very useless one yet it may be pleasant to you to know who they are and you may occasionally [sic] meet with some of their connexions one name I know I have heard James mention as well known in the muslin world a Mr. & Mrs. Brown he is a son of Brown of the firm of Brown & Rogers, we are not very intimate with the lady as she was near lying in when we arrived and has not been out much since she recovered he is a fine young man rather dashing and we are told he was very much so before he married and was a **(4)** good deal in debt she was a Miss Sewel a relation of one of the first merchants here. another of our acquaintances is a Mrs. Chinery who may be a relation of your friend of that name for ought [sic] I know I am told she is the daughter of an Inn keeper on the road near Stamford Bridge, she is however one of the finest Ladies in this place. They give splendid balls and it is observed of the lady that she wears the most expensive dresses of any body and seldom appears twice in the same. But the grand lady of all is a Mrs. Dick her husband is the highest member of counsil [sic] who is married, in consequence of which she takes place of every body in the settlement just as the Lady Mayoress does in the City I believe he is very rich, she is rather pretty and at least 20 years younger than he is; her father is a Taylor at Charing Cross his

<sup>16</sup> In reference to Elizabeth and Mary Thoburn and their step-father Reginald Whitley who ran a plant nursery in Brompton.

<sup>17</sup> John Gwillim was Henry Gwillim's older brother, an apothecary in Hereford.

name is Douglas she has a brother here a writer. Living with Mrs. Dick is a Miss Boydell a niece of the Aldermans she is about fifty years old she came out here about a year or two ago with Mrs. D.- she dances away at the balls and attends all the publick amusements of the place, some people say she is a good sort of woman and only came here at the particular request of Mrs. D with whom she had been very intimate for some time, but others are of opinion that she intends to captivate. The most intimate acquaintances I have are the three daughters of a Mr. Westcot his wife died about a year ago. The eldest of the young ladies is about 20, the second is 18 & the youngest 13 years old. They have with them a governess a Miss Williams she is rather a handsome girl and clever enough but has a good deal of the Godwinian<sup>18</sup> shool [sic] and the modern dash. **(5)** Two of the young ladies were married on the last day of the year. The eldest to a Mr. Maitland a merchant in a considerable house here he is about 43 years old, we think Mrs. M- very much like Lizzy Thoburn in her person but it is only in her person for her manners are exactly opposite, for as Liz is too anxious a temper to let herself be comfortable, so this good lady is so very easy and indifferent that she takes no pains at all to make her friends comfortable besides this she is very vain and not very wise. The second who is married to a Mr. Rowley a rich companies servant is remarkably plain in her person, she has not however her sisters faults she is attentive enough, and her husband is remarkably so and a very good natured man, he has settled 10 thousand pounds upon her which sum was paid into the hands of trustees before the weding [sic] he is a young man about the midway betwen [sic] 40 and 50 or rather nearer to the latter number of years. I have not chosen this family for intimases [sic] on account of their merit for I do not much delight in them but their father was particularly attentive and kind to us when we first arrived here and continues to be so he has been extremely desirous that his daughters should be very much with us, and Mr Rowley is the same. Mr. Westcot is a very proud old man he ranks very high in the civil service of the company **(6)** and was very rich at one time but he lost all his property by some speculation. I fear I shall tire you with descriptions of people you know nothing about but you may read them at your leisure or let it alone altogether if you like. We have a great many more white faced ladies for the society here is very large, but at least half the women are half cast, that is they are the children of English men by black women; these girls are sent home to England, to be educated as it is called, that is to learn to dance to squall and to strum I have not met with one tolerable voice in the place amongst the women. Sir Benjn Sulivans<sup>19</sup> family are very numerous and very curious, two daughters and a son arrived here since we did, he has a son and daughter, one of the girls who is lately arrived, these are half cast, the other girl is just fifteen, and her brother a man of about 20, are children by a

<sup>18</sup> In reference to the educational ideas of William Godwin, husband of Mary Wollstonecraft.

<sup>19</sup> Sir Benjamin Sullivan was a Puisne Judge in the Supreme Court at Madras.

french woman whom he met with in Germany, she had been a kept Mistress of the Emperor Joseph, he brought her here as his wife and she was receiv'd as such, however she grew tired of her spouse, and went off to England with another Gentleman who now keeps her in London, soon after this affair took place Mr. S-- married a lady here stating that he was divorced by the Archbishop of Paris. by his wife, he has had ten children, 6 of them are living with her in England, where she is gone to (7) superintend their education. Most of the civilians have these blackey families, the misses are sent home to learn to give themselves a few airs and then return here to be provided for by marrying military men up the country. when this work is performed a man of about 60 is at liberty to return to England with a pretty young wife and a family of small children!!! You will wonder why I say the Civilians have half cast children to provide for more particularly than the military men. The reason is that the latter are always moving from one station to another and the children are forgot or perhaps never known to them at all, besides which the Military young men have not as good incomes and therefore [sic] cannot afford to educate and provide for them. We have had a great deal of amusment [sic]going forward most of it I have been to but the evenings and mornings are so cold that Betsy has not been able to bear them, at first all the medical people advised her to rise early and drive out before breakfast but she caught cold every time she tried so Mr. Ord who attends her, observing that, has advised her not to rise till the sun has been up some time and always to take a cup of coffee first. I must tell you that Mr. Ord has a Brother in Cheapside, I recollect the name on a sign John Ord & Comy, but I do not remember what trade it is but I believe a considerable one.--

(8) But to return to the pleasures of the place. I must tell you that I have a great many good friends who are always ready in offering to carry me with them to any Balls or shows that are going forward, I have chosen one Lady, my near neighbour with whom I generally go Mrs. Trent the wife of General Trent she is a very quiet pleasant woman and rather pretty they have been in England and returned to this Country about 2 years ago. They intend to return home in another year. The officers of the Scotch Brigade gave a Ball on St. Andrews day and a very grand supper under tents in the garden. The Nabob<sup>20</sup> and all his attendants were there they were all dressed very fine some in shawl dresses with embroidered silver sashes and turbans. The Nabob wore a muslin dress richly ornamented with silver, a sash all of silver and a turban the same, besides a great quantity of jewels and the plume which was presented to him by the governor at his coronation. I believe I have not written to you any account of the Nabob, he did Sir Henry the honor to write him a friendly note, requesting him to fix a time when he might pay us a visit, the next morning being fixed he came to breakfast, with his son and about 60 attendants, about 6 of whom were of high rank and sat down to

<sup>20</sup> Azim ud-Daula, Nawab of the Carnatic.

the table with him, he is a very fat tall young man rather of a lively countenance. he talks **(9)** a great deal and eats voraciously [sic]. Betsy expressed a wish to see some of the largest Elephants, and he very politely sent the next morning, all richly caparisoned and their faces beautifully painted in scrolls winding in the course of the muscles. I mounted one, the Elephant kneels down and a step ladder is placed against his side for one to mount, the rider or driver sits on the neck behind him is a seat divided in 2 two square apartments [sic], these are lined with rich silk or velvet, (that I was in was green velvet) with cushions [sic] of the same to support the back and arms each of the apartments holds two persons very comodiously [sic] but you must squat like a taylor. Over the seat is a dome supported by four small pillars at the corners, the dome is lined with velvet richly ornamented with gold stars, it is also fringed with deep gold fringe and a great many large gold tassels about it, when you are seated and the steps replaced on the animals side under a rich cloth which covers him all over, he rises up with a motion just like the rocking of a ship and you are forced to hold fast whilst he rises or you would be thrown out, when he is up he trots [sic] tolerably fast, and the motion is easy and pleasant enough. I think it must be an agreeable [sic] way of traveling as they are very sure footed and one should see the country all around. **(10)**

The Free Masons gave a grand Ball and supper on St. Johns Day all the gentlemen of the lodge appeared in their jewels and all their ensignia their wives were distinguished by blue and silver sashes and blue ribbands embroidered with different devices in silver relating to the rank of their husbands in the Lodge The rooms were decorated with festoons of blue silk, and painted transparencies<sup>21</sup> Lord Clive gave a Ball on the Queens Birthday in the same style as the others, the supper was in the garden, under tents. I have lately been three mornings to the races and you will be surprised when I tell you I have been almost starved with cold tho I had on a cloake, and a double shawl I set out from home at 5 in the morning as we have six miles to drive to the race stand. The sun rises at a little past six oclock but there is so much dew at this time of the year that it has very little power till 8 or nine; I am no judge of the racing sport but I believe the two first days it was was [sic] very good, the third however was the most amusing to me as there were several absurd poney races, and what was very curious and quite laughable a Camel race, and an Elephant race. The Elephants besides their riders had each a man pulling them by the tail and belabouring their sides with a large stick, but no one attempted to get the start of the other. They all made as much haste as they could and came in, in the same order they went **(11)** out. The veranda which is build [sic] for the accomodation [sic] of the company is in a most beautiful situation commanding a

<sup>21</sup> Transparencies were painted on translucent cloth or paper. See <http://shannonselin.com/2016/10/illuminations-transparencies/>

very fine view; if I had Mrs. Ratcliffs<sup>22</sup> pen I would describe it but but as you see mine is a very sorry one I cannot undertake such a task.

I assure you my finery wears out apace and one wants a great variety for meeting the same people everyday. Pray call on Mr. Wilby and get a small stock of ornaments from him when you send for what I had from him have been very usefull I should like a few things from the jewelers but not very expensive ones at Dyde & Scribes and such places you will meet with fancy beads which are much esteemed here my brown beads are much admired which I bought there, I think they called them Egyptian. be sure send me some necklace and bracelets of the patent pearls I should like the necklace to be about the size of a pea each bead and the bracelets smaller about 3 rows each if the small clasps are worn if not you will buy them of one row or ten rows according to the fashion a pair or two of the patent pearl drops for earrings. do not buy any of the pearl beads smaller than this O [drawing of bead] for the very small real pearls in this country are not dear but of a large size they are immense [sic].<sup>23</sup> Betsy has some of the patent which she brought out with her and she is the only person who has them here, even the Pearle **(12)** merchants take them for real, one told Betsy that her plain drop earrings were worth 900 pagodas<sup>24</sup> and he would not believe they were false till he weighed them.

All our cloaths have been very much admired and borrowed by twenty people for patterns, now you know we did go about a good deal for them and got all the varieties we could. But the people who send out things to their friends here in general do not chose [sic] well. They buy the dearest things they can get and by that means all get the same things I am very glad I did not afford a patent Lace gown here are several and a pretty [sic] English muslin smartly made and trimmed [sic] is thought quite as much of, a variety of taste in the make and trimming [sic] is every thing, be sure send flowers and fancy feathers. And some shoes and gloves occasionally and dont forget the Magazine of the fashions, that we may see how to put them on. I should like something [sic] made at Mrs. Lancasters now and then. The people all have Miss Braces things here and Miss French I like to have mine different if I can-

I shall send with this a drawing which Betsy has written a description of therefore [sic] I need not say any thing on the subject but that it is sad representation I shall also send the old Taylor who works in the house Betsy says he puts her in mind of some **(13)** the people described in the Arabian nights entertainment.<sup>25</sup> I have painted a table and some other things about the house, and I

<sup>22</sup> Likely Ann Radcliffe, author of Gothic fiction.

<sup>23</sup> She draws a circle for size, marked by O in the document.

<sup>24</sup> Unit of currency.

<sup>25</sup> *Arabian nights entertainments: consisting of one thousand and one stories* was the first European version of the "One Thousand and One Nights," a collection of stories originally written



have drawn some Butterflies and other insects but somehow or other I do not find much time to draw going out in the morning for exercise and in the evening for pleasure, with preparations for the latter take up a great deal of time. and I have a good many notes to answer every day. I do the house keeping business too which is a good deal of work for I am obliged to keep every thing locked up in a store room and to give out every day to the different servants a proper quantity for the days use I cannot trust them with more they are such pilferers, I must tell you how they contrived to cheat me of the candles I gave them out a proper number and they cut a peice [sic] off each before they set them up, this I should not found out soon a Lady told me to observe that and I found they really had done so, this is a good instance of the kind of thefts committed [sic] by the natives in general, they are not hardy enough to break open any place or to steal any large thing but they are always at these petty thefts.

I don't think I ever told you any thing about the fruit of this country, I must **(14)** own I was disappointed in them at first the flavours are so different from any thing I had been used to, and in general so very powerfull [sic]. I am now quite reconciled to them and I like them nearly as well as the English. We have two or three sorts of oranges the sort most esteemed is very high flavoured but not very juicy another which I prefer is sweet and very full of juice but not much flavour, a third sort (the worst of all) seems to be something betwen [sic] a China and a Seville orrange [sic] the pines and mellons [sic] are exactly the same as in England. One of best fruits is the pumplemoos which is the same as the shaddock<sup>26</sup> of the West Indies you may have seen them as they are sometimes carried home from there they grow about the size of a large mellon [sic] and are in fact a great overgrown orrange of a very fine sort the Mango is very much admired and is a very fine fruit also is very high flavored and I think very agreeably [sic], but those who dislike them say they are like turpentine tow and treacle tied up in a rag and sucked. The guava is shaped like a codling<sup>27</sup> its texture is exactly a mellow pear and it has something of the flavour of strawberries. The plantains grow in large clusters sometimes above twenty in a bunch each plantain is about 6 inches **(15)** long and an inch and half in diameter.

This is the most common sort which is white but there are a great many varieties of them they differ in size and colour some are green and some red but they all grow alike in clusters in this manner [drawing of plantain cluster here] it is unlike any thing in England in its taste and I am very fond of it I fear I have told you some of this before so I believe I must make memorandums of that I write least [sic] I give you the same dish twice and I am sure you will think once quite enough.

down in Arabic. The French translation was produced by Antoine Galland between 1704 and 1717 and translated into English by Beaumont, appearing in various editions from 1706 onwards.

<sup>26</sup> Pomelo.

<sup>27</sup> Likely codlin, a variety of apple.

This writing is really too bad and I am ashamed of it, but my pen is quite worn out and pens are very dear so I am obliged to be saving and wear them down to stumps. besides I am going to a ball and cannot spare time to write well, for the packet closes tomorrow and I have two more letters which I want to write-

I desire you will give my love and a hundred kisses to dear James and my little nephew Tom pray take care of him that I may see him a stout fellow 6 years hence, (the term of my transportation will then be expired) If I were to adopt your plan of making spots for all the kisses I want to send I must take a sheet of paper and spot it all over pray give some to Liz and Mary & Mama and if James has no objection you may give one to Regi, but they are too precious to bestow on Finn<sup>28</sup> [?] tho he has been a sufferer with his poor ear. I beg to be remembered to Dr. [?] Thompson you may tell her I have been very often in the exhibiting room but am not yet disposed of. I cannot find in my heart to begin another sheet tho I would have great pleasure in filling it. I think (16) you will say we never know when to leave off. So God bless you all, good by, good by, your very affectionate sister,

M. Symonds

Madras Feb. 11th, 1802

I have changed my mind, and shall fill up this piece of paper and wrap up the letter in a loose piece as the writing all shews through, and I want to tell you of a curious fruit which I forgot before; it is called a rose apple by the Europeans, it is the size and colour of an apricot but it has an eye like a medler [sic]<sup>29</sup> of a delicate green the texture is exactly an apricot and when you break it open it is loose from the kernell [sic] as the apricot is when over ripe the taste is exactly roses and sugar most elegantly mixed and not too sweet, the kernell is green, (with a very thin brown shell) and tastes the same as the green part [?] of a rose bud, it has just that astringency, and the crispness of it. I desire you will tell the Bromptonians, that I dont think they deserve to be remembered at all and I dont know that I shall write to Liz, it is so shabby in her not to send us a line when we had left them above half a year, before the last fleet sailed I have sent a great many scoldings in this letter and I am very angry with every body that dont write to me. I will try to write a few lines to Mrs. Shephard but least I should not be sure to give my kindest remembrances to her and thank her for all her good wishes and tell her that I dont intend to return home before my seven years are expired least I should be sent back again and I am sure I shall not like another such a parting. be sure send

<sup>28</sup> A dog?

<sup>29</sup> Medlar, a fruit.

us all the pretty things you see, which you think will be usefull [sic] to us, whatever their nature may be. I may venture this commission to you, as I know you have no immoderate idea of expence. -dont be lazy going out, shopping [sic] will do you good and make you gay, and teach you to spend your husbands money, he has not time to

**Letter\_009\_EG\_02-1801: Elizabeth Gwillim to Hester James, 12 February 1802**  
**(Mss.Eur.C.240/1, ff. 47r-48v)**

**(1)**

My dear Hetty                      Madras Gardens Feb 12th. 1802

I entrust this to a private hand who assures me he will put it in the office at the first Port & by that means you will have it a fortnight before the letters by the Packet of which we have written several - The ships which have been at Bengal called here a few days ago & sail on Sunday - I purchased several things to send but can get no conveyance for them - A Mr: Chalmers who is taking his wife home & family has undertaken [sic] to carry one long shawl & a bit of shawl for a waistcoat which I was very anxious to send to Mrs: Holland the waistcoat is for Mr. William Cam;<sup>30</sup> - I bought a shawl for you & hoped to have been able to have sent it & a waistcoat for James one or two other Waistcoats of the same pattern which I wished to have distributed besides a bit of Muslin to make Lizzy & Mary a gown each. But I fear I shall not be able to send them unless Cap[tain] Mash will take them when he goes but tho' I have sent to every place I cannot yet find him out. I conclude therefore he lives on board & have troubled you as before with all the letters under cover to you. You will find a little one to my mother with a Wafer in it ready to put in the post to save you the trouble of writing - I hope you will be well & taking your son into Hereford shire about the time this will be with you which I expect will be in June. I hope Mrs Green will not think I have forgot her but it is now so long owing to the Monsoon that any ship sailed [sic] from this place that ships are crowded in such a manner that one can get nothing taken, but as we have now Peace we shall have ships going every month. I have wished you **(2)** joy of the little Tom who I hope will live & do well in a long letter to you - six sheets to my Mother 3 to you, I think you will not have patience to read it all We owe you a thousand thanks for your letter - I hope you will be able to continue the same kindness for we shou'd have felt ourselves most forlorn creatures but for you - I wish I cou'd do something [sic] for you here the while or perhaps you wou'd like one of my black maids to help you - This I have lies under a tree all day asleep, in all her rings & pins & has a large star in the one side of her nose made of Rubies

<sup>30</sup> A relative of Henry Gwillim's mother, Elizabeth Gwillim née Cam.

set in gold which disfigures her not a little We were much diverted with Regy's letter [drawing of a flower] but very angry with Lizzy & Mary; We are much obliged to Nancy Green for her letter which we consider as the Widows' mite was considered her time being so much occupied. our cloaths [sic] are in great request at least have been I do not know whether this fleet has brought any thing newer but by your account not much except that you tell me it is the fashion to be dressed in buff & I assure you I thought the Ladies completely so here when I first saw them - They astonished me not a little. I have not been able to imitate them on the contrary I am now & have been for three months in all my English cloaths [sic]. -

Mr. Gwillim has had a billious [sic] illness in his sickness on board ship he brought up a great deal of bile - He has been remarkably well & was getting fatter, but the truth is he wou'd not let well alone, For being so well he thought nothing wou'd hurt him & being very fond of Malt liquor he drank a bottle of ale every day for 6 weeks or two months, which every body says is very (3) bad in this country & it is not one in a hundred can bear it to mend all he drank milk three mornings & I assure you he eats very hearty - at last he got very uneasy & took some Rhubarb &c but that only stirred up the bile - he was ill six days & was obliged to take some rummagers [?] but thank God I do not think he looks the worse for it - he has now a great charge neither to drink beer nor milk - The custom here is to rise at 5 or [word crossed out] Winter at 6 in the morning - to have a tiffin at one & to dine at 7 oClock & go to bed at ten Mr: G. has a great aversion as you know to eating before dinner - he used to take nothing but a cake & I took half my dinner at tiffing time & half at 7 oClock this mode agrees with nobody everyone cries out against it but nobody alters it Lady Clive & a few others tried much but she cou'd only get leave to eat her own dinner at three oClock, nobody wou'd leave off this odious custom so as to comply with dining out at [word crossed out] her hour indeed they have so ordered all sorts of office business that it can now hardly be done - It disagreed with both of us & therefore we have begun upon a new plan I believe there may be half a doz[en] families who do the same we have no tiffing & dine regularly at 3 oClock. we have our Coffee between 5 & 6. & if we have company or dine out we consider it as supper for tho' it is called 7 oClock it is near 8 before we sit down & ten when we rise from table at which time everybody runs home or out to Balls. - [words crossed out]

This mode of life is quite comfortable to me. only when I sup out I fancy myself at your friends in Oxford Street for we have Turkies [sic] that you cou'd not see over - round of Beef boiled [sic] roast Beef, stewed beef Loin of Veal for a side dish & roast pig - Capons as large as Hen turkies [sic] & in short a scandalous waste of provisions - or rather of our money for there are enough ready to eat the food - very few things are dear - R[ichard] Clarke has a place which is worth 500£ per annum which as he has no expense is to so young a man a great thing - He lives

with us & there are no means of spending money in this place at least none such as he wou'd ever (4) run into - All balls are given or subscribed to for the family at least more than anybody cou'd attend - dinners are given always at home, there is no going to the Tavern except to play Billiards - some men gamble very high & play Hazard- There has been but one Play since I came & I did not see it It was just the day after we came - we have had one concert-

I have marked the shawl HG just above the border on each end at the corner it is white & the waistcoat piece yellow with spots

Mrs: James

No. 39. Bishopsgate Street within

London

Your shawl is white also - I wish you had it - I hope you will have the orange colourd [sic] one I sent by the Thurlow - one for you & one for Mrs: Gwillim. I shall send for Company having written to everybody either I or Polly. My love to James & little Tom & to Nancy Green I am happy to hear her mother is well. I hope mine also is better this winter than last. believe me most affectionatly [sic] your's EGwillim

[note on the side:] I have divided the seeds for Mr. Whitly<sup>31</sup> into 3 parcels - all directed to you. -

**Letter\_010\_EG\_03-1802: Elizabeth Gwillim to Hester James, 18 March 1802**  
**(Mss.Eur.C.240/1, ff. 49r-54v)**

(1) My dear Hetty,

We all wrote to you & sent you various packets of letters by the ships which left this place on the 18th of February. I also with great difficulty got a gentleman to carry a white long shawl for Mrs: Holland & a piece of spotted shawl for a waistcoat for Mr: W. Cam, which I hope you will receive & forward to them - I have now [words crossed out] seen a gentleman a Mr: Longdill surgeon of the Monarch who promises me to take care of your shawl & some waistcoat pieces which I will thank you to give as I shall [word crossed out] mention. - I thought to have written further to you by the last ships but they sailed [sic] [words crossed out] very suddenly. I had

<sup>31</sup> Reginald Whitley of the Brompton nursery.

hardly time to send a few seeds on board for Mr: Whitley however the same gentleman who took the shawl took also a bag of seeds & another gentleman a packet nearly alike but packed differently - I believe there was nothing valuable it being a bad time of year. In the bag of seeds I put a small bag with some seeds strung for beads & wrote on that bag for Mrs: James. I had no time to explain about them - they are not a seed of this part but are sold for ornament & some Ladies wear them. I thought it likely they wou'd pass with the seeds otherwise they wou'd be taken. They are cheap enough rough as those were & I think handsomer than when polished [sic] but some people like them better polished [sic] when they are dearer I shall there fore get some done to send you & some to Nancy Green as you may like to give them away to any friend. They look very well with a small gold bead between each - They are called here Fakier's beads,<sup>32</sup> - the Fakiers<sup>33</sup> are a sort of Religious who travel about & beg with their families & they wear (2) these beads - There are also a set of Beggars belonging to the Hindoos called Pandanomans<sup>34</sup> who wear them. These people are beggars by their cast. They travel about from one country to another & are always well entertained & upon what they obtain by begging they live, which is no great hardship since all the people supply them with the best they have. They are a tall handsome set of people we see them by dozens with their wives & children Their dress is the most beautiful, considered as picturesque of any of the people. Many of the Tanks (Pools) & Wells all over India are staid [sic] with a kind of red earth; and muslin being dipped in them with the addition of some leaves becomes of a beautiful clear salmon colour - by the way I must tell you in these tanks with these leaves they wash Nankeen which becomes brighter by these means the oftener it is washed - Now these beggars wear a vast quantity of Muslin an under cloth of about 6 yards an upper one of as much thrown over the shoulder in a fanciful manner & a large Turban in loose folds all this Muslin is dipped in these staining waters, whether for men women or children & sometimes it is almost a rose colour. over these muslins they wear these beads in great profusion; long strings of the largest sort are thrown over their necks & fall as low as the knee & others of a smaller size are in shorter chains they have frequently a dozen chains round their necks one lower than another, & in their Turbans they twist them in all sorts of inventions generally very gracefully - as Milliners put beads in our caps but a much greater number of them. The dark brown carved-looking beads lying upon the salmon

<sup>32</sup> Also known as rudraksha beads, these are the warty seeds of *Elaeocarpus angustifolius* (formerly *E. sphaericus* and *E. ganitrus*).

<sup>33</sup> The term fakir was derived from the Arabic word for "poor" and originally applied to Muslim religious mendicants. It was later also applied to Hindu mendicants by Anglo-Indians (Hobson-Jobson, 347).

<sup>34</sup> Pandaram refers to Hindu ascetic mendicants (Hobson-Jobson, 666).

colour has as fine an effect as you can imagine. - These beggars have but a sad character ~~by~~ given them by writers, but the Hindoos **(3)** hold them in great respect - They have special charge over the women & are allowed to converse with them in private to give them advice. If a slipper of one of them be left at a door the husband is not permitted to enter till it be the pleasure of the instructor - It signifies to him that he is not to come near. Strangers who have not the prejudice of the Hindoos are not ready to believe that they always make an innocent use of their extraordinary priveleges [sic] without doubt they have no bashful air. -

March 12th I have met with a gentleman surgeon of the Monarch East Indiaman which sails from here on the 20th., who is so obliging as to offer to carry some things for me; I have therefore desired him to take the white Long shawl for you: It has large sprigs & EG close in two corners - I have also sent the worked Bengal muslin for Lizzy & Mary Thoburn & Polly has stiched [sic] it upon two old body linings without cutting that it may not be taken, [words crossed out] washed & will I dare say pass. - Polly desires you to give her love to Lizzy & beg she will take particular notice of the taste of making up but desires she will not let the pattern become too common. She is also desird [sic] to observe that her task is not forgotten in the length of the tail. -

I send by the same gentleman a mother of pearl snuff box in which you will find a China thimble for you & another for Nancy Green - two pieces of Chrystal [sic] called here Vellum stone for cutting seals upon which are for George Samuel.<sup>35</sup> The box is for Mrs: Gwillim & I should be glad if you will send it to her as soon as possible I have likewise packed up an Ivory fan for Nancy Green which you will give her with my love. I wish I cou'd have had an opportunity of sending her somthing [sic] better at least bigger but I cou'd not get conveyance for any thing larger & therefore bought a fan The China ships being just **(4)** come in here. - I hope you will like your shawl - I our [?] send with this the remainder of a piece of Gown shawl a Waistcoat of which I sent to Mr: W. Cam.<sup>36</sup> I have cut off one square which you will please to send to my mother & the long piece is, they tell me, enough for three waistcoats - I wish you to send one of the three to G. Samuel with my compliments & tell him I hope to send him a better [one] when I get an opportunity - The other two I wish James to keep for himself to wear with his blue coats in the winter. - pray send the Vellum stones with the Waistcoat to G. S. & tell him I have got down one of his drawings & I am working away after his manner in back grounds to my birds - but if I work much I shall have no colours left - I have searched & enquired in all places for the Indian yellow,

<sup>35</sup> George Samuel (died c. 1823) was an English landscape-painter and member of Girton's sketching club. He apparently mentored both Elizabeth Gwillim and Mary Symonds in painting, probably while they were growing up in Hereford.

<sup>36</sup> A relative of Henry Gwillim's mother.

but there is no such a thing to be heard of & I cannot th[ink] it is of the substance he imagines it to be - I shou'd rather suppose it to be some preparation of turmerick [sic] which is the paint the natives use on their persons & I have seen a great deal equally fine in colour but not so finely ground & prepared. -

With so much as you have to do I am sorry to trouble you with commissions but unless you or Nancy Green will do for us I know not who else to apply to. - I shou'd not like to have too many things at once & there fore must trouble you about twice a year to send to us little articles of dress they spoil in keeping here, but the price of buying them is intolerable - please to let us have 6 pair each of coloured kid shoes & some green Morrocco for me - 6 pair for each of us of white kid gloves & 12 pair each of the finest Limerick gloves<sup>37</sup> of a light yellow colour will be enough or instead of the Limerick some pairs of fine soft yellowish grain kid - These carry & keep best the browns spot & spoil sadly & do not wear at all well in the (5) heat. Pray tell Mr: Langstone he must put each glove in a seperate [sic] paper for in the ships the leather heats & all our gloves were sticking together, we were obliged to tear them asunder - They were gone like strings at the bottom of melted Isinglass & wherever a damp finger had sewed the silk quite black. In short they were almost all greatly injured & the Kid shoes the same for want of separate papers. - By the way I may as well mention to you here to please to let us have whatever lace is put to trim a gown or cap very white & whatever is sewed much shou'd be done with dry hands for whatever has been touched with sweat turns in the Voyage as red as brick dust. The caps & bonnets I had worn in England cou'd not be used here but for patterns till they were washed & what is remarkable the best washed cloaths [sic] that had not been much boiled [sic] were the same several clean gowns I expected to have to put on in the ship I found quite red in the wearing parts. - I shall not want thread yet a while but a few needles wou'd be useful for all I brought out were stuck together with rust, so pray do not let anymore be oiled [sic] - They make nice cotton tape here. - I want some shining French cotton for working Muslin, but Pearsons is rough stuff Butlers is the only place to buy it at if you shou'd think of it - I shall want colours & paper for drawing - but I hope you will have sent it - Pray send me a good many ribbons all colours & widths Laylock [sic] & purple carry very well my Laylock crepe is as fresh as ever - White spoils sooner than anything - Made flowers are of the greatest use, but do not fear to send us anything you think pretty that is not expensive (6) in Muslins for gowns or cambrick [sic] muslins if worn we can always get customers if we have too much of anything - stockings do not wear out faster than at home & I

<sup>37</sup> These gloves, made in Limerick, Ireland, were popular in both Ireland and England during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. They were very light, being made from the skins of unborn calves, lamb or kid.



seldom wear silk - silk gloves are quite disagreeable [sic] here I never wear them. - Mr: Gwillim will want ~~half~~ a dozen pair silk stockings with clocks a little ornamented but as little open as possible & half of them not open at all - for the Mosquitos [sic] get in at the holes. -

Polly wrote to you to send me some more dishes &c the same as our dinner set, we do not want plates but a great many dishes all sizes. one soup Tureen & it must be the best shape - the tall sort - sallad [sic] bowls & vegetable dishes - no sauce boats - one plate each person goes through the dinner here it is laid at first but they all use China water plates which are set on the plate & these water plates are changed - They keep kettles of water boiling [sic] outside the house to fill the plates constantly. - I want also from Wedgwoods' - 2 doz[e]n plates to match my breakfast set - one doz[e]n small dishes of different shapes for fruit which is always set here at breakfast -- 12 breakfast cups & sawcers [sic] & 12 coffee cups with Muffin plates or any little things but no Chocolate cups - several slop basins, & bread & butter plates I will draw a bit of the pattern but I fancy they know it for I told them to write it down - I do not know whether Polly mentioned it before but I want from the Derby China Warehouse 12 plates to match my desert [sic] set & 12 dishes. The dishes must be 4 of each shape for corners. -

I shou'd be glad to have a very ~~thin~~ clear handsome deep black veil of false lace & also about a dozen yards of white ~~lace~~ joining lace of a pretty pattern to put into worked muslin - for Veils here - (7) Knowing how much you have to do it must seem I fear a little unreasonable to request you to do so much for us but as there is no particular time when it is to be done I hope between you & Nancy Green I shall be able to get my little marketings - When you go to any shop on your own account you can by [sic] me any trifle you think pretty & keep it till an opportunity offers - Pray send me some very hard tooth brushes If Waite or some Dentist cou'd spare a few of them & some for the inside I shou'd be very glad for the common ones are of no use at all to me & I cannot get any dentists' tooth brushes without giving a Pagoda (8<sup>0</sup>/-) for two & a sharper [? word unclear].<sup>38</sup> -

The warm weather seems to agree with me very well it is now getting as warm as is agreeable [sic] - we had a few fine showers a day or two ago but we are not to expect rain till June & it will be hotter till that time. The last three months have been the most delightful weather that can be imagined - I begin to get quite a Housekeeper & to feel at home. At first I did not know how to order the dinner, however I find now that Seasons are only considered in Vegetables - & in very few of those, most of the fruit trees bear blossoms & fruits at the same time. The plantains of all kinds are always growing, Mellons [sic] are not quite in yet - The favourite fruit of the country is the Mango & the Mango trees are now in full blow smelling very fresh & nice The

<sup>38</sup> Toothbrushes began to be mass produced in the late eighteenth century.

orchards look like Walnuts or Pear trees but the flower is a large spike of small blossoms like-  
~~Madow~~ Meadow-sweet - There are as many sorts of Mangos as of apples & as much difference in  
them. I like them unripe in tarts they are like a fine green apple - but I fear I shall not like them  
ripe again as I was ill after eating them. We had been pretty busy as you may suppose before we  
landed - It was the very hottest (8) time of year. The sun was right over our heads that morning  
we came early on shore while it was cool & pleasant - We breakfasted with Sir Tho<sup>S</sup> Strange & to  
his house we had come two mile staring all the way - after breakfast, as many people who came in  
the Fleet wanted houses it was thought expedient that we shou'd look at such as were to be had as  
soon as possible & it was proposed we shou'd go with a gentleman who brought his carriage for  
that purpose. we drove several miles saw two great houses & after that he wou'd carry us to his  
house which is what they call a Bungalow. It is recokned [sic] one of the prettiest things in the  
place & he is a most nick-nack man & keeps it in such a stile [sic] as no man cou'd who did or  
thought any thing else. It seemed perfect Fairy Land - I felt no inconvenience from the heat & he  
requested me to walk round the garden asking me if I felt the heat unpleasant which I did not, so I  
continued to walk - The sheep were feeding the grass was quite green - all the Hot house plants I  
had been used to delight in were in full blaze of flowers & behind [?] a large shrubbery The ~~great~~  
tall Cocoa Palms were waving & looked so cool that I thought I cou'd have walked all day - There  
was one immencely [sic] high tree with a hundred at least of the hanging birds nests upon it with  
the sheep that were grazing were some beautiful little Deer which came to eat out of our hands -  
The smallest things that ever were when we went in we found a table of fruits &c & among the  
rest some mangos for which he was famous - & of which he pressed me to eat - In shape & colour  
they were exactly like apricots but as large as a small Mellon - The texture is like a very juicy  
plum of the flavour much like Mellon, Pineapple & Apricot mixed together, certainly very  
delicious but too rich - I did not eat much but I never have been able to eat any since - whether it  
was from (9) the heat or the mango I know not, or both together but I got a most compleat [sic]  
sick headach [sic] which lasted me two days & the poor man was so much censured for his  
imprudence that I believed he never wou'd be free from the reproaches thrown upon him - I have  
been affected with the heat once or twice since & am therefore now careful but it is very odd that  
whilst one is in it one feels no inconvenience - I have begun a letter to my mother but I am just  
now told that the packet closes so I doubt if I shall be able to finish it - I have written some long  
letters that I was obliged to write & am very busy ~~with~~ drawing Birds. ---

We all join in duty to my mother love to you & James & the Child & to all Ned James'  
family - Do not forget to Nancy Green & Mrs: Beamen [? name unclear] & her children - I dare  
say I shall have soon an opportunity of writing again - I shall send Mrs: Chamber's letter to you if

you have any fancy to read it - Let us know all that the child says & does - I long to hear from you again God bless & preserve you all & believe me most affectionately Your's

EGwillim. --

Gardens

March 18th: 1802 -

We have still peas in the garden - I send you the Feathers of a fowl & cock which we eat yesterday **(10)** I am trying to keep some alive - They are found in the Woods - & the County people when they catch them bring them to the houses for sale - I imagine this to be the original fowl which being now domesticated has so much changed its appearance if you will look at the feathers of the neck & shoulders you will see that they have bits at the end like straw - Pray ask somebody to enquire if they are in any Museum stuffed for it they are rare I shou'd like to have some stuffed to send over or will try to send them alive They are very beautiful but wild - The Country people catch wild Peacocks & bring for sale - I have bought a good many for the wild ones seldom fly about here. - Keep what beads you like & send the rest to Nancy Green.

**(11)** [blank]

**Letter\_011\_MS\_03-1802: Mary Symonds to Hester James, 18 March 1802**

**(Mss.Eur.C.240/1, ff. 55r-57v)**

**(1)** My Dear Hetty,

I sit down just to write a few lines for my conscience sake, that I may not have to accuse myself of omitting to write by every opportunity. I have little to say Betsy having monopolized all the subjects except the descriptive ones which are so many and lead to such long letters, that I have not venture [sic] on them at present; but besides want of time, I am beginning to grow diffident in those matters as she does them a great deal better than I; mine did well enough to fill up the time when she was silent, but now she writes such long letters I am a little jealous I can tell you, and am fancying you won't have much respect for my performances don't say this is all out of lazyness [sic]. I think you can guess how happy your letters made me, particularly the account of the dear little boy; God bless him I hope he is well, and be sure tell us all about him in your letters. I must tell you how I spend a good deal of time; it is owing to a new acquirement which has brought me into great request here; **(2)** amongst my female friends; I am become a miniature painter (don't laugh) I have finished one Lady's portrait, have two more in hand, and twenty petitioners praying

to be drawn; but I don't undertake gentlemen for if I did I should not have breathing time. I thought to have sent you a specimen of my performances (in that way) by these ships, but I have not had time to do any of our own family, except myself; I drew myself first as a trial, and it was thought like, but I have had the misfortune to loose [sic] it. I believe it is stolen by some of the servants [sic], I shall be much obliged to you if you will send me a dozn [sic] of glasses for miniatures of different sizes<sup>39</sup> and let them come by the first opportunity, our friend G. Samuel<sup>40</sup> will tell you where to get them; I can buy plenty of Ivory here, and have got some charming brushes and white paint from China. Pray tell G.S. that I expect he will write to me and give me some information on this subject, and I desire he will let me into all the secrets he can find out about it, for I cannot get any instruction here. I hope you have thought of my wig & Betsys I shall want it sadly in October, ones own hair does very well at this dry season but during the rains and when the damp (3) sea wind blows it is impossible to be comfortable without false hair. I suppose Mr. James would give me a wig, as the sailors use the word (if he were near me) for talking of wearing such a thing: At sea a 'Wig' signifies a scolding. When you buy bonnets or caps for us remember what suits you will suit me and Nancy Greens head is exactly the thing for Betsy, I have not written a line yet to poor Nancy for this fleet, but I hope I shall have time to say something to her; if I do not write be sure remember to give my love to her. We expect this Fleet to sail tomorrow but I shall be certain about it this evening as we are to meet the PostMaster general at dinner; his wife is my very particular friend Mrs. Rowley. All the Regiments at this place have lately been reviewed by the Governor and the Commander in Chief; the men are so very gallant here that the officers have always thought it necessary to give invitations to all the Ladies in the settlement to breakfast with them under tents after the reviews; this is very pleasant as they begin at daybreak and sit down before the sun becomes uncomfortably hot; and some of them have very good kinds of music. When you see Mrs. Shephard pray tell her I am greatly obliged to her for her kind remembrances of me and good wishes. I have an intimate acquaintance whom I think she may know a Miss Notley a niece of Cap<sup>tn</sup> Blake of Gt. Ormand Street she is pretty lively (4) Girl and a good deal admired here it is said she is to be married to an officer of the Scotch Brigade. I have sent by the Surgeon of the Monarch 3 small Bags of beads I don't know if you may like them but I think they will look singular and pretty in England for bracelets and necklace. They are worn here by the Natives; sometimes they have them set in gold like acorn cups at each end and connected by a little gold link.

<sup>39</sup> Portrait miniatures were painted on ivory and often enclosed in metal locketts fitted with glass covers, which is likely why Mary asked for "glasses."

<sup>40</sup> George Samuel (d. 1823) was a landscape painter. He was a family friend who apparently mentored Elizabeth and Mary in painting.

If printed Cambrick muslins or any light coloured things are worn which will bear washing I should like to have a few sent out frequently, as they are not common here and the few I have are very much admired; I don't altogether object to things which will not wash as they are very pleasant in the cool season but one don't [sic] want many of them. We are much obliged to you for your kind thought of the apricots and other sweetmeats, whenever you can conveniently send things of that nature. They will be very acceptable as will a few bottles of different colour sugar plumbs [sic] you will get a great variety of those kind of things at Tringham's in Holborn he will sell them very cheap if you get Dick Hodges<sup>41</sup> to order them for you at the wholesale [sic] price, or he will sell them so to you. I dare say, if you buy them in John Gwillims<sup>42</sup> name you need not fear overstocking us with them as they are much admired here and are always put on the table when there is any company. I suppose you will think it strange as we do, that our two companions should be appointed Registers, Mr. Temple is deputy Register to the Supreme Court, he is very well off for one who has been (5) here so short a time, but there is no realizing the golden dreams people have of this country. Pray give my love to Jemmy and tell him that master Harry has got a stick which would make him a little jealous, it is a fine Bamboo as thick as my wrist and mounted very fine with silver, he has got a spade and a how [sic] too, to work in his garden when the weather is cool enough to permit him to take so much exercise; besides these he has a fine family of live playthings which he takes great delight in peafowls, jungle-fowls, turkeys, a fine Cassawary, which is a curious bird you may have seen Exeter-change,<sup>43</sup> it is shaped like an ostrich, of a brown colour, the feathers resemble hairs, and the wings are so small as to be useless: he has also a flock of sheep, two Bullocks to draw manure for the garden, and his stud of four horses; these are two carriage horses, one fine Arabian, which he rides, and a nice little piebald poney for the chaise; or bandy (as it is called here).

Mr. Register Clarke has got acquainted with several families and spends his time pleasantly amongst them, we accept of separate invitations, that is to say Richard is frequently asked out to male parties, and I am often asked to spend the day with young folks, without Sir Henry and Betsy, but they are never asked without us, Richard and I are often at dances too without them, as people who have young girls living with them sometimes get a little music from the Regiments, when any of the officers dine with them and so make up a dance without much formality [? word faded] (6) to be sure Richard has a little lead in his heels and we can't

<sup>41</sup> Richard Hodges was the husband of Henry Gwillim's sister Mary.

<sup>42</sup> The father or brother of Henry Gwillim. Both were apothecaries.

<sup>43</sup> The Royal Menagerie at Exeter Exchange (known popularly as Exeter Change).

often persuade him to dance but he is very fond of going amongst the mirth of that sort, and is a great beau at handing the Ladies, this he does with a great air I assure you, I do not think you would know him if you were to see him, he is grown so tall and so stout. If you get the Brown beads from the India House<sup>44</sup> without any trouble I wish you would show them to Mrs. Toussaint and tell her that I think she could introduce them very prettily for Court.

They look beautifully with yellow or pink croze, they are very cheap here, so if she should think them worth sending for, she can have them in less than a year from the time of writing, and I can send her a bag full at any time I beg you to remember me moost [sic] kindly to the Bromptonians I hope Lizzie and Mary will receive their two long tailed gowns safe I stiched [sic] them up without cuting [sic] the muslin to cheat the Custom house officers.

With kind remembrance to all friends I remain my dear  
Hetty, Your sincerely affectionate, sister

M. Symonds

Madras, March

18th 1802

**Letter\_012\_MS\_XX-1802: Mary Gwillim to her Hester James (no date or signature) 1802 (in pencil)] (Mss.Eur.C.240/1, ff. 58r-61v)**

(1) My Dearest Hetty,

We are unexpectedly favoured with an opportunity of letting you know that we are all in the Land of the living. It is not usual for ships to leave this place at this time as they generally experience very bad weather off the Cape, but the Commander of the Anna is the chief owner and is unwilling to lose time. Richard Clarke complains sadly of writing by her and almost wishes she had not called here for he does not think it form to write two letters for one and we are in hourly expectations of the Fleet from England, by which we hope to receive large packets of good news, we are as you may suppose all on tiptoe. Since I wrote to you we have changed our house, that we were in was in a low situation and at a good distance from the Sea shore so we found it too warm for this season [words crossed out], (April May and June

<sup>44</sup> East India House, London

being the hottest [sic] months) The house we are now in is a mile farther from the Fort than that we left; it has a good garden and it commands a very fine view of the sea, and all the Ships as they go out, or come in; we came to this place the beginning [sic] of April and since we have been here I have not been at all oppressed by the heat. Betsy has been much better **(2)** than she was in the cool weather, and we are all in very good health. We have not yet experienced much of the Land wind, that is reckoned the most unpleasant, but it is by no means unhealthy, it is a hot dry wind, instead of cooling when it blows upon you it feels as if a hot Iron was passing close by you, it makes one's hair curl like a fury, and one's skin feel like old parchment; when these winds set in they are quite regular blowing from four or five o'clock in the morning till 2 or 3 in the evening, ~~when~~ at which time it changes to a fine refreshing sea breeze; the Land wind season does not last above a month or six weeks, in general. Richard and I walk out almost every evening, sometimes on the beach it is a very fine sand but not so hard as the sand at Barmouth,<sup>45</sup> consequently not so pleasant, for it fills our shoes, and, as our feet sink, it increases the fatigue very much, which is no desirable [sic] thing in this Climate, we dine at 4 o'clock, and live just as we did in England only we go to Bed, and rise, a little earlier and have half a hundred Black men about the House, who do not wait upon us quite as well, as two maids and a man would do in England. When I have teased [sic] my brains with explaining something or other in Black English (which I assure you is a very different Language from that you speak) have had an hours hard conversation **(3)** (The man I have been talking to [word crossed out] seeming attentive and desirous of acquainting himself with the subject,) but he tells me at last that he is not a proper person for that business; must be another one [?] man he bring if mistress please and then she can explain. I have got a shoe-maker at work for me I will tell you how I am forced to manage him, in the first place he must have money advanced to buy the last and the leather; now if I were to trust him out of my sight I should never catch him again, so he sits under a Mango tree in the garden and boils his pot under another (that is his rice) which he is allowed 2 fanams<sup>46</sup> a day for; his task is to make two pair in a day which he can do with ease as they are wretchedly slight, but that is of no consequence for it is only the white leather that is wearable; the black has an odious smell and the other colours they dye so ill that they are not fit to be seen; except one, which is intended for red but does not resemble that colour in the least, it is however something between [sic] a brown and a purple which is not ugly, I do not think it worth your while to send us any white shoes, for tho these do not keep

<sup>45</sup> A town in Wales.

<sup>46</sup> The denomination of a small coin long in use in S. India, Malayāl. and Tamil *paṇam*, 'money,' from Skt. *paṇa*, [rt. *paṇ*, 'to barter']." (Hobson-Jobson, p. 348)

the shape very well, they are so cheap that one can well afford to change them often we get 5 or 6 pair for a pagoda, which is only 8 shillings, when you send things a few peices [sic] of narrow sattin [sic] ribbon will be very (4) acceptable particularly white; for making shoe roses and such sort of ornaments it is very dear here, and we are obliged to make all those little things ourselves, they do not carry well when made the white roses lose their colour but the ribbon comes pretty good on the block. Colourd [sic] and particularly figured shoes we shall be very thankfull [sic] for. I am sure you will say I am a troublesome correspondent for you must have a great deal of trouble to read my bad writing and when you have made it out its all a budget of commissions which you are to have the trouble to execute, and not only that but you must have the trouble to transcribe them before you can forward the letters to my mother, well have patience and go on for I have some trouble on your account, let me tell you it is as hard case enough when I have accompanied you in all your excursions [sic], assisted you in all your employments, in the nursery, in the pantry &c, &c. to have some cross grained notions come into my head, and tell me that my plan of the day may be quite wrong. I desire you will not think yourself quite alone in the Poplar walk. I pop in there too sometimes, and Finn wags his tail and thinks you stay a long time, he knows the supper will be very (5) late and his master will rub his nose instead of ear, if you dont make a little haste to pick the pease; well when Lizzy and you get together over an old letter there is no end to it, and Regi; and Jemmy, may amuse themselves as they can, if they were not there, the carpet would be burnt with the ends of stick falling off the fire, not a soul left in the parlour, poor Mary faging [sic] away Mrs. W has got the child the maids are settling, the affairs of both the families in the wash house and Lizzy and you accounted for as above. Who knows if all this time you may not be at Tupsley or Willersley<sup>47</sup> with a large piece of bread got into the dairy stealing the cream off the pans, if you eat such a quantity of cream after the custards you had yesterday and the mulberries and the peaches you eat this morning you will be ill and then you must send for John Gwillim, and he may be engaged with some bin[?] thing of his own for ought I know by this time. This is sad prate to send so far, but it may give you some idea of the occupations of my brain.

I have been spending a week with my friend Mrs. Rowley at Bevedere (that is the name of her house) It is not above two miles from our own, but it is the handsomest place near Madras. The House belonged to the late (6) Nabob it is very spacious and highly ornamented the grounds are well planted and handsomely laid out with a great variety of fine shady walks a river runs through the ground which makes it cool (as the winds are always cool when they

<sup>47</sup> Villages in Herefordshire.



blow over water whatever point they blow from) The house commands a fine view [sic] of the Pulicat hills which are very handsome in their form.

I do all the Gossiping Visiting and most of the Housekeeping, all the other members of the family are becoming very Learned in the Oriental Languages. Betsy is Studying the Gentoo,<sup>48</sup> Richard the Malabar,<sup>49</sup> and Sir H the Persian what use they may make of them when they have acquired them I do not know Richard will indeed have sufficient use for the Language. it may be a great advantage to him; for my own part I have very little time and no inclination to attempt any more of them than the few words I pick up in my conversations with the servants &c [?]; as I have never yet been able to acquire any knowledge in my own tongue it would be great affectation in me to attempt to gabber in the Eastern ones. If I draw a few plants or Insects which differ from those of Europe (7) you will be glad to see them and I shall be much gratified in an opportunity of amusing you.

I am going tomorrow to spend a few days at Gen[era]l Trents. I have a great many of these kind of invitations, and when the family are all well and things seem to go on smoothly at home I think I may as well accept of some of them as it serves to make a little variety in the amusements.

I believe you do not know that I may probably have a companion arrive by the next Fleet from England. Mr Strange<sup>50</sup> applied to Sir H to receive a natural daughter of his she was to have come out to Lady Strange if she had lived. [word crossed out] Owing to the connexion [sic] with Sir. Thos. Strange Sir H thought himself bound to receive her, she is a half Cast or what you call mulattos, which two thirds of the Girls who come out here are, some of them look pretty enough when they first arrive but when they have been here a little time without the dacing [sic: dancing] Master, they become as round backed as the natives and they get several shades darker when they have been a little time in this Climate even though they keep themselves entirely out of the sun, they are generally wretchedly educated. Strutting two or three songs, and dancing a reel is called accomplishment, you cannot think what wretched useless beings most (8) of these kind of women sink into when they have been married a few years. This letter resembles one of yours which used to amuse Betsy so much. I am now going to contradict the first part of it. The Anna did not sail when I expected it would so I laid by my letter and it will now be sent to you by a frigate which will be in England much sooner. This is

<sup>48</sup> Telugu.

<sup>49</sup> Tamil.

<sup>50</sup> Perhaps James or Henry Strange, brothers of Sir Thomas Strange who both spent time in India.

shamefull [sic] paper, but I have no better. I do not think I shall write to any body else by this opportunity as I have only just heard of it and must send my letter to night but I shall edeavour [sic] to write to every body by the Anna. I reproach myself for not having written to Richard Hodges since I left home pray remember me to him his friend Clarke is much disconcerted of not hearing from him, but I hope we shall have an Epigrame [sic] at least by this next Fleet. I have paid my visit to Mrs. Trent, I was there 6 days which I spent very pleasantly. She is very mild good kind of a woman I think much such a one as Mrs Bullock but she has no children they intend going home next year. The General is quite a Cockney but a very goodnatured man and has been 36 years in this country except one visit of 3 years in England which delighted him so much that he has never been contented in this country since his return. I cannot keep this to say more but I shall write again by the same ship if she is detained, remember I

[unsigned letter ends here]

**Letter-013-EG-07-1802, Elizabeth Gwillim to Esther Symonds, 16 July 1802**  
**(Mss.Eur.C.240/1, ff. 62r-71v)**

(1) Richard Clarke had letters from his father of the 2d March as he said nothing other I hope you were all well at the time. It is some pleasure to have such a hope but you ought always to send a letter once a fortnight at least I hope somebody will to the India House & then I shou'd have more news. -

My dear Mother,

Perhaps our last packet of letters was as much as you expected from us & quite enough to tire you, but if the ships had not sailed [sic] sooner than we expected you wou'd have had more. I expected to have heard from you again by this time but no ship has arrived that cou'd have brought us any letters. I have nothing therefore to answer to & can only say I hope you all continue in health & that you have got over the Winter well. The warm weather has been very agreeable as yet to me & I have been a good deal engaged in visiting &c but I shall leave the white people to Polly & tell you a little about the Black people. The Hindoos are a most extraordinary people; everybody exclaims & indeed so they are, every day I am more & more surprized [sic] at their firm [word crossed out] adherence to customs so Ancient & so unlike

those of any other people. Subdued and Oppressed as they have been by so many different nations they admit none into their society nor do they vary any of their habits in comfortity [sic] to their conquerors - Alexander the Great entered the upper parts of India, to compel the payment of tribute money customarily paid to the Persians - It appears therefore that the Persians had visited this country for the sake of its wealth long before & the followers of [word crossed out] Alexander describe the habits of these people, in the little they have said on the subject ~~exactly~~ as they appear at this time with the only difference that they at that time governed themselves & were rich beyond all conception in gold & jewels. Before this period the History of the Hindoos is involved in Fable - The Antiquity of the Nation is indisputably proved & the unchangeableness of their manners, but nothing more is known. They say that God created the four Elements - & a fifth of which **(2)** the Heavens are made. That he afterwards created a Being indued [sic] with perfect Wisdom called Bramha<sup>51</sup> & commanded him to make the World.

Bramha having made man-kind he divided them into four tribes the Bramin, the Kittri, the Bise, & the Sudra<sup>52</sup> - The Bramins were to be Priests & to direct men in the ways of God - The Kittri Kings & soldiers - the Bise Merchants & ~~Labourers~~ cultivators of Land The Sudra, Tradesmen & servants which division is most strictly kept to to [sic] at this time. - The Hindoos have an idea of there having been four Ages of the World - The first or Golden age when the Tyger fed with the Steer - Those when virtue was on the decline & the Iron age we now live in. - The arrangements of Bramha however seems to imply ~~the~~ by the necessity of a Priesthood that the people were not quite [word crossed out] so perfect as to need no warning & by the services to be performed by the Kittri Cast one must suppose force was some times necessary to keep them in order. Some Historians rejecting all their fabulous accounts say that a great King of India had a Vizier of the name of Bramha, whose children were so much more wise & learned than the rest of the people that the King [words crossed out] who they say divided the people in to the four casts ordained this family of Bramha to be Astrologers & Priests which high employment however they first came by them they have had the wit to retain to this day. Neither are they in danger of losing respect by the folly of individuals amongst them for they have contrived to possess the people with a notion that there is a certain portion of the Divinity in all Bramins & that therefore however weak, mean or wicked they may be they are to be treated with the greatest respect for fear of committing any offence against the Deity who is supposed to **(3)** reside in them. The Hindoos are supposed to have worshipped the True God till the Persians introduced amongst them the worship

<sup>51</sup> Brahma.

<sup>52</sup> Here, Elizabeth is describing the ancient varna system, which divides people into Brahmans (priests), Kshatriyas (warriors), Vaishyas (commoners), and Shudras (servants). She adopts the nomenclature of Andrew Dow's *History of Hindustan* (1770).

of the Sun & of the fire & soon after which they fell into Idolatry; In this state they have continued so long that that [sic] the Divine nature is seldom thought of by them, how-ever they have a conception of ~~What~~ a Being superior to these they adore. Some writers have lately been curious in remarking that their Religion contains an idea of a divinity & thence suppose the notion of a Trinity ~~it~~ to have been originally taught to all mankind - whether that be the case or that it have proceeded from a natural consideration of God in his threefold capacity of Creator, Preserver & destroyer cannot easily be ascertained - but their most Ancient sculptures & they never have varied from those modes, represent the figure of Bramha as a threefold deity - Three upper parts, ending in one at the loins - The middle figure is called properly Bramha the Creator - the one side is called Vishnu the preserver & the other figure is called Sheeva the destroyer or avenger - Besides the sculptures that represent the deity in this threefold manner they are represented seperatly [sic] & the worship is divided - Bramha who is the principal has no Temples erected to him tho' he is as I have described carved on them all - The Temples or as we call them Pagodas are all either to Vishnu or Sheeva<sup>53</sup> & are somewhat differently constructed. All the Hindoos are divided by this means without regard to their Casts into Worshippers of Vishnu & Worshippers of Sheeva. At first it is to be supposed it was matter of choice but it now continues in families & they hold each other in no great esteem. The followers of Vishnu suppose him a benevolent Being who by prayer & supplication or rather perhaps by an observance of Ceremonies will accord **(4)** them what is desireable [sic] - & their rites have been always cheerful & innocent - But the followers of Sheeva suppose him to be a Being of a malevolent disposition ever ready [to] avenge the smallest faults & their worship is wholly dictated by fear. To appease this angry deity they formerly sacrificed their children & when human blood was no longer shed on his alter Beasts of all kinds were slaughtered - Even at present the feasts of Sheeva are said to be more disorderly than those of Vishnu & are seldom attended by the Vishnu people. - Besides that these gods go under a variety of names in different places, they have wives & families, representations of whose persons they keep in what they call Swamy or Sammy houses.<sup>54</sup> The Pagodas in this part of India are very frequent but these swamy houses are everywhere abounding - They are generally small oblong buildings some as small as a Thomas a Becket's tomb<sup>55</sup> & not unlike others are as large as a small room & there are many finished on the top in the manner of the Pagoda's. They are generally much enriched on the outside but like the Pagodas they are all dark within, except the light which proceeds from lamps hung round the God on Particular days these Swamy houses

<sup>53</sup> Shiva.

<sup>54</sup> See Hobson-Jobson (p. 883).

<sup>55</sup> Becket's tomb was housed in a purpose-built chapel in Canterbury Cathedral until its destruction in 1538 as part of the Reformation.

have the door thrown open to show the God to the people but none enter except the Bramin The stones of the floor of the building & the walls are quite Black with the clarified butter which is poured over the god daily, for logs as they are, they are attended with all the care that animation cou'd require, on certain festivals their cloaths [sic] are new - they are bathed & anointed regularly according to the rules prescribed by their religion, cookery & fruits of all kinds are placed before them, which however are eaten with great respect by the people. When the gods are (5) Carried out of the Swamy houses they are attended by bands of Musick [sic] Bramins & dancing girls a certain number of whom belong to each Pagoda & attend to the Swamies [words crossed out] that is the gods of the different swamy houses around about. - Scarcely a night passes but there is a festival of some kind or other & they go to a considerable expence for others their musick [sic] which to our ears is intolerably loud is constantly to be heard during the night at which time they hold all their ceremonies. Fireworks are the great part of their amusement or as they say ceremony - When I first came I was so much occupied that I cou'd not go to their feasts - I mentioned one to you in one of my letters for sacrificing before ~~to~~ the instruments of Iron This feast lasted a fortnight & was a general one. It is called the hunting feast & probably was formerly a hunting of wild beasts - at present in this place it ~~appears to be~~ consists only in putting down a poor hare out of a basket - I went one evening to a Choultry near us where the god stays for when they are taken out of the Swamy houses to go in Procession they stop at every Choultry if they occur at every hundred yards - These gods are moved upon a Carriage but they have on this carriage a variety of ways of travelling On this occasion he was put upon a large horse [words crossed out] like a Pegasus carved in wood & gilded - but the whole carriage & horse & god so covered with wreaths of flowers and finery of all sorts that his person was scarcely discoverable he had however a golden face ill enough carved & was about the size of a large doll. - The Choultry in which he waited was (6) dressed with flags & wreaths of flowers in a beautiful stile [sic] & the dancing girls performed a long time before him to our great amusement - The people dressed us with chains of flowers & gave us beetle & fruit for they are always pleased if you attend their feasts. A great quantity of rice was brought out boiled [sic] & greedily devoured by crowds attending after which with great shouts the god came forth on his horse & the hare was let loose but the god was turned suddenly round & a great part of the crowd separated to pursue the hare which wou'd belong to whoever had the good luck to catch it. This ~~feast was~~ part of the festival was all I saw & it was by daylight; but the same ceremony was performing in various parts. As their feasts are kept during the night I have not been at any of them till lately - There was one feast a few weeks before xmas when for many days the women appeared with their hair platted [sic] ~~down their backs at~~ within the plait the flower of the wild bread bread [sic] fruit of which I told you in a

former letter they make hedges This flower is cut from the heart of the plant & is like a rush flower but as thick ~~& longer~~ as my wrist & about half a yard long - like reeds & grapes it is clusters of minute flowers that are full of powder (farina) It has a fine but strong smell which is the quality [sic] they esteem in flowers for they use them for perfumes & always fold them in the hair. This plant is called Pandanus Odoratissima<sup>56</sup> [sic] Just after xmas, in January they have a feast called Pongall<sup>57</sup> the preparation for which lasted several weeks - This feast celebrates the return of the Sun to the North-ward - or as we shu'd [sic] say the turn of the year. - Besides the usual ceremonies at night there are many others (7) observed on this occasion some of which I cou'd not guess the meaning of - The ceremony from which the festival takes it's name of Pongall, which signifies boilling [sic], is the chief. For some weeks the Bazars [sic] which are kept in places like the Parks in London represent just what an English Fair wou'd if it was kept in those places - Round abouts & Up & Downs and such like sports - with standings of trinkets & sweet meats - The Pots they use are of red earthen ware & on this occasion the red ware is spread on the ground in profusion. It consists is chiefly of large pots or Vases from 5 to 10 gallons measure. The parents or elder relatives give to the younger ones on this occasion one of these pots filled with rice, ~~sugar~~ green ginger, turmeric [sic] & a large quantity of sugar-cane fresh cut - the green leaves hang out at the top of the Jar & round the neck of it is tyed [sic] long wreaths of flowers of a golden yellow strung together in their way. These yellow flowers are the ornament for three months of the year. It was curious to observe for some weeks, whichever way one went ~~to meet~~ people carrying these large pots so elegantly adorned with wreaths of flowers - On [word crossed out] arrival of one where it is to be presented the wife takes the flowers & dresses her head with them the children take the sugar-cane - & the rest is for the boilling [sic] or Pongall which is rice, milk, & sugar in this new pot. It must be performed with great care & the rice well picked, cleanliness occuring to produce the best sign of good luck. If the Pot mantles well & rises high & white, the year, it is supposed will be favourable but if the boilling is checked or the scum appears discoloured (8) nothing but ill is to be expected during this season the compliment on the meeting of friends, is not like our's [sic] how do you do? - but how was your boilling? - for these days there is a custom of dressing up all the Bullocks, which are taken to a particular place to be exhibited. We keep a pair to draw sand for the garden & I was applied to for a Rupee for fresh sugar-cane & ginger & cocoa nut to hang about them & flowers for their heads & necks just as you see them in an ancient sacrifice their horns being dyed either green or red & the cart painted

<sup>56</sup> *Pandanus tectorius* (commonly known as *P. odoratissimus*) is a screw pine with slender, dichotomously branching trunks, large and just-about edible fruits and prickly-margined leaves). Mary painted a large specimen.

<sup>57</sup> Pongal is a harvest festival celebrated by Tamils in India and Sri Lanka.

in red & white stripes. The common bullocks are of a light red colour very pretty mild looking animals, with long white horns, a hump between the shoulders & a very long dewlap - But the Bullocks kept for Hackeries or Bullock-bandies, which are the carriages of the natives are generally snowy white of the same form but larger - Their horns are generally encircled with gold or brass rings & tipped with very delicate ornaments - When these white Bullocks have their horns dyed of a bright coral colour & are dressed with flowers, they are extremely beautiful & when drawing the Bandy which is like a little throne, one cannot help thinking of a carriage in some Romance. I must not forget to tell you that that [sic] this feast of the return of the sun, is the season for renewing all things, every house from the best to the meanest hut is entirely cleaned out, painted & white washed, Nothing cou'd exceed the gaiety of the appearance of the streets in the towns & the Villages - the devices on the Braminy houses [word crossed out] **(9)** almost effaced were all renewed & those who cou'd not afford better paintings striped their houses with broad stripes of red & white.<sup>58</sup> This rage for cleanliness is however carried farther than is pleasing to my taste for ornament The trunks of the trees before the doors are painted to look like twisted columns with red & white & the long walls of granite that inclose the pagodas & even the steps down the tanks are striped in the same manner: fortunately this colouring is removed by the first shower of rain from these kind of places which are much disfigured by it when it is fresh done There has been lately a great feast kept at St. Thome where we have been three Evenings to see their ceremony which lasted ten nights - It is in honour as [word crossed out] I can learn of the Marriage of [word crossed out] Sheeva - The god is carried out each night in a different way one night he rides on a Bullock & on each side of him one of his wives also on a Bullock.<sup>59</sup> the next night they ride out on Horsback [sic] - an [sic] third night on Elephants - a fourth on Euperpe [?] Carriages & so on on the last night he is carried out without his wives as a Pandanam or religious beggar. -

I believe I have mention'd the ~~Village~~ town of St. Thome<sup>60</sup> to you before - I frequently go there as I much admire it. It is very large one part is quite a Braminy town<sup>61</sup> - The streets are very broad planted on each side with Cocoa palms & on the occasions of festivals **(10)** they always hang festoons across the street from tree to tree at the distance of every fourth or fifth house. There are some times pieces of silk or cloth made into a kind of fringe which has an excellent effect from a variety of colours - sometimes they are of leaves strung together & lamps of

<sup>58</sup> Red and white were the colours of the East India Company.

<sup>59</sup> The two figures Elizabeth interprets as Shiva's wives are actually Shaivite saints.

<sup>60</sup> San Thomé was established as a Portuguese colony in 1522. By the time the Gwillims arrived, it had been absorbed into the English settlement of Madras.

<sup>61</sup> In reference to Mylapore, an ancient port city known as the birthplace of the Tamil philosopher Valluvar and referred to by the Roman geographer Ptolemy.

transparent paper as clear as glass with paintings richly ornamented - These Lamps & lanterns are of all varieties of forms & very handsome & rich - The houses are all illuminated with innumerable lamps 'till it is a blaze [sic] of light - The great square at St. Thome is about the size of Lincoln's Inn fields - one side of this is a wall inclosing the Pagodas which are very handsome & appear over - The other three sides are Braminy houses with frequent openings to the country. - Before this wall & these houses there are Cocoa Palms in two rows - then a broad driving way & another double row of Cocoa Palms at the edge of the tank - the whole square besides being one fine piece of water - This tank has a curb stone round it & steps to the bottom of granite - it must have been an immense work as many of their tanks are. They are not flights of steps at intervals but the whole sides are steps from one end to the other. It is so deep that a little Temple or Pagoda which **(11)** is in the middle is now covered & will not appear till after a long dry season - at present about eight steps brings you to the edge of the water - The illumination of this large tank is the prittiest [sic] thing of the kind that can [drawing of steps: steps with a lamp on each; reflection in the water] be imagined I cannot describe the appearance without drawing it. One lamp is placed on each step up & down in a wave to the water's edge - each lamp has a tremulous reflection in the water - The lamps are very strongly lighted & the reflection is like a pointed fringe of fire hanging in the water - The trees across the driving way are connected as I have described & at the four corners of the square what they call Pandals<sup>62</sup> are erected these are temporary buildings & are only a set of Cocoa palm trees - very straight ones set in the ground for columns about 50 - or 60 feet high they are bound round with purple muslin & white webbing or tape in double rows like twisted columns these support an awning, which is either a large piece of needle work, representing the stories of the gods in patch work or else fine carpets with flowers of gold or colours round & generally five immensely large [? - word partially off the paper] transparent paintings for lanterns hanging from **(12)** this awning - Under these places the gods rest a short time in the Procession three dancing girls performing all the while. -

In order to see this sight we set out about ½ past 10 o'clock having three miles to go. The roads were crowded with men women & children coming from all parts - we went to a Choultry in a Street near the Square before which choultry there was a pandale erected it being near to the entrance of the Pagoda from whence the Gods were to set out - They brought us scent & put garlands of flowers of a kind of white Jasmine around our necks & from a silver ewer sprinkeld [sic] our handkerchiefs with rose water giving each of us a ball of the same flowers as

<sup>62</sup> In Hinduism, a pandal is a temporary structure set up to usually venerate the god and goddess (Wikipedia). The word is derived from the Tamil and can also refer to a shed (*Hobson Jobson*, p. 665).



the garland, to hold in our hands these were like our cowslip bells. -They then brought some of the best dancing girls who are very richly dressed their hair is combed smooth parted in front & sweeping round the corners of the forehead with a fringe of fine work in gold & small jewels edging this sweep of the hair & lying on the forehead [sic] They wear a conspicuous piece of jewelry on the middle of the forehead & various ornaments in the nature of clasps one ~~large~~ piece of gold like a small saucer finishes the back of the head & between that & the front ornaments wreaths of coloured natural flowers were twisted several times round. the back hair is plaited [sic] & hangs down to a great length inter mixed with gold and pearl tassels & flowers

- Their ears are covered with ornaments as many as possible **(13)** are hung in the ears & others suspended from bands in the hair. - The necklace & chains they wear are very fine & cover their necks - their arms have bands round the middle of the upper part of the arm, & bracelets on the wrists innumerable - These jewels are sometimes false but 'tho' very shewy are not when real of the value they may be supposed to be as they are only table diamonds & so thin as not to be fit for cutting - These women wear no shoes or stockings but an immense [sic] weight of gold round their ankles in strings of small bells which sound as they dance - Their dancing is very little like ours they never step upon the toes but keep the knees bent & tread on the broad sole of the foot, they move in a very small space sometimes when they sing as they dance they advance very forward in a straight line & retire; but at other times they dance for an hour within the space of a sheet of paper. the feet however all the while in constant motion (I am speaking now of the dancing of a single person & the chief display of their skill is in the motion of the hands & arms the air of the head & the expression of the features - in these they excel & indeed the upper parts of their figure appear [to] me to be better formed than the lower - They are not like the Grecian figures; but are short from the waist downwards & dancing with the knees **(14)** so much bent & the feet kept near the ground seems to encrease [sic] this defect - The action of the upper part of the figure is extremely graceful it is sometimes voluptuous but never affected. - They dance whether they recite or not to two or three very loud instruments one of which of a most piercing sound ~~which~~ is a piece of metal held by one hand & struck by another piece of metal held by the other hand - The man who plays this keeps his head close to the dancer's & with a kind of eagerness seems to direct her in every motion, [word crossed out] he constantly repeats. We had this evening a long performance by one dancer & she was only once relieved by one of the girls in the back ground. It was a story of Sheeva one of their gods who in the habit of a pilgrim of great beauty, set all the women in love with him. Some Bramins in the back [words crossed out] take up the Chorus -- about twelve o'clock notice was given by loud reports of the fire works that the gods were setting out & we went to walk round the square of the illuminated tank with them

they were on three carriages very large drawn by numbers **(15)** of people - Sheeva in one in the middle & a wife in each of the other carriages which were a little smaller - The Carriages were like large thrones with many carved figures of the Horses supposed to be drawing it & coachmen in carved wood & most gaudily painted, larger than life; besides many angels & lions - the whole dressed up with hundreds of little flags & wreaths of flowers in short the ornaments are so profuse that one can hardly be sure, even after much prying, that one has seen the face of either god or goddess - after these shows the ornaments of a Theatre woud [sic] look very miserable The clear moon above, looking pale with with [sic] the glare of fire works & lights, the profusion of which you cannot guess at it. It is a constant explosion during the whole tour made by the procession - if it were not almost profane to say so, these things really come on like a god - thick darkness goes before them - The great clouds of smoke roll on before the carriages & conceal every thing, but what peers above them the great waving leaves of the Cocoa trees which receive the light of the fires & of the Moon & **(16)** the Mango & other trees covered [sic] with white clusters of flowers - The glare of fresh fires upon the volumes of smoak [sic] & the showers of fire from different fire works whilst Rockets thrown up unceasingly, twenty, forty, a hundred at a time seeming to pierce the skies have altogether such an effect as cou'd hardly be concieved [sic] - The noise of their instruments is most tremendously piercing but I think a little use wou'd make it not disagreeable. The dancing girls preceeded [sic] the Cars - & when they stopped, danced perhaps twenty standing as ours do but dancing in their own way only advancing now & then to meet what we shou'd call the partner & retiring - They are all women vast numbers of Pandamanums men & women follow the cars dancing in their way - There are no other carriges [sic] allowed The crowd all walk. Thousands attend & they are the great beauty of the picture for the dress is so graceful & so clean - the white muslin turban & drapery & the order & tranquillity [sic] of their behaviour gives great solemnity to the scene - one can hardly be surprized [sic] that they are unwilling to give up these shows for a better Religion the fruits of which do not appear very good in the examples our people who come out here give them. **(17)**

After we had walked round the tank some times resting at the verandas of some houses where chairs were set we came back to the Pandal under which we had sat. The god was taken to the Pagoda & some of the Pandarams entertained us with a kind of buffoon dance some boys having tygers masks on showed some little activity about in the taste of tumbling at a fair. During these feasts the great cause of tranquility is the sobriety of the people those of Cast never drink any kind of ~~liquor~~ spirit or fermented liquor, but besides this they are naturally very mild in their dispositions drunkenness they [word crossed out] detest to a degree you can hardly conceive - their shops are just like the stalls in Covent Garden with ranges of fruit in some in others

confectionary which they make in very pretty & in a great variety of shapes but with little variety of taste flour, sugar, clarified butter Cashew nuts in the way of almonds & sometimes Cardamum seeds like sugar plumbs the worst is they are fond of mixing a little musk which is to us intolerable & generally the best sort are covered with silver leaf & all are very greasy.

The shops of flowers are much like the flower shops in Covent garden but more like artificial flower makers because they hang up wreaths & bunches made up. It is surprizing [sic] what quantities of flowers are sold in wreaths eight months in the year they are of a sort of double white Jasmine the rest of the year yellow flowers but all are occasionally [sic] mixed - all these shops sell beetle leaf which looks exactly like lilly [sic] of the Valley leaves **(18)** & I used to take the little bundles to be some flower of that kind rolled in the leaves. --

July 16th: I wrote you all this account of Indian ceremonies for the amusement of you & little Tom & expected to have sent with a letter Polly sent about the latter end of May or beginning of June. She also intended to have written several other letters as did Mr: G. that one letter I hope Hetty has had it was sent by a mere chance we were disappointed of sending the others, nothing can be so teasing [sic] as watching the opportunity of sending letters the Vessels frequently sailling [sic] without any notice. - -

I have just now heard that the Swallow Packet<sup>63</sup> is going to sail which has been lying here nine months to be ready to sail at 24 hours notice & whether it may now sail in a few hours or be here some months I cannot guess but report says it is to sail & therefore I shall pack off this to acknowledge the receipt [sic] of a letter from you & one from Hetty written from Tupsley Jan: 14th: 1802. Mr. G. had a few letters on business & from some friends but not one from any relation of his. I expected a box of preserves and a box from Mr: James because Mr: Temples father said he had inclosed for his son some books in a parcel going to be sent by Mr: James which I expected wou'd be with some gowns caps &c &c &c Mr: Ware wrote to Mr: G. that he had sent us some porter but does not say how directed. We have received none of these things & all the ships are come in for the season except one which is not expected till August or Sep[tember]: - The ships destined for China & Bengal have sailed [sic] from this place & we have made enquiry without effect the letters not mentioning what has been sent - I fear our things are gone **(19)** to China by which means they will be lost or go back to England. but one of the Mates of the United Kingdom who dined with us tells us he thinks it likely the boxes are still in England as unless some person delivers them & takes a receipt [sic] from the officers they are frequently left in the Warehouses - Therefore if the Preserves & Mr: James' box were sent we shall be glad if he will enquire where they are - It is a little disappointment [word crossed out] to

<sup>63</sup> A fast sailing ship designed primarily to carry mail.

me but not worth talking of I can go on if they come a few months hence only I have no caps - & I cannot trick out in flowers like the young misses a few handsome caps are therefore very desirable [sic] to me & also a little false foretop of hair in the fashion to be sent now & then Everybody young & old wears them here as we have no hair dressers & the hair does not keep curl by reason of the perspiration & damp of the air. -

The months of April & May which we we[re] taught to think wou'd be very hot were to me deligh[tfully] pleasant - particularly in our pleasant house on the sea Mr: G. was also well at that time but in June had a great many boils of which he was very impatient. They are a complaint that neither black nor white people often escape at that season Richard Clarke has had plenty but he did not much regard them - Mr: Gwillim was really very ill with his for five weeks & took up all my attention for tho not alarming they are extremely painful - I had three which made me very ill for some days. - Richards were many but small ours were large Polly has no ailment - but I lose her very much she is frequently out for a fortnight or three weeks at a time & has many invitations - at present she is from home I dine out on Wednesday to fetch her home. - The last six weeks have been the hottest weather we have had just as it was when we arrived - the Land winds have prevailed [sic] which are very disagreeable if they continue all day - but have nothing baneful in them except that by drying up the skin the checked perspiration **(20)** brings boils & prickly heat which is exceedingly teasing [sic]. We have no Muskitoes [sic] in this house.-

I shall conclude this with many thanks to you & Hetty for your letters which I hope you will let us have at all opportunities - I trust Hetty's little Tom is better I was very sorry to hear of his illness but I shall begin another letter & answer all in that - In this only

Mrs. James

No 39. Bishopsgate Street

London

HGwillim July 31st 1802

love to Nancy Ned the Children &c Hetty will open this I hope & take the cream of the compliments for her & James - Thank God we are all well at this time - I wish I cou'd know you were all as well - but the news you sent me is old - Many people here have letters as late as the middle of March. I am ~~pray~~ dear Mother your dutiful Daughter EGwillim

**Letter-014-EG-08-1802: Elizabeth Gwillim to Hester James, 23 August 1802**  
(Mss.Eur.C.240/1, ff. 72r-76v)

(1) My dear Hetty,

By the Fleet which arrived lately I have had the pleasure to receive your two letters written from Tupsley & one from my Mother. We feel the greatest obligations to you for your kindness in writing through so many difficulties. It gave me much satisfaction to find my Mother had borne the early part of the Winter so well which was I suppose in part occasioned by the pleasure of having you with the family. I was sorry you had been so unfortunatly [sic] ill & that the poor child suffered so much which must have been a great drawback from you happiness as it was from our pleasure in reading you letter at this distance from you I always imagine that it will be more pleasing to you to hear all you can of us & our goings on than that I shou'd regularly answer all the chit chat you are so good as to send me & therefore I do not answer to every particular many of which may have escaped you before your letter reaches me nevertheless every line of your letters is a treasure to us for you seem to bring us home by the descriptions you give us of every person & every action & we think you little less than a good fairy that transports us through the air to our native country. -

A letter which I lost an opportunity (2) of sending some months ago, & at the time little regretted has been kept by me till a few days ago there having been in all that time no opportunity of sending to England.- I sent it to take the first chance & I find it has been put on Board a Hamborough<sup>64</sup> ship by which I fear it may cost more than it is worth but as it may arrive after a long interval you may be not sorry to have it as I have added to it a later part with a short account of our goings on at present. The ship I intended it to go by does not go at all after 9 months delay. In short I have been so often disappointed in sending letters & we have so often lost chances by waiting for what were esteemed certainties that I shall never again presume to promise myself when a letter may go.- This is intended to take a chance only & will not, for that reason be long. - I sent by the [word crossed out] Monarch in March last by favour of the surgeon two pieces of Muslin a shawl & some pieces, seeds &c which I hope you will receive in August or Sep[ember] I expected many opportunities before this but they have all failed [sic] - Polly wrote a letter by a chance to go by the Anna a Country ship - I believe she told you we had changed our house for one which I think you would like as well as I do. It is by the sea side & the two months we had been taught to dread April & May turned out to be in this situation the pleasantest I have felt we

<sup>64</sup> Likely Hambrough or Hamburg.

had almost constantly a Sea Breeze & when that blows we never feel too warm - about the 10th: of June however it began to be extremely warm & with the exception of a few days we had six weeks of Land wind. ~~which~~ It is reconned [sic] to have been the severest Season for twenty years & upwards & has been in truth very disagreeable This wind has in it nothing unwholsome [sic] but by blowing over a long space of Land heated by the Sun

(3) & by bringing with it a quantity of fine sharp Sand it gives a burning to the skin just like the effects of a sharp frost in England. The extremes of heat & cold seem to produce nearly the same effects. The wind sweeps with great violence & is dangerous for this reason that the heat & sharpness of it produces boils & prickly heat which if exposed to the wind are checked by it - for this reason we wear shawls & guard ourselves from it by shutting the windows as we do from Cold - These winds are not very troublesome when they are low or during the night & in good seasons the sea breeze sets in as it has lately done at nine in the morn[ing]. It has during part of June & July blown perfect gales which sound just like the Wintry winds with you & the sky is generally cloudy - If it is a bright day we are certain of the Sea breeze early - we have ~~now~~ had even whilst the Land winds blew showers most days but we have not had so much rain as cou'd be wished for the sake of the Country & the Gardens & every thing will be late When we came here on the 26th: July last year we found the Country perfectly Verdant - a verdure indeed beyond what I had ever seen the grass was tall & fresh, It is now only beginning to look green except where it is watered - The trees look fine but have an Autumnal appearance many leaves of the Cocca [sic] palms look copper colourd [sic] & all appear [sic] red or gilded on the edges so if one may compare great to small things - some of the smaller Groves look like baskets of filberts - for the use of a Painter they are extremly [sic] beautiful & my view of the Sea through them is perfectly beautiful - The rice is Green in (4) the fields & the flowers keep blowing on us They do not depend immediatly on the rains for the preservation of things of that kind - The tanks & rivers do not fail & they cut channels in every direction which they easily fill & water every part. Mr: Gwillim & I have been great Martyrs during what is called here the Griffinage that is the first year - I trust in God we shall do better next for I fear you will all of you think me very idle tho I have in reallity [sic] been much otherwise - we have both had boils & terrible prickly heat which to a person so irritable as Mr: G. is perfectly a Misery It is so indeed to me tho' I have tried to bear it with patience. These disorders are like the Gout & tooth ach [sic] they excite no pity but are very distressing as for the Prickly heat a real fit of it (of which I have had three & Mr: Gwillim two) it is worse than I know how to describe every part of back breast arms & hands covered with a thick scarlet rash that itches worse than the Scotch fiddle<sup>65</sup> & it wou'd require a hundred hands to

<sup>65</sup> Scabies, according to Thomas Hawkes Tanner, *An Index of Diseases and Their Treatment*, I

rub every part that itches As for Mr: Gwillim he had four pair besides his own in constant employment & he was so little able to bear a disorder that requires so much patience that made himself quite ill - The return of the Sea Breeze has restored him but my fit is not abated yet having only been about a fortnight. Polly & Richard have no ailments - I have not been able to sit out of doors to draw but I am very deep in Hindoo learning & am learning the Gentoo Language which I can write pretty well (5) I was sorry to hear Nancy's children had the whooping Cough which is a sad complaint - Mr: Gwillim bore the death of Mr: John Yorke very indifferently I never saw him more afflicted he was low with his boils &c when he heard it & he cried a whole day. The death of Mrs: Buller too the Bishop of Ely's last daughter was a most distressing circumstance we had a most kind letter from Mr: Carew who married Mr John Yorke's only daughter with a circumstantial account of his illness. -

My Mother says that when she has had our letters from hence & hear of our having her's she shall think nothing of the distance between us I am sure if we had before we came here been much acquainted with people who are in the habits of coming here we should [sic] none of us have thought so much as we did - When one sees people who have been here 10 or 12 times & who when they are going to England talk of returning here immediately, when I look out of my house & see the sea beating against the shore & think that from the time I left England I saw only the same appearance I can hardly think the space between us so great as it is. -

Polly is writing to Nancy Green & giving a full account of our receiving by this Fleet only a Box of Books from Butterworth - no caps, or gowns no Preserves no porter nothing we were to have I fear they are all gone on to China or else that they are still in England & have been put into no ship which is the best hope. We may still have them by some other Vessel. I shall want Evening & Morning Caps & a foretop of false hair for the sea air takes out all the curl from ones own & there is no body to dress it - As for this false foretop I have mentioned it in all my letters & expect Mr: James will be a good deal diverted at such a hue & cry after a Lady's wig - Everybody here uses them tho' Mr: Gwillim inveighs against the custom most bitterly & vows to burn mine if he finds it, however it is very useful on occasions. --

I was most happy to hear of my (6) Pidgeons [sic] - that they do not breed faster is because they are chiefly Males - I used to observe that the females seldom live & the males are very hardy. - I am sorry that poor Lizzy & Mary Thoburn were prevented from writing to me by a suspicion of my neglect I know it did not originate with them it was one of Regy's deep thoughts. - Long before this they will understand how much I was disappointed in not being able to send letters to them & the confusion of sending letters from one ship to another at sea is not to be

(London, 1866). Also said to be a rash caused by consumption of too much oatmeal!

described those who understand it are too busy for themselves to help others who are strangers. - If letters come from one of us & not another you need not be alarmed because we think it best to divide them because ships so frequently change their destination.- .-

You ask me if the weather is oppressive in this Country - In the Land winds it is exceedingly so but at this present 3d: of August I dare say I am suffering less with heat than you do the Sea breeze sets in about 9 or so in the morning & then it the air is delightful - There is one difference in the heat of this country & England That in days when by the thermometer the heat is extreme we feel no loss of appetite [sic] on the contrary people eat exceeding The land wind is much like our oppressive days in England & takes off appetite [sic]. but the fine clear days with the Sea air when it is extremely warm a hot dinner tho large has not a disgusting appearance as it seems to have in England - one thing is that with so many doors open & windows unglazed we are not distressed by the smell of the meat as in England in close rooms - I do not know if I ever before remarked a trifling thing to you which is natural enough but we were not aware of it - during the summer months when the air is hot we can see no steam or smoke from any dish nor even from a Pitcher of boiling [sic] water by which means we have frequently burned our mouths & I have been very near scalding my hands by plunging them into basins of hot water. In the Monsoon we see the steam as in England - We have one great (7) comfort I feel by coming from the Saucy servants in England which is the attention & tenderness of these people in illness or difficulties - Even those who beat them & abuse them acknowledge that their care in illness is beyond all things It is a religious principal with them never to be made angry by any thing that an old person or a sick person says. They are patient & forbearing under insults & provocations of all kinds - neither do they bear in mind these affronts. - I wish you knew my Gentoo man Saamy he is but just 19 but has a large pair of whiskers. Mr: Gwillim is very fond of several of them, but he is our great favorite he has the exact face of little Tom James most beautiful eyes & eyebrows & a face full of mildness & goodness - his skin like most of the Gentoos is a deep Devonshire brown - He has not a thought beyond the home. We have two Malabar & two Gentoo men of cast the Gentoos I like best one is extremely handsome the people of Cast are all delicately clean but the Gentoos are neater fairer in their skins & [word crossed out] handsomer than the Malabars The Gentoos are chiefly Vishnu people that is go to the Pagodas of Vishnu who is a mild & benevolent God - These servants of cast will not do any menial office for which they frequently are very unjustly insulted by Europeans - The truth is they hire themselves for no such purpose & wou'd sooner die they consider themselves as Gentleman & hire themselves in the character of Dubashes<sup>66</sup> - that is interpreter - for whom the Europeans first came to this Country & till lately it

<sup>66</sup> s. H. *dubhāshiyā*, *dobāshī* (lit. 'man of two languages'), Tam. *tupāshi*. Hobson-Jobson (p. 328).



was only those who are well educated people who cou'd acquire the English Language - There are thousands of Parias a lower order of people who will do all things & those who complain need not employ these men: They find however that they are the only people to be relied upon. - They will come behind the Carriage carry an Umbrella & always take things from the hands of the lower servants to give us, for they wait at table - If you go into a shop they go with you & assist in choosing the things & settling the price & assume a character like servants in old Plays a sort of companions to the Master - They will not dress (8) hair nor shave neither will they do those offices for themselves it wou'd be thought degrading for them to cut their own nails which are always nicely cut by their own barbers - If a man was to cut his own nails he wou'd be called Barber a term of so great reproach that he cou'd never get clear of it - at 5 years old they begin to clean their teeth which are beautifully kept they never eat without washing the hands feet & teeth & always wash the hands & teeth perfectly after eating. - They do what they call wash head, once a week that is are well scrubbed one doing it for another with a paste of eggs & lime juice & pounded Vetches which is like almond paste & plenty of hot water - They are extremely agreeable in one respect that they have no offensive tricks, which they abominate & have a great contempt for Moor men who always indulge in them & for such English as do - They never scrape their throats nor snuff with the nose nor pick their teeth or fingers nor make any odd noises - nor do they ever scratch their heads or in short do any trick that can offend delicate eyes or ears-. I own I have been often not a little ashamed to hear one of my country people, who in ten minutes has com[m]ited [sic] ten things that wou'd disgust these people swear at them for beasts & dirty devils - one thing however tho' they certainly equal in niceties of this kind the desires of Lord Chesterfield they pay perhaps too high a price for this delicacy. In their sacred books [words crossed out] these regulations [word crossed out] are mixed & a point of cleanliness or manners stands by one of Religion or Morals & is pressed upon them by language equally forcible - Our vulgar old Proverb says cleanliness is next to Godliness - they have made it at least equal if not exceeding it. - (9)

I know not whether this can be sent or not but will take the chance - We pray for all your health & happiness Thank God we are all well at this time with best remembrances Duty love &c I remain your's truly

EGwillim Madras

S. Thome - Aug[ust] 3d. 1802.-

[Ja]mes

Bishopsgate street

within London

**Letter-015-EG-09-1802: Elizabeth Gwillim to Hester James, 14 September 1802**

**(Mss.Eur.C.240/1, ff. 77r-81v)**

(1) 3rd: of Oct: Recivd [sic] your letter by the Admiral Applin [sic]. Which has turned our sorrow into joy - Drank your health in great glee with our friends at our table.-

S. Thome Sep[tember] 14th 1802

My dear Hetty

I know not when any Vessel may be likely to leave this place; but flattering myself that you may be as glad to hear of us as we are to hear of you I shall begin a letter & put in a few lines as I find myself in a humour to write for when opportunities are so scarce I do not like to lose one chance of writing when a sudden one offers Another ship the Britania [sic] came in from England - the last but one & not one of our things arrived - what is worse not one line from any soul except a short letter from Temple's father to him saying that on the - of April 1802 Mr: James' family were well I hope to God it was so & that they still are so but a line if had been but one wou'd have given us great satisfaction There is now but one chance more for our things the ship called Admiral Applin [sic] is not yet in - I have not yet bought any things but some mere trifles. it is therefore of no consequence if the ships are safe & we cou'd know you were all well!

- The heat of the weather is abated here now & my Garden is in good order I have four large beds of French beans but not yet in flower & they are to be sold in the bazars however the season is that the people were busy with the building & our gardening was not begun till late Our Building is almost finished but not dry enough to go into. I do not know whether Polly told you that we are so much pleased with this situation that the Landlord has made an additional (2) Building to induce us to stay. The new Building is connected to the original one by a curved Verando [sic] or Gallery you wou'd call it & it consists of one large room two Bed chambers & a Verando [sic] to each & all front the sea so that the Breeze blows in very delightfully. The Building has been some amusement to me as I think it wou'd have been to you.- I intend to tell my mother a great deal about it as she understands these matters<sup>67</sup> - I have

<sup>67</sup> Esther Symonds took over her husband's business as an architect and stone mason after his death and ran it until 1806.

told you in my letter so much about the black people that I am afraid you will either not have time to read it or that you will be tired of the subject & yet there are a thousand things I have not said a word to you about. - I am always curious to enquire their customs & here are so many different people that it takes a long time to distinguish one set from another. - The Hindoos with all their different divisions next the Moor men with the Nabob at the head of them then the remains of the Portegueze [sic] & various low people whom they have converted to what they call Christianity besides these the Armenians who are Christians of another kind & have their churches & chappels [sic] besides our own people many of whom are as great curiosities as the strangers. - All these people are so much in love with the ceremonies of the Idolaters that they make their own [word crossed out] forms as nearly like them as possible. I was in the Garden of a Portugueze [sic] chaple [sic] to see the ceremony one night in Passion week & when the procession passed I was amused with a little english boy crying out "run that Swaamy - (that is that Idol) is coming" It was a representation of our Saviour as taken from the cross & so shockingly represented in wax as large as life as to be very distressing he was carried on a bier with a Canopy over as to the Grave. Before the image walked a number (3) of boys dressed in brown frocks with borders & large painted wings on their shoulders &c to represent Angels each caried [sic] a waiter with some ~~part~~ instrument used in the Crucifixion one had the nails; but of an immense size that they might be better seen another the Hammer - the nippers - the crown of thorns &c &c &c behind the bier [word crossed out] the women were caried [sic] Mary & Mary Magdalen each as large as life in wax & dressed in black silk flounced peticoats [sic] & gowns with head dresses like Portegueze [sic] nuns & their beads in their hands these figures had the feet upon the top of a pole which raised the feet as high as the heads of the people- many other things were carried besides innumerable attendants in ridiculous flounced dresses of colour'd silks and gauzes which the larger Angels wore much in the stile [sic] of masquerade dresses a great part of the procession was made up of the people in long robes carrying candles besides which the whole Garden was a blaze of light - The Chaunt [sic] of the Priest I thought extremely fine & solemn & [word crossed out] ridiculous as the procession was the effect of the voices was beyond anything of the kind I ever heard - These people are all dark as black as the other natives very few of them being really Portuguese<sup>68</sup> [sic] & those few have been so long in the country that they are become dark. The smaller angels had a quarrel & were kicking one another as they went along to the amusement of the spectators

<sup>68</sup> Luso-Indians, often known simply as "Portuguese" by the British in India included those of Indian and Portuguese descent and people of Indian descent who had Portuguese surnames, acquired through conversion to Christianity.

- In short it was a most unnatural mixture of solemnity & absurdity. We followed the Procession into the chappel [sic] where indeed I have at other times been This as many others are, is very rich & (4) surprized Mr: Gwillim who had seen Flanders There are not indeed any paintings but the ornaments are very fine extremely expensive & quite clean & fresh - This Church or rather Chappel [sic] is the only one I have been in it is a large apartment like the Parish Church in London but with no Gallery on the sides the Chancel is very large, divided from the principal part & before you reach that, on each side there is a Chapel each [ex]actly in the stile [sic] of the Great altar. The design is an immense sarcophagus, gilded with many images & gold candlesticks & lights innumerab[le] in all the niches & little hollows which in our Church[es] are, in such parts, filled with dust & cobwebs the figures also are fresh & richly dressed whether large or small & are numerous. Neither the ornaments nor the buildings are correct, being every where a mixture of Grecian Gothick [sic] & Moorish but the newness & brilliancy of the Gilding, the rich effect of so many small parts & the lights dispersed in every part, give a delicacy~~that~~ of effect that I cou'd not have guessed at by seeing a dirty monument in Westminster Abbey, which is the same kind of~~the~~ thing - These Chappels [sic] are hung with damask of different colours that is the colours are changed on different days. The roof of the Chancel of this I thought particularly beautifull [sic] it was hung pieces of satin of two colours in long strips about a yard wide at top & sloped to a point at bottom these laid over each other around the cornice & then all the points taken together in one knot in the centre of the ceiling [sic], the middle hanging hollow - it appeared the most beautiful top of a room I ever saw - you will judge what immense quantities of sattin [sic] must be used when I tell you that the Chappel [sic] is very high. During the whole of Passion Week all that passed on that week is acted over day by day as it ocured [sic] the intombing the sealling [sic] &c and on Easter day the resurrection. (5)

- Oct[ober] 2d. I wrote a sheet to you one day since when the ship Admiral Applin [sic] has come in but without bringing anything for us. Mr: Temple had a letter from his father who says our things were to have been sent by an order from Mr. Strange who went out of town & forgot it. I have now no hopes of seeing them till after the monsoon but in the hopes they are safe I shou'd not have cared if I had had a few lines. I wish Mr: James wou'd divest himself of the idea that he is writing to India for a few lines wou'd answer every purpose & he wou'd not mind writing to us at Brompton - I wish indeed I had had my preserves those I brought out having been very useful but now gone - a Cap or two I also feel the want of my head being rather disordered, [word crossed out] I am not much inclined to turn to millinery having so little time to do other things I want to do. - Lizzy Thoburn & Nancy Green have I presume

forgotten [sic] us - I particularly told I thought everybody that we shou'd expect to have a few lines put into the India House once a fortnight by which means we shou'd always hear by every opportunity & without a farthing expense - I must beg of you not to put letters in parcels but always in the India House by which means I shall have them so much the sooner & more certainly - you must think we feel it a little hard to have had at this time no news from England of a later date than Jan[uary] 1802 when everybody in the settlement have had letters in every month from Jan[uary]: till the fifth of June just half a year later, during which time we have not heard how any of our (6) friends are - I do not mean to reproach you who have been almost our only correspondent however [word crossed out] long letters are great treasures we do not ask them, two or three lines sometimes from you & sometimes from my mother or Nancy Green cou'd tell us how you all are & save us many painful conjectures. -

We have had the most severe season ever remembered & have as yet had no rains we expect the Monsoon to set in very soon. The heat of June July & August was excessive the Land winds blew with great violence & Mr: Gwillim & I have been great sufferers with boils & prickly heat which last is not yet gone It is a most tormenting disorder & if struck in like other rashes very dangerous - it is also very tedious. Polly has as yet had no sign of it & indeed she is & looks remarkably well she and Richard are in high spirits constantly she has told you what a party we have so I shall say nothing on that subject. Thank God Mr: Gwillim is now very well, as ever I have seen him. - I have just heard that Captain Mash of the Gen[era]l Steven is arrived here on his way home I shall send after him & will write by his ship to you & Mrs: Shephard I shall therefore say little more now - We received a letter some weeks ago from Mr. Edwards, it was written in a hand scarcely intelligible from tremor & very confused, he said in it that he was recovering very fast but I had not heard he was ill nor in what part the country he was but I suppose he has been in the same way by the letter (7) he said he was coming down to Madras - I am much concerned on his account poor creature. It was very imprudent at least if not cruel to send him to this country. - To day Mr: Gwillim had a letter from Mr: William Barrol written as before in a stile [sic] of intimate friendship which he does not relish - It was merely to let him know that he was arrived here from Bengal on his road home. - He does not seem inclined to send for him. --

It is in vain for me to conjecture how you all are & what you are doing I shall therefore say nothing on that head but will try to hope for the best. I sent you by a Mr: Prosser of the United Kingdom two Palanpoes [sic] one of which I wish you to keep & I will let you know to whom I wish you to give the other I was glad to get the opportunity of sending them tho he went to Bengal with them I packed some pieces of Muslin to shew [sic] you what the ~~people~~ women

wear for their Choulies each Chouley takes half a yard - I also sent you a Moor womans veil curiously dyed you will be surprized [sic] at the coarseness of the Muslin but in this bright sun they look very well. -

Oct: 3d thus as above last night I wrote lamenting the Applin has been in one week - today~~the~~ Capt: Rogers called on Mr: & Mrs: Hargrave & produced out of his pocket your Packet, your nice long letter, James letter & your to Mr: G. altogether of equal value with so much gold I cannot now have time to write this over again so you must excuse it - I have the greatest joy in hearing your dear little child is so well I pray God to preserve him I am sorry to hear you are become so thin I fear you walk too much - I hoped to hear you were got a little fat - as for Master Jemmy I am quite glad to hear **(8)** he can pass a Winter without his Rheumatism [sic] - I am very sorry to hear poor Nancy<sup>69</sup> has lost her youngest child - I fear you are mistaken about Mr Tho[mas] Gwillim's<sup>70</sup> being a Post Captain I suppose it is a Master & Commander however I hope it may be Post Captain & shall have great happiness to hear it confirmed - Pray give our best wishes to him - I hope to write to Mrs: Shephard this ship at all events by Capt[ain] Mash. - Master Richard Hodges rather surprized [sic] me. - & that is saying much as I had fancied nothing wou'd have surprized [sic] me that ~~they~~ he or his friends cou'd do. -

I am rejoiced to hear my mother talked of coming to London I hope she put it in practice - you need not put yourself in fear about your letters coming safely to us I have had all that have been sent - as yet. - Oh! That I had those that are solderd [sic] up in the tin case pray never put any in boxes again of any consequence. By the packet they are sure to be safe & I pay nothing. - I believe I shall not send this by the Hamburg ship but by the sovereign India man which sails tomorrow directly for England - I shall have an opportunity of sending some things to you soon by Mr: Templar Lieut[enant] of the Leopard Kings' ship - they sail in about 8 or ten days. - I hope I shall find letters from Nancy Green & Lizzy & Mary Thoburn - and that I shall have my seeds by the begining [sic] of Dec[ember]: to sow - my French beans are almost all dead for want of rain never was such a season known - I am glad you bought me some confectionery that I brought out with **(9)** me answered amazingly well candied & sugar plum things are sold here very dear a Pint decanter of Candied almonds or Carraways are two Pagodas - My Tolu Lozenges & [word crossed out] Mint seeds have lasted 'till now & I shall be glad always to have Tolu Lozenges<sup>71</sup> sent not in Boxes but from Tringhams by the pound, they have been most [usef]ul [letter damaged] to me & the mint seeds - I have also still som[e] [b]lack currant drops

<sup>69</sup> Elizabeth's older sister Ann James (b. 1759).

<sup>70</sup> Thomas Gwillim (b. 1766) was Henry Gwillim's younger brother.

<sup>71</sup> Tolu lozenges were made from tolu balsam, which is tapped from the living trunks of *Myroxylon balsamum*, a tree native to South America.

that have kept extremely well & are very good. I owe you a thousand thanks for thinking of them. - I hope you have long before this received a white shawl with large sprigs I sent you & two pieces of Muslin for Lizzy & Mary Thoburn - These I sent by a Mr Long a surgeon who assured me he cou'd land them - The surgeon is the best man in the ship for he can lock up things in his medicine chest - whatever you paid for your shawl pray let me know as I do not like you shou'd be at any expense I hope you have had a shawl sent by a Mr: Chalmers a Lawyer - for Mrs: Holland - Yo[u] told me about the grey muslin gown for Mrs: Holland What came of it - I had it worked in black before I left England. - Tomorrow Capt. Mash dines with us & Capt. Rogers. - I hope they will carry some things for me between them. - Mr: Templar<sup>72</sup> has promised to ~~send~~ carry me some things. -

I pray constantly for your health & happiness & we all talk [cont]inually of your kindness in writing so much to us in all your difficulties. I am glad you know Mr: Livingston he appears to me a very attentive good young man & is the very particular friend of Mr: Dove a surgeon who came out with us & is up the country - his letters describing the country to me I will send soon for your's & my mothers amusement at leisure hours - May God bless & keep you all - safe till our return - by then you (10) have this two years will have nearly elapsed - so time flies? - Adieu - I send no Compliments as we all write but love to the dear child - ever affectionately your's

EGwillim

Oct. 4th

Remember my Compliments to Mr: & Mrs: Bullock & to Miss Daws in return - also to Nancy Green love

By the H. C's ship The Sovereign

Mrs: James

No. 39 Bishopsgate Street

(within

London

HGwillim

You did not say in this letter how Mrs Beaman & her children were give my Love to her & them I hope they are well -

**Letter-016-EG-10-1802: Elizabeth Gwillim to Esther Symonds, 2 October 1802**

<sup>72</sup> Lieutenant on HMS Leopard.

(Mss.Eur.C.240/1, ff. 82r-83v)

(1) My dear Mother, Madras Gardens - S. Thome Oct[ober] 2: 1802

I have an opportunity of sending a letter by a gentleman who sails in a fast sailing [sic] Hamburg ship tomorrow & I will not let him go without a line to tell you we are at present all well after this very hot season we have passed which tho' it set in late has been most severe & considered as more so than the oldest Indians remember. The weather now gets cool & pleasant. - I trust in God you are all well, & shall not tease [sic] myself with conjectures; but the last letters I have had were dated Jan[uary] 1802 & every other person in the settlement have had letters every month since that time till the 5th of June some ships having come in three months from England - I must entreat of you to write a letter you or Hetty & have it properly directed & put in the India House once a fortnight by which means we shou'd hear. The Monsoon is now expected to set in when the flag is struck & we shall have no hope of hearing from you again till February this will be a long time to look on to & very mortifying. - I have written several letters to you & Hetty & hope within this month to write several others to you this will therefore be very short. - Polly is remarkably well having had no sort of complaint since she came. - Mr Gwillim has had a letter from his father dated March (2) which seems to say they are in Health at least nothing to the contrary. - I find Mrs Squires is dead of a dropsy no unexpected thing I suppose from her size. -

The Building of my new apartments is nearly finished & I think you wou'd admire it very much; we are as Hetty told Mrs: Stephens in the Pillory for besides the front of the both buildings a long curved gallery joins them in which I think they have put two pillars where one wou'd have done It looks however the better & is a very whimsical white Marble Palace now it is all quite fresh - I shall not in this tell you how they perform which is curious enough in many particulars -

Lord Clive opens a Magnificent Banqueting House on the 7th with a Ball &c to the whole settlement - His house & this building Banqueting house altogether is extremely beautiful & looks like a Palace for Priam & his fifty sons - We have continued reports that he is going to leave us which I hope are not true - he dines with us on the 9th and therefore certainly does not go at the time talked of. We shall be very sorry to lose him for tho he is not shewy [sic] in his manners he is very good natured & not at all high: he has been extremely kind & civil to us. - & I do not think I shou'd like so well the persons intended to succeed [sic] him as Governor - It was a disappointment that Lady Clive & her (3) two daughters had left this place as they also were very free & agreeable [sic] - she delighted in this Country & made large collections of curiosities<sup>73</sup>

<sup>73</sup> Henrietta Clive, née Herbert (1758–1830) collected minerals as well as plants. Parts of her collection remain at the National Museum of Wales.



which indeed any person might easily get but there is great difficulty in preserving them from the [word crossed out] ants which are perfect scavengers - & carry away every crumb left on the ground. They certainly have great merit in cleaning the house for dirty servants & are most expeditious in their work, the only inconvenience is that they sometimes take us for rubbish & begin to remove us by biting us in a very sharp manner - I have had a Bird eat up in a night. I hear nothing of John Gwillim's marriage which you told me of - Mr: Gwillim had a very pert witty letter from Dick Hodges on his Banon [?] - he is to go to Oxford<sup>74</sup> - Richard Clarke is much improved & grown surprizingly [sic] - he goes in a Bandy that is a one Horse chair to the Fort every day - & Mr: G. goes in a Palankeen - they return to dinner at 4 oClock & Richard has the evening & the morn[ing] 'till Eleven oClock - At first he had not great desire for the Balls & the Company of the Ladies but matters are much changed - He & Polly & a few more have so much business of that kind that I cannot enter into the spirit of it & indeed they are so rampant sometimes that I cannot get any good of them. - I am quite glad to have them do this part of the business for me for the going out in (4) hot & cold places does not agree with me I get cramps & slight rheumatisms [sic]. - We have a gay party in the house at present - Give my love to Ned, Nancy Tom & the young ones & believe me your most Dutiful Daughter

EGwillim

- I am sorry to find Poor Nancy has lost her youngest child. -

Mrs: Symonds  
Capuchine Lane  
Hereford

Mr: Gwillim & Polly desire to be properly rememberd [sic] to you & all the Tupsly family. -

Last night I wrote the above & this morning the Capt: of the Applin has brought me a long letter from Hetty accounting for our former disappointment & has made us very happy -

**Letter\_017\_MS\_10-1802: Mary Symonds Hester James, Madras Oct. 2? 1802 (in pencil)  
(Mss.Eur.C.240/1, ff.84r-85v)**

[167/84 noted on bottom of page]

<sup>74</sup> Probably Henry Gwillim's nephew, son of his sister Mary and her husband Richard Hodges.

(1) My Dear Hetty,

I sit down to write a few lines to you, as I will never miss an opportunity, but I think you very [?] probably receive other letters &c (which will be sent by us some days hence) before this; as we shall then have a charming [?] opportunity of sending, by the Kings Ships, which have been stationed here the greatest part of the war, and are now ordered home as [?] to be relieved. The gentleman who carries this is a Mr. Samuel, he is an Attorney [sic] here, & the Editor of the Madras Gazette, he had the misfortune to marry a sister of Miss Wells the Actress, she has behaved very ill it is said in England, and it is whispered here that the (purpose?) of this Voyage is to get divorced from her, & to bring his children out here, who have been schooling in England. I have the satisfaction to say we are all pretty well Betsy is always a little nervous, as she used to be in England, We have at present a very pleasant house, & quite full of company, Mr & Mrs Edward Hargrave, & Mr W<sup>m</sup> Hargrave, who are just arrived by the Admiral Aplin; the gentlemen are sons of Mr. H\_ of Boswell Court.<sup>75</sup> The Eldest was in the country 5 or 6 years. He went home for his health & then met the Lady, he has married, for the con- (2) sideration of, some say, 7 & others 17, thousand pounds, which she possessed; by the help of rouge & false hair her face looks pretty enough, but as the song says, she is 'badly warped in the back' [?], she was a miss French of the city. I dare say James knows the name, she has been at a ball last night, I got her acquainted with plenty of smart young men, for partners, & she seemed quite delighted in the Indian gaiety, & Indian Gallantry. I wrote to Nancy Green a little time since & told her a great lye [sic] viz I said I had sent you some drawings, & a letter, by that same ship & I intended to do it, when I wrote to her, but unfortunately I sent them too late, I shall send them to you by a very charming young man, who is now on a visit with us he is a Lieutenant in the Leopard, W<sup>m</sup> Templer he is a nephew of Judge Bullers, & a Brother of a Mrs. James Buller, a sweet pretty woman who lives in Serle Street, I knew her a little in England, he calls himself my Brother & I really love him as if he were so, he insists on my writing to his Sister, I am not quite sure that he would not prefer being loved in another way, but I keep him to brotherly love, on account of his youth, for he is not quite 20. & or I have an utter aversion to inequalities, my heart is quite safe if I were 16 I believe I should like him better for a lover as he is very good, & sensible & exceedingly handsome. I am writing you an idle prating [sic] letter but it will convince that we keep up our spirits pretty well, it is a fine (3) thing to be in a place where a little beauty goes a great way. I am very handsome here & very clever & the Lord knows what, if you cannot believe it you may blot it out or burn the letter or

<sup>75</sup> Boswell Court, just north of Fleet Street in London, was where Elizabeth and Henry Gwillim lived before their departure for India.

what you like we have suffered much on account of the parcels we expected, they are not yet arrived, & I do assure you I regret their loss more on account of the letters I hoped they would contain than on account of the finery tho really, we shall be quite satisfied if more attention is not paid to the shipping our parcels. I hope you will never again enclose letters in the parcels but send them by the open post and be sure to mention the name of the ship you send by all boxes &c. & describe what they contain. I beg to be kindly remembered to all my dear friends, & a thousand kisses to the dear little boy. I pray to god to spare him to us, perhaps he is not the less likely to continue with us for being a little weakly, for those who are quite healthy we are apt to feel too confident about but a delicate child claims our constant attention. I have just hear that Mr. W Barrol is arrived here from Bengall [sic]. I hope I shall not see any thing of that most illustrious gentleman, but I am surprised you did not mention his coming in any of your letters. I must conclude with good wishes & prayers for your happiness.

Your most affectionate Sister,

M. Symonds

Madras Oct<sup>er</sup>2<sup>nd</sup>

[Continued on next page in pencil]

(4) Tomorrow is Sunday & your Birthday. I shall not forget to drink your health in a bumper. God Almighty bless you & send you many happy returns of it.

[Notes on this letter written by Hetty, sending it to their Mother:]

Address: Mrs Symonds, Capuchin Lane, Hereford

[Below address:] My dear Mother this is a letter I received from Mary I have also one from Betsy but it being large I cannot send it to you till some opportunity and I expect many more. I went by your desire about the Vein Marble but can get none at Parkers he being in want of it himself. He had promised to let me know but I have not yet had an answer. As soon as I do I will let you know all about it - this not being directed I thought I would send it - to you to divert you till I carry yet some more

[Above address:] This from Mary.

If I do not hear to day from Parker I will go to Westminster. James has been very poorly this last week. Yours [Hester]

**Letter\_018\_MS\_10-1802: Mary Symonds to Esther Symonds, 3 October 1802 [in pencil]**  
**(Mss.Eur.C.240/1, ff. 86r-87v)**

(1)

My Dear Mother,

One of the happiest girls in the world is now writing to you, I have just received a packet of letters from Hetty, which has made me so. I finished a short letter to her yesterday but it will go in another ship, & I expect this will come to land long before it. I have but a few minutes allowed me to write this not being aware that the [word crossed out] ship would sail so soon.

Thank God we are all in good health & spirits, in my letter to Hetty which I sent by a Mr. Samuel, I mentioned my fears lest [sic] the parcells she sent us were lost, but I find by her letter that we may expect them some weeks hence, indeed it may be some months but that is not material so long as they are safe, & when we hear that you are all well we are quite happy.

Hetty mentions Mr. T. Gwillim being made a Post Captain,<sup>76</sup> but that I suppose must be a mistake, as he was not made a Commander when we heard last & surely rapid promotions are not usual, whatever his advance may be I sincerely wish him joy of it & hope I shall see him when we next meet with two Epaulets. It would have been very (2) gay for me if my finery had come by the Admiral Aplin, as we are to have a most splendid ball on the 7th at Lord Clives he gives in celebration of the Peace & on that occasion he opens a new Banqueting house which he has just finished Building, we have a family living with us at present who are come out in the Admiral Aplin, Mr. & Mrs. Hargrave & a Brother of his. These young men's father was a neighbour of ours in Boswell Court, the one is a civilian the other a military servant of the Company. I am extremely happy that Hetty has received the things we sent by Mr. Livingstone he was introduced to us by a very good young man a shipmate of ours coming out here. I fear poor Edwards (who married Polly Ravenhill & come out when we did) is very ill he was sent up the country to an employment soon after he arrived & we heard nothing of him till the other day when Sir Henry receivd [sic] a letter from him written in a wretched

<sup>76</sup> A rank in the Royal Navy.

trembling hand, saying that he had been very unwell & was coming down to the Coast in the hope of recovering his health, since that he sent some books to be taken care of for him but himself is not yet arrived poor creature it was a shocking thing to send such a man into this climate for by all accounts he was scarcely himself all the voyage. I cannot bear to let a ship sail (3) without some scrawl or other in it for you.

I am afraid you will think my letters very trifling as I give you no description of the Country but I think Betsy does those things better than I & besides I shall convince you soon that I am not negligent of those things; when you will receive letters & descriptive [sic] drawings of my performance. I should do more for you but as Betsy has not strength to bear much racketing I am obliged to visit for all the family for Sir H-- will never go to any Balls & had rather take his evenings nap than pay visits to the gayest Ladies here, indeed it does not agree with him to be put out of his way, at first I contested the matter a little, because I did not like to go out without him, but I have given it up now, because I see it teazes him & now I know every Lady here & am never in want of a companion. No less than 3 Ladies of my acquaintanc [sic] have fited [sic] up rooms in their houses for me, whenever I chose to spend a few days with them. indeed [sic] I find myself a great favourite here but I dont know what it is for, but I endeavour to be obliging to those who are civil to me. To be sure the girls who come out here are for the most part ignorant, pert & bold, & receive all attention as merely what is due to their beauty, tho God knows there are not 3 in the place who have the smallest pretentions [sic] to it, I have filled the paper with nonsense [sic] & must now conclude, wishing health & happiness to all (4) my dear friends. I hope God will bless & preserve all the dear little children. I am heartily sorry for poor Nancys loss of the little one; I am glad too that I had not seen it, as its loss is not so great to me. Hetty does not say how old it was when it dyed. God bless you all.

Yours most affectionately & dutifully,

M. Symonds

{October 3 & my dear Hettys Birthday)

Address: Mrs Symonds

[Note on bottom: This was intended to be sent by a ship which will not sail for some days but as opportunities are very frequent just now we don't mind these disappointments]

**Letter-019-EG-10-1802: Elizabeth Gwillim to her Hester James, 18 October 1802**  
**(Mss.Eur.C.240/1, ff. 88r-91v)**

(1) My dear Hetty,

I intend to have written to you by the Gen[eral] Stewart. Capt: Mash [word crossed out] dined with me & promised to take a parcel to Mrs: Shepheard I hoped he wou'd have called on me but he did not & finding it grow late I sent yesterday everywhere to find him & had but just discovered his retreat when a gun was fired from the Fort to order every person-~~and~~ to go on board & the Vessels to sail - The North wind, or monsoon set in suddenly with some strength & a storm was expected. Before this intelligence cou'd reach me we cou'd see the ships from the top of the house under wheigh [sic] - I had bought a piece of Muslin for Handkerchiefs for Mrs: Shepheard & packed it up ready - Also Mr: Gwillim in a great fit of gallantry has bought you a pearl necklace, and I fear neither one nor the other can be sent - however the night became perfectly still & the Vessels appeared this morning in the offing orders are therefore stuck up to say the packet is again open, but I fear we shall not be able to send any thing but letters - I am much concerned about the Handkerchiefs - & Mr: G. is in much distress for you to be adorned in his present they are small pearls [sketch of pearls] so you must wear them often when you can get them. - I have been too much hurried with company to write to you as I intended or to Mrs: Shepheard - William (2) Hargrave is in much dismay - I see he had prepared a large Packet for Mr: Nailor another for Mrs: N. & a third for Miss Olive which last not to be able to send I suppose will be a sad mortification. - The wind is very rough now, but the surf is not very strong. - Mr: Templar whose family I think you must know - he is a nephew of the late Mr: Justice Buller & first cousin to that Mr: Buller who married Miss Yorke the Bishops daughter who died lately - has been with us he is a young man about 20 & extremely good natured - he wished so much to call on you that Polly has given him letters which I also hoped to have done - you will probably have this before you see him as the King's ships are not so hasty in their movements - He is very good natured or else we wou'd have sent-~~you~~ him to you as I am very cautious, least in your business I shou'd give you trouble. - I have sent by him a small sized Palampo<sup>77</sup> for Nancy James.

<sup>77</sup> "PALEMPORE , s. A kind of chintz bed-cover, sometimes made of beautiful patterns" (Hobson-Jobson, p.662).

It will be large enough for their Beds & also a piece of Book muslin which is the manufacture of this country I cou'd wish Nancy to take six handkerchiefs & give Mother the rest for her use. - I sent also with the Palanpo one about two yards size for your son if please God he lives - It is as coarse as straw but is painted with fine Lions in the stile [sic] of the country - eyes & teeth in perfection - I think you will laugh when you see it - I have also sent a piece of chintz to line it with with pretty Lory birds<sup>78</sup> all over it &c such [word crossed out] he may admire - These pieces of chintz are made no longer being painted on purpose for one peticoat [sic] only in each piece - Polly had a present of a Pair of shawl stockings for my mother to which I have added a pair of shawl gloves. They are sent (3) a Capt-~~Mr~~: Dorrel who will most likely see Mr: Templar at the Cape & will there give him the parcel: if not it is directed to Mr: Templar's brother Mr: Buller in Serl Street from whence I dare say you will soon get it - Mr: Templar is Lieutenant on board the Leopard therefore when you see in the paper that that ship is arrived you may expect to see him. -

By Mr: Barrol I had no chance to send to you not much liking to trust anything with one so wild - he dined with us twice I dare say he will see you & tell you what passed - he behaved I thought more quietly than formerly; but said he was very anxious to get some appointment to come out again. --

I told you I believe I had a letter from poor Edwards, since which I hear that he died on his journey to Madras - Whether he was robbed or not by his servants I know not as he died at a great distance from hence but it appears that he was very ill provided & had scarcely necessaries - Mr: Ricketts has written to Mr: Ravenhill the particulars but he says he thinks he was ill off. they came out in the same ship & he says he had a very scanty provision - I am very sorry for his wife but it was a dreadful thing to send the poor man into this country. The surgeons at first coming out are particularly exposed to unhealthy places - I have not written to Lizzy Thoburn which I intended to have done tho' she does not deserve it - but I have wrote a long letter to G. Samuel - Polly has written to Mrs: Shepheard & I have wrote a volume to Mrs: Morgan. - we send by Mr: Templar a jar of Preserved Nutmegs for you & two jars of Ginger done at home but I am not sure you will ever (4) have them for the jars were all over set in the surf of the Sea & some I understand broke. - I sent with the jars some for Mr: Templar's use. two pots with trees for Mr: Whitley & some seeds but I find the pots were broke & I fear the trees destroyed & the Sea water has possibly spoiled [sic] the seeds - Mr: Templar promised me he wou'd try at the Cape to get some seeds & wou'd add to those I sent which were but few. - All these things were to go on board before Mr: Templar set out himself an hour or two - one of the poor Hindoo men who are

<sup>78</sup> A lory bird is a type of parrot.

the greatest Cowards in the world had a great fancy to go with [word crossed out] these things, not one in a thousand has ever been in a boat nor had he; but he longed to see a ship - he wou'd not sit in the boat but on the edge & as soon as a great breaker came it washed poor Vencaty out of the boat & made all this distress - the worst of the matter is it washed away Mr: Templar's sword which he had given him to carry, a Persian blade, part of his trophies from Egypt. - Mr: Templar took charge of two Crown Pidgeons [sic] for me as a present to Miss Carews who are his relations - you know they are Mr: John Yorke's grand-children. --

I am very sorry to hear of [word crossed out] Mrs: Tho: James' illness - I hope she will recover - I have heard of the death of so many I have known about that age lately that it makes me quite low. - I had forgot almost to tell you that Mr: Templar took a piece of Bengal worked Muslin which you are to give to Nancy Green for a gown with my love. - Lord Clive has sent me 10 yards of the finest flannel from (5) his Estate near Welsh Pool - therefore I shall do very well without my Parcel - I hear the Skelton Castle will go to Bengal before it comes here - by that ship I expect my things you say ~~the~~ another castle but I am told it is your mistake. I hope Mr: Livingston will succeed in getting them on board I am much obliged to him - I am sorry to say poor Mr: Dove has had the Ague constantly by being in the jungles - (that is woods) - I desired Richard Clarke to write his father a letter by way of giving him a taste of our outlandish words we use here and I believe I must give you one for I find myself writing them frequently - I dare say they surprize [sic] you - Tope for Grove<sup>79</sup> - Tank for a Pool.<sup>80</sup> - a Muster - for a patern [sic] of anything<sup>81</sup> - a cot - for a bed - a Godown for a kitchen<sup>82</sup> - &c &c - The beauty of this fantasticalness is that the words belong to no language used here. The natives say they are English words - I believe they are corruptions from various languages - but they are always used - some are diverting as this is a dirty letter & only to be seen by you I may tell you - a chitt for a letter - & as the natives constantly sound ch - like sh it is a vast amusement to Mr: G. to hear the Butler - Maram - please to give chit - I want Mrs's: Chit - I cant have without haste Chit - Sir please to make chit. - Some pronounce words odly [sic] enough a bad woman they call a Beach woman because they wait about the Sea Beach - & this they call bich - & young they call hang - one hang gentleman - talking to one bich woman - (6) The Portegueze [sic] are the great writers of English

<sup>79</sup> The term tope meaning a grove or orchard was derived from Tamil *tōppu*, Telugu *tōpu* and became used by Anglo-Indians throughout India (see Hobson-Jobson, p. 934).

<sup>80</sup> Tank meaning a reservoir or artificial pool has possible roots in either Portuguese or Gujarati. (See Hobson-Jobson, p. 898).

<sup>81</sup> Muster meaning a pattern, or a sample is from the Portuguese *mostra* and was used by Europeans in China, as well as India. (See Hobson-Jobson p. 605)

<sup>82</sup> Godown was more often used for a warehouse or storehouse. From Telugu *giḍaṅgi*, *gidḍangi*, in Tamil *kiḍaṅgu*, signify 'a place where goods lie,' from *kiḍu*, 'to lie (see Hobson-Jobson, p. 381).



for them & they write papers & Petitions to Mr: Gwillim & on various occasions they pick up all the hard words they can string together from some old Romances or novels so that the papers are perfectly diverting because in the midst of the grandeur some words of the very lowest kind. - They sent a paper the other day describing a man who had destroyed himself & meaning to say- ~~amaze~~- amazement they said they broke into his room & found him hanging to their very great amusement. - I sent you a curious paper copied by my man Sawmy [word crossed out] it is an account of two great Ladies who burned themselves with their husband last March. -

This is an idle scrawl & I must send it off to Mr: Gwillim who is gone to the Fort to see if he can get any opportunity of sending the things on board to Capt: Mash. - My love & Duty to all - writing to you is the same as writing to my Mother so I will make the fewer excuses - Pray God bless & keep you all is the prayer of your's most affectionately

EGwillim -

S. Thome - Oct: 18th: 1802. -

I sent two large chintz Palanpoes by Mr: Prosser whose ship the United Kingdom is now in Bengal one is for you & one - you will keep till I tell you. - I mentiond [sic] this in another letter.

(7) [blank]

(8)

By the H.C's ship Britannia

Mrs: James

No. 39 Bishopsgate Street within

London

HGwillim

**Letter\_020\_MS\_10-1802 (Mss.Eur.C.240/1, ff.92r-94v), Mary Symonds [to Hester James]  
October 18, 1802**

(1) Betsy has told you about the fate of our things which you put on board the Skelton Castle but we think it better that it should be mentioned in both the letters & therefore [sic] I have opened mine to put in this slip of paper Cap<sup>tn</sup> Bitman says he had them on board, but they were sent without an order from the Directors, & therefore he was obliged, by an order from them, to put the things on shore again, at first he said he had written to give notice of thier [sic] being landed to the gentleman who put them on board, but afterwards he said he believed he he [sic] had written & was not sure -

The captain of the [name of ship unclear] which arrived since says he saw the cases in a warehouse at Graves End. Should you ever recover them & they are not spoiled, you may send them yet. as fashion is of much less consequence here than with you, in your letters you allude to some things they contain & we are very much obliged to you for the trouble you took in procuring them, particularly the jam & c. We have recieved [sic] your letters by the Ann & Eliza one dated September the 4th by which we have the satisfaction to hear that you have been very fortunate in recieving [sic] the things we sent by Mr. Longdell & c. but I shall answer your

letters more fully by the next ship at present we have very little time as this is to sail to night & we send the letters nine miles to the post. I have written to Mr. Clarke & John Gwillim & thier [sic] letters I enclose to you, to seal & send I doubt they will not afford you any amusement in reading **(2)** but I leave you to judge for yourself or to be determined by your leisure whether to read them or not all I can say to my friends is if they wish to hear from me I will take the trouble to say so I am quite ready to write, letters enough, such as they are for I have no pleasure equal to writing to my good friends, except reading their answers indeed you are our best friend in that way & I know not what I should do without your salutary Epistles. I gave you a direction to one of the Ashtons & I think there is another brother belonging to the Banking Devaines Daws & Noble.<sup>83</sup> I assure you the Cap<sup>tn</sup> is a very fine handsome young man & is a fair way to make a good fortune, but I fear he is too much of a rattle, tho he is good nature itself. I never told you about our seeing Mr. W- Barrol he dined with us two or three times when he came round from Bengall [sic] & he really seemed to be very much improved his behaviour was quite steady and decent & I assure you he appeared to great advantage. I think it a lucky thing that these long letters of ours arrive in the latter part of the summer for otherwise you would not get time to read them. God bless you & good bye

Mary Symonds [in pencil Oct. 18, 1802]

We were all at a grand ball last night which was given by Mr. Oakes, he is a great man here being the President of the board of Revennue[sic], he is a fine Old fellow & a great beau of mine!!! The Lord love him.

[Elizabeth Gwillim to unknown, no date]

**(3)** [sentences crossed out] Christmas in many respects is kept in Madras as May day is kept in England. The temperature of the air & the fresh verdure of the grass & trees after the rains, together with the flowers which abound in this Season enables them to do this; the whole country indeed appears extremely like England in a fine warm May, but with this advantage that they have many ripe fruits-- the Houses of the Europeans are built in the stile [sic] of Italian Villas The Entrance, if the home consists of more than a ground floor is a sort of Paiazza [sic] with an open gallery over it, with columns & if of one floor it is sometimes a Piazza & sometimes a Portico with columns, or as all these open apartments are called here a Veranda. At day break the arches of the Piazza are dressed up by the servants a plantain tree is set on each

<sup>83</sup> Devaynes, Dawes & Noble

side of every arch (or opening, if it be a colonade [sic]) these trees are stripped of the lower leaves & each forms a white Ivory looking column like a very large Elephants tooth it may be about 7 or 8 feet high & so far it runs straight, here therefore, very much resembling a capital are fastened on large branches of the plantain fruit above these the long leaves springing out bend over & meeting each other at the keystone of the Arch are then bound together with strips & bunches of flowers. These columns are then bound round with narrow wreaths of flowers of which they provide at least a hundred yards, & the tops of the Arches are filled up with them, by hanging them in festoons crossing each other, in a various (4) ways so as to produce an agreeable assemblage of lines, The floors of the Verandas [sic] & halls are strewd with flowers & small leaves so as to make almost a carpet.

During breakfast time the Servants of the family their children (boys) & all people who are employed about the house come in with presents of Fruit & flowers everyone brings something [sic] however small but flowers always make a part if not the whole. They never gather flowers as we do with stalks and leaves but carefully take off all the green for they esteem nothing but that which smells finely. Their nosegays are therefore very stiff & formal being the heads of the flowers bound upon sticks, in various fancies like the flower pots made of wax or paper & cried about the streets in London. However they often produce very rich effects, sometimes by contrasting colours & sometimes by disposing of rich fruits into the softest gradations--a nosegay for each person of the family with a lime or an orange or two is a present from a menial servant. Those of the high orders bring wreaths of flowers to wear round the neck with (Shaddock or Plantains fruit. The Nabob sent us a letter of congratulation on the return of the Season & a large present of the finest fruit with wreaths of flowers, & a relation of his also sent us a variety of fruit with long wreaths for the neck according to the common way which are about two yards long & short ones of a purple flower like violets. These flowers were threaded (as they all are for the person) by a needle & thread, like beads, but pressed close together & these purple ones are particularly beautiful for the top of the (5) flower is of a strong rich purple & the wider part has a pinkish or laylock<sup>84</sup> tint & the flowers being all threaded one way as the garland was turned about it looked changeable like a dove's neck, to relieve the purple at distances were put in two or three white flowers & a kind of tassel of the same white flowers was fixed by way of solitaire each garland has a pair of bracelets to match. The carriage horses have their heads dressed with garlands [words crossed out] as those of state carriages are with ribbons. The Coach man is also adorned. The Palanquin boys put the flowers round their

<sup>84</sup> lilac.

necks & twist the wreaths in their turbans with so much taste that I do not at all exaggerate when I say our best Milliners would be improved by seeing them. For four or five days after xmas day a set of people who call themselves Portuguese or Christians go about in the manner of the morris dancers in England. In the note relative to the painted window represented in Johnsons' Shakespear<sup>85</sup> it is said that the Hobby horse was frequently forgotten in the Morris dance. It does not appear to be introduced in the Morris dancers here [words crossed out] but the Caffer<sup>86</sup> or Moorish king riding his Hobby horse with his Horse-keeper Hookah Bedar & grass cutter form a party who go about seperately [sic]. All people who ride in this Country have a Man run by the side of the horse called the horse keeper & the great Moorish Princes have besides a grass cutter to go with them for the horse are here all fed by grass cut by women, & a Hookah Bedar that is a man who keeps his Hookah lighted & runs behind him with it, when the great Prince wants a whiff of his Tobacco their Bedar kneels down & holds it whilst he smokes through the long leather worm (6) This farce therefore represents a Moorish king riding out in state. He is attended by pipers & taborers who play whilst the others dance & in dancing offer grass to the horse & the pipe to the king whose horse is meanwhile kicking & prancing to the tune & the machinery is so well contrived that at first I really thought at a distance it was a small horse for the Moormen frequently ride little ones & they are almost as much covered by the trappings & [the profusion of draperies of various colours which the Moor men [words crossed out] delight to wear. The contrivance is a large hoop covered with trappings into which the man gets & tying it round his waist he spreads his long robes over it.

The neck of the horse is made with springs so that the man pushes it up & down ~~with~~ to represent a spirited horse. The head is well carved painted white with red marks probably intended as Crosses. They are adorned with flowers both men & horse, & a great deal of rich silk, & linen draperies. The Morris dance is a distinct sport & besides pipers and Taborers consists of eleven persons in like a tolerable burlesque dance at the Play house. There are three principal dancers the king & as they translate it to me his two ~~Ministers~~ Secretaries. These are very richly dressed particularly the King. It is a curious mixture of Christianity & Paganism for the King wears a crown like the Spanish very large & rich all of gold & with a large gold cross on the top of it. His hair is puffed out in great abundance under it & he wears robes of various

<sup>85</sup> Samuel Johnson edited *The Plays of William Shakespeare* in ten volumes with George Steevens. It was first published in 1765.

<sup>86</sup> From Arabic *kāfir* (unbeliever), in India the term was usually applied to Africans and their descendants, some of whom were converts to Islam.

colours over each other but so contrived that in dancing you see them. His upper robe is of Purple gauze fringed with gold & he has a sceptre in his hand

**Letter\_021\_XX\_XX-1802 (Mss.Eur.C.240/1, ff. 95r-96r) "Sureau Row to Jeven Row and Naugogy Row", April 21, 1802**

(I) Translation of a Mahartta [Maratha] Letter from Sureau [?] Row [Rao] to Jeven Row [Jeevan Rao] and Naugogy Row [Nagoji Rao] Dated at Muddiarginum [Madhyarjunam?] 21<sup>st</sup> April 1802<sup>87</sup>

I dare say you have received the Letter I wrote to you informing you of the Decease of his Excellency Rajah Aumer Sing [Amar Singh] on the 18<sup>th</sup> of April<sup>88</sup> Since which we used every Exertion to prevent her Excellency Paurvathee Bhauhe Seib [Parvati Bhonsle] from Burning Herself who regardless to our Solicitations being resolutely determined to Execute her Intention together with Saavethree Bhauhe [Savithri Bhonsle] the Rajahs second wife answered us in the following manner It is inconsistent with you who have lived under our protection from Generation to generation to attempt impeding our Resolutions [sic] any longer being past 3 OClock

Perceiving their eagerness to accomplish their Design we considered it would prove Fruitless to persevere in our Solicitations Mr Blackburn's<sup>89</sup> Hircars<sup>90</sup> also Endeavoured to dissuade them which also proved ineffectual Having made the necessary Preparations they proceeded from the Palace at 4 OClock the Decased [sic] being carried in a Palanquin attended by His Highnesses [sic] Two Wives in their Palanquins followed by a numerous concourse when arrived at the River Veerasolum<sup>91</sup> the other side Cauvery [Kaveri River] the funeral Pile being

<sup>87</sup> This is the translation mentioned by Elizabeth as having been made by her servant Sami.

<sup>88</sup> Raja Amar Singh (or Ameer Sing, or Ramaswami Amarsimha Bhonsle) ruled Thanjavur / Tanjore between 1793 and 1798, when he was deposed by the EIC in favour of his nephew Serfoji II (he had previously served as regent to Serfoji).

<sup>89</sup> Captain William Blackburne (1764–1839) was the EIC Resident in Thanjavur / Tanjore. Blackburne negotiated a treaty with Amir Singh in the 1780s and later was important to brokering relations between Serfoji and the EIC. See Savithri Preetha Nair, *Raja Serfoji II: Science, Medicine and Enlightenment in Tanjore* (London: Routledge, 2012).

<sup>90</sup> Probably a variation on "Sircar," derived from the Persian ' Hind. from Pers. *sarkār*, 'head (of) affairs and had various uses, including for a servant in charge of domestic purchases. "Hircar" is used to refer to a servant in John Harriott, *Struggles Through Life, Exemplified in the Various Travels and Adventures* (London 1807) I, 164.

<sup>91</sup> Possibly the Vennar or Vennaaru river.

erected on an eligible situation in the Centre of the River the Corpse was placed thereon with which the Religious obseques [sic] was not completed before 10 at night -

Her Excellency Paurvathee Bhauhe Seib taking me by the Hand said you have always proved yourselves our Friends and **(2)** and wellwishers and having been a considerable Time in our Service constantly studied our Prosperity in consequence of your attachment and fidelity to us we deliver to your Care the young Raja Pretaub Sing [Pratap Singh]<sup>92</sup> being Fully assured you are sufficiently Experienced to conduct all matters for his welfare and that you will do nothing to the Degradation of his late Excellencies memory so bidding [sic] Adieu to all the Spectators and mounting the Pile advised us not to be grieved in the least confiding that the Hon<sup>OR</sup>ble Company would render their Protection with respect to the young Rajah and all that were attached to the late Rajah would no doubt study the happiness of the young One then giving the last farewell [sic] to the Surrounding Multitude composedly lay down with her Husband on the Pile which was set on fire as soon as the Religious Rites were performed -

Immediately after His Excellencies second Wife Sauvetre Bhauhe threw herself into a a Firy [sic] Pit which was prepared adjoining the Funeral Pile at that instant the Crowd burst into Tears whose grief was inexpressible and which was testified by the most lamentable Cries being astonished at the Queens undaunted resolution being about one OClock when they returned to the Palace after which the Rajahs relations and Frainds [sic] afforded every consolation in their Power to his Excellencies surviving Wife Bauvane Seib [Bhavani Bhonsle] and plased [sic] the proper Guards around the Palace-

Soon after Captain Blackburn arriving at the palace expressed his sorrow that the ladies were not restrained from Burning themselves slept in his Palanquin the remainder of the night outside the Palace called at the Burning Place in the morning appeared much affected by the sight and expressed his sorrow for the loss of the Rajah &c Then returned to the Palace to pay a visit to the Queen his late Excellencies surviving spouse the young Rajah Pretau Sing come **(3)** out and saluted him and the Captains asking him who am I he said you are Mr: Blackburn which very much pleased the Captain who made professions of Consolation to the Queen and advised her not to give way to grief that the Hon<sup>OR</sup>ble Company take care of an protect her and Family

<sup>92</sup> Pratap Singh was Amar Singh's son. According to a letter to him from Edward Clive, dated 2 September 1802, he received support from the Madras Presidency after his father's death (*Records of Fort St George, Country Correspondence, 1802* (Madras: Government Press, 1909) no. 37, p. 29). However, he was not the ruler of Tanjore, as implied here.

agreeable to their wish. Her Highness answered that the Rajah previous to is Death assured her that she need not be under any apprehensions [sic] but rest confident that the Hon<sup>OR</sup>ble Company would render her and Family their Protection take care of an treat them with the Respect due to Their Rank and Dignity The Captain then taking the young Prince on his knew promised him and his Royal Mother that the Hon<sup>OR</sup>ble Company would render them Comfort by their Protection and attention and recommended her frugality in her Expenditure during the young Rajahs Minority Her Highness directed me to write to you informing you of these Proceedings and also to the Rajahs frinds [sic]. Requesting them to look to the welfare and dignity of the young Prince She wishes one of you would come to Muddiargenum as the seeing of you in her Misfortunes would afford her some Consolation

**Letter\_022\_MS\_XX-1803 (Mss.Eur.C.240/2, ff. 97r-99v) Mary Symonds to Reginald Whitley, Madras, 6 February 1803**

(1) 1803

(2) My Dear Regi

I sending your Honour too many salams so fine eshids you send,<sup>93</sup> I thinking master taking too much trouble to keep so fine name, I directly make sigiram send Bullock bandy<sup>94</sup> get Blacktown dirt, some river esand, Bullock make trouble that sake never come soon, I telling, what for so long time coming, you very well understand af fast pive<sup>95</sup> oclock evening time that's [freser<sup>96</sup>] time, this countries custom, never keep in grownn eshid hot time that sake tomorrow morning too esoon get up before hot time coming

This time all eshid I keep in ground, some eshmall eshmall<sup>97</sup> thus come very fine, I go see evening time; by & by tomorrow morning, maistrie coming tell, some one, one. Esort eshmall tree little esleeping, I directly go see woun eyes I tinking one too parsley tree some esallady tree too much esleep, that sake, after I thinking never come life, Maistrie, telling, let's take it (3) out she says, put more eshiol, indeed much pleasure this kind business, Auyah I call come keep in hand

<sup>93</sup> In reference to seeds (eshid) sent by Whitley.

<sup>94</sup> A cart.

<sup>95</sup> i.e. half past five.

<sup>96</sup> Perhaps "fresher", a cooler time of day.

<sup>97</sup> "Small, small"



eshmal bag Auyah all day sit down sit down to esmoke Charoot,<sup>98</sup> then I send Dobashe<sup>99</sup> directly bring fine new Chattee,<sup>100</sup> this so fine eshid, must keep some fine tree. good eshmell, in Chattee, near to Mrs rooms, that Veranda can looking too much pretty, this chit,<sup>101</sup> I send tappall,<sup>102</sup> because I thinking this good pleasure, Master can understand all this thing, plenty good water Mrs's Garden got very fine tank, besides three wells, I give order, some pandall<sup>103</sup> keep over Europe tree hot time, because too much sun comeing so eshmall tree never keep life, So soon I see eshmall bags one minute I call Gardener Maistrie, he espeake this some China name can very well understand, that sake I tell Misalgee go bring China man, make eexplain misalgee come back, China man can't find; in this place not one person can understand name that eshmall bags,<sup>104</sup> hear to Mrs's Garden one fine Tope,<sup>105</sup> all Cooaa-nut tree, very handsome, only that place too many Esnig<sup>106</sup> near to that Tope one nullah<sup>107</sup> that sake Esnig never come Mrs's Garden very seldom Esnig come in water, Bad Esnig never (4) come, Only Jackall come night time near to godown making to much noise, Mrs sometimy get up call Seapoy,<sup>108</sup> send away, One time is coming one, one esort large cat, kill away fowl some sheep, Mrs can very well understand that Cat because Mrs got book Dr. Anderson giving Buffon book<sup>109</sup> that sake Mrs telling Palanqueen Boys kill away that Cat, then after Mrs draw picture Mrs espeak name Lynx.<sup>110</sup> After Mrs draw picture too much bad eshmell<sup>111</sup> coming Palanqueen boys keep ready [messal<sup>112</sup>] when Mrs. throw away cat, directly make Currie after that Palanqueen Boys' telling that Cat currie too much nice. all they eat for supper. Suppose Master Regi taking little trouble. I thinking can find this good sence letter, suppose Master never find then I thinking Lizzy, Mary, Mama will find Grandmama I thinking never get sence in head this countries espeaking, Master Regi garden i never see all different sort chillies only one two esort no any more, when I

<sup>98</sup> An Ayah was a nursemaid or ladies maid. Elizabeth refers to her maid smoking a cheroot, or small cigar.

<sup>99</sup> A dubash, or translator/ administrator.

<sup>100</sup> Chatty, an earthenware pot (Hobson-Jobson, p. 185)

<sup>101</sup> This note or letter.

<sup>102</sup> "Tappaul" was used in South India to mean "post" (Hobson-Jobson, p. 900).

<sup>103</sup> A small temporary shelter.

<sup>104</sup> Whitley had marked the bags containing the seeds with a fake Chinese character.

<sup>105</sup> Tope meaning grove or orchard (Hobson-Jobson, (p. 934).

<sup>106</sup> Snakes.

<sup>107</sup> A nullah or watercourse (p. 632), used here to prevent snakes from entering the garden.

<sup>108</sup> Sepoy, an Indian soldier in a European army.

<sup>109</sup> i.e. Dr James Anderson had lent Elizabeth a copy of Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon's *Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière* (published in French between 1749-1767 and in English translation by 1775-6)

<sup>110</sup> Elizabeth identified the animal with the lynx described by Buffon, but since lynxes do not live in India, it was likely a palm civet.

<sup>111</sup> Smell, i.e. the dead animal was beginning to decompose.

<sup>112</sup> Possibly "vessel" - i.e. to keep the meat in.

come Europe I think I take little walk in Garden dayly every day once a day. I never find how Master Regi get muster so fine China name to keep that eshmall bag, (5) This paper I writing; some one Black man espeak Lawyer Gentleman alway custom telling that Lawyer; Master must draw paper fuzzle<sup>113</sup> nother Turney,<sup>114</sup> now, I think after too much troubl I take, Master Regi never make fuzzle, thats sake I telling Mrs must make little Gentoo writing; I send one Cajun,<sup>115</sup> if Master never fid that Cajan writing, then must keep on nose looking Glass; now I finding this fun very bad fun, so I take leave & run away going, but if Master make hungry upon me directly cut off ears, cut him neck estrong wound

I am Honourable Sir

Your Honours most obed[ien]t daughter  
& very faithfull servant  
Mongataiya Feranostate

Madras February 6th, 1803

**Letter\_023\_MS\_02-1803 (Mss.Eur.C.240/2, ff. 100r-103v) Mary Symonds to Hester James,  
Madras February 7th, 1803**

**(1) Letter 1st**

Madras February 7th, 1803

My Dearest Hetty

We have receivd by the Scelton [sic] Castle which arrived here on the 23 of Jan,<sup>y</sup> Mr. James's letter containing a mixture of good & Ill news. I must own that from the earliest accounts I reciev'd [sic] from my Mother & you of the dear little boy, I never flattered myself with the hope of seeing him, he

<sup>113</sup> An English word meaning to confuse to befuddle.

<sup>114</sup> Possibly "attorney".

<sup>115</sup> "Cadjan" or strip of palm leaf used for writing. Mary is threatening that if Whitley plays any more tricks, Elizabeth will write to him in Telugu ("Gentoo") on a palm leaf.

was too delicate from the first. Let us not, unreasonably, lament the loss of such dear little creatures since the most fortunate of human beings, must acknowledge that he who dies early escapes from more sorrow, than all the pleasures this world can bestow, will reward him for enduring. We received [sic] at the same time two very pleasant letters from Lizzy & Mary Thoburn & a basket of Seeds from Regi he has been at his old wags tricks, & lettered all the bags of flower seed with an imitation of Chinese characters; in return for his kindness I have written [sic] him a letter in what we call Black English that is precisely as the servants & all the natives speak I think he will have a little trouble to make it out. What in the world put it into your noodle that Mr. Thos. Gwillim was made a post Captain. Sir Henry received a letter from his father with a very different account of him & this puts me in mind to give you another wig,<sup>116</sup> you have a smart stroke at me for not dating my letters in your last & that very letter you date May the 16-1801. now I have you Mrs. saucy [lass?---cut off--]. I hope you will have seen my friend (2) Mr Templer long before you see this, I wish much to hear of his arrival & his fellow passengers the Ridgeons [?].

If the climate &c of England does not alter him you will find him a most agreeable acquaintance, but young men sometimes get their heads turned with too much attention particularly coming from this country where all favours are conferred by the Ladies. I beg you will be particular in telling me how he behaves to you, you will see what familiar terms we were on here by the ridiculous stuff I wrote by him. The last fortnight he was with us was all spent in romps & play to be sure I ought to have been better employed in writing long epistles to my friends at home & collecting things for thier [sic] amusement, but as such a friend as Templer will not often be met with nor so much mirth be likely to be repeated I do not much regret it.

The gayety & Show of India of which one hears so much in England have very little variety in them. The amusement always ~~always~~ consists of a great dinner at 8 oclock and a great ball in the evening at these one always meets the same set of people who do not care one farthing for each other & the one half of them are wishing each other hanged; one hears the same scandal at all, & in general one sees the same fine cloaths, & here are some Ladies on whom you would think it snowed pearles & rained diamonds, yet when you learn their secret history you find their husbands are over head & ears in debt, & that they have half a dozen children at home whom they chose to be separated from & to leave unprovided for; rather (3) than to abate of some ostentatious extravagance which all thier [sic] acquaintance know they cannot afford & therefore

<sup>116</sup> A severe rebuke or scolding, ? originally from a 'bigwig'; an act of wiggling *n. slang or colloquial* (OED).

[sic] condemn them for indulging themselves in. A what folly is this. Here has been a fine hue & crie [sic] this last 3 months some of the foolish people about the Government ~~Now~~ chose to oppose the authority of the Judges by military force but they have brought them upon their marrow-bones & I believe no such attempt will ever be made here again, it has however cost poor Sir Henry & Sir Thos. Strange a great deal of anxiety & fatigue, but nothing can be more complete than thier [sic] victory. We are all on tiptoe expectations of a new Governor. The present Lord Clive is a very good natured man but in the affairs of the Government he is a mere child & knows no more what is doing than I do, he is extremely fond of Gardening, & the natives who have a good deal of humour call him Gardener Maistrie, just as the people at home call the King Farmer George-

Mr. James made a great mistake in the time of celebrating Sir Henry's birth day, but that is no matter he may keep it right next time it is the 3<sup>rd</sup> of July, but all days are equally proper for a good jollification & the kind intention is every thing on these occasions.

Poor Betsy is never out of trouble for if you gets dead subjects to draw from they become offensive before she can finish the work to her mind, & when the birds are brought in alive they stare, or kick, or peck, or do some vile trick or other that frightens her out of her wits, sometimes she thinks the birds look sick, that is whenever they stand quiet & then in a great fit of tenderness she lets them fly before they (4) are finished, least thier [sic] sufferings should be revenged upon her or their ghosts should come flying round her & flapping thier [sic] great wings, scare her to death. These are serious troubles I assure you. But we do all we can to remedy such evils & have now got a venerable looking old Moor man who catches a bird at a time he holds them in proper attitudes or feeds these miserable captives in a proper manner, for her poor concience [sic] sake, now you will think all must be right & the drawing going on bravely but it is no such thing, for when she is prepared & the drawing implements are all arranged, this wicked servant & his bird are missing they are perhaps retired to some distant hovel to smoake [sic] a pipe or drink a little arack [sic] together for for my part I think this world is quite full of trouble!!

We have now a large Old Kite who was caught last night & is kept in swadling [sic] cloaths the Old man has a curious method of securing their wings & their claws he takes a round piece of cloth and makes a hole in the middle of it big enough to thrust the birds head throug [sic] he then gathers the edges of this garment together round the bottom of the birds body & ties them close with a string, beside this we have six or eight large Cranes & Storks fastened by thier [sic] legs in different parts of the garden these great long long legged things are 3 or 4 feet high,

they eat (5) fish and frogs by hundreds. The bird catchers always bring them blindfolded; then there is a cock & hen Pheasant of a curious kind, who occasion much sorrow & trouble by thier [sic] disorderly behaviour for this Rascally cock pecks his wife & uses her so ill that Betsy has at last been obliged to have articles of separation drawn & each has now a house & establishment to himself, but this is nothing we have blue Pidgeons & green Pidgeons partridges of different sorts & Quails a great Cassowary, & dried Skins of birds in all corners of the house, but I suppose you will see all thier [sic] pictures in time if we have the good fortune we hope for, as I assure you that is her principal motive for taking all this pain to collect them, & I sincerely hope she will have health to go on with this kind of amusement as such an employment will make the time we are absent from you seem much shorter but as I am about it I think I ought to mention the rest of our live stock I believe I told you of our dog Vipary [?] who is an exact resemblance of Finn. I have now another which was given me quite young by Gen<sup>l</sup> Trent & I have taken great pains to rear it indeed it promised to be very pretty & they told me it would not grow very large so in compliment to Mr. Templer, when he went away, I called its name Tyger, but I suppose owing to too much care in feeding him he is grown so large so prodigiously ugly & rough that he ought more properly (6) to be called bear however all the servants are extremely fond of him & say he is thier [sic] good centry [sic], we have no cats they are very scarce of no use & very ugly. We have two Bullocks which are very usefull [sic] animals. They carry heavy burthens [sic] to & from the Fort and bring manure for the garden & do abundance of business, we have just added 4 fine cows to our stock which a Gentleman has been so good to send Sir Henry from the Northward, and as they are all in the family way we may expect an increase of calves heads & if it please God to send me an increase of brains (I guess by the brightness of my writing) you will not think it amiss.-

but how will my concience [sic] be satisfied if I don't fill the paper with some note or other & I like you to be acquainted with all particulars-

I could write a good deal more such stuff as the preceeding [sic] if I had time but I am just told that the packet will close to nigt [sic] & therefore [sic] must close this, & I fear if this is really the case, I shall not be able to write to any other friends tho I wish it very much, particularly the Thoburns & Nancy Green, however I hope soon to be able to take up the pen again, as several ships are expected round from Bengall but they are particularly late this Season you must give my kind love to those friends & make my excuses for me, I have written a (7) a [sic] a really long letter to Templer & a foolish one to Master Regi. I am going to a fine Ball

tonight Mrs. Rowley has got a little girl who is to be Christened, to be sure my ornaments &c make rather an old fashioned appearance but I suppose the new ones will come (as the Black people say) some time, any time, no time, pray remember me a thosand [sic] & a thousand times to every kind friend, except George Samuel, & John Gwillim, they are two scrubby fellows who never take any notice of us, by the by, you don't say a word about that Mr. J\_ G\_ how did he behave to you in Hereford? I have a great mind to commence a correspondence with him surely he will take the trouble to answer me. I cannot endure to think myself on bad terms with a person I like so much, particularly being absent from him, you know I always looked upon him as a brother & I really felt the same as you for him as if he were so-I beg my kind love to Mr. James, & Ned, & Mr. Thos. James, & I commission you to give them 20 kisses each at convenient opportunities, you may say most any thing you please to George Samuel but pray let this reward be proportioned to his merit if he has written to us say a great many pretty words to him & you may add a kiss if you have no objection, but if he has not written (8) scold him well & give him a thump & a good thump on the sponce, for Betsy wrote him a long letter & I wrote him an absurd prim quizzzy one, but that was the first, he shall have a better next time. Betsy, sits opposite me drawing & the old man is employed to turn about in proper attitudes an extraordinary kind of animal which was killed yesterday in Dr. Andersons Garden, our noses are terribly [sic] regaled by the scent of it, but it is very curious so we must have its picture 'tis something like a dog, & somthing [sic] like a Cat, & something [sic] like mouse, it has a beautifull [sic] black fur, & a long tail, half a dozen doctors have been consulted & five hundred books hunted over but no one can discover the name of this wonderful brute!! but every one rejoices in his downfall as he is known by the natives to be a sad devourer of cocoa nuts & other fruit.

I shall sit scribbling on till it is too late to send my letters, if I do any more, so God bless you all, & grant you health & happiness thus we may one day meet together & talk over these matters round a cheerful fire.

Madras, Feb 4<sup>th</sup> 1803.

I have dated both pieces this time.

**Letter\_024\_MS\_02-1803 (Mss.Eur.C.240/2, ff. 104r-106v), Mary Symonds to Hester James,  
February 7 1803**

My Dear Hetty, Letter 2<sup>d</sup>

Feb 7 1803 (in pencil)

As the Wellesly did not sail as soon as it was expected I avail myself of the opportunity to add a few more lines of scribble. Notwithstanding the disastrous fate of the things you intended us to have recieved [sic] by the Skelton Castle, I hope you will not be quite disheartened from sending us a few things at convenient opportunities a few articles of milinery [sic] some trinkets which are not very valuable a few gloves & above all some shoes but not white ones, you will be so good to send some white ribbon of different widths every time as it is very much esteemed here but it will not keep. I shall be obliged to you to send one or two cakes of Reeves's<sup>117</sup> Carmine & one of Gaul stone<sup>118</sup> & a few brushes, we cannot get any brushes here that are usable. G- Samuel thought we should find the China brushes & colours useful & therefore [sic] we sent for some but they are quite useless. One or two Straw & Chip Bonnets will be very acceptable untrimmed whenever you send. They will pack inside each other & take little room. I am wretchedly in want of a pair of earrings.-I am very much obliged by a request you made me, to send you my picture, but here has not been any artist who painted minitures [sic] for a long time, & when any one comes, tho' he be thought but a bungler at home, he expects an immense [sic] price, therefore [sic] I believe I must beg you to wait till I am clever enough to do it myself, to be sure it is not easy to know one's self in any respect, but in general our own representations are as good as any that are made of us. To be sure, at my age I cannot be expected to improve in my looks nor do I think myself one bit the handsomer for a great many very fine crows feet which are added to my face since I left you. A Capt. Ashton has lately become very intimate with us he introduced himself to Sir Henry, as having known that part of his family who settled in Lancashire. I believe he is from that County or Cheshire he says he has a Brother who lives I think in Wood Street & is something (2) in the [word crossed out] house of Aines & Co. in Cheap-side I wish you or James would make a point of finding out what he is & get acquainted with him if you can his name is Arther Ashton, & I wish very particularly to know all you can possibly find out about his connexions

<sup>117</sup> William Reeves (c. 1739–1803) of London, England, is credited for inventing around 1781 the first watercolor cakes, blocks of watercolor paint that are shaped and dried.

<sup>118</sup> The pigment known as gallstone, was a deep-toned yellow.

This brothers name is Richard he is a Capt in his Majestys 12th Regiment, I suspect he has been a great pickle, but perhaps if you get acquainted with the one in London you may find out the whole history of this one I beg you will not neglect this request & let me know something about him by the first opportunity. In this place one's acquaintance consists of God know who here are some very fine folks who talk very magnificently & hold thier [sic] heads vastly high yet those who have been in England & made a point of enquiring, tell such curious histories that you would be much surprised to hear them Some of the great men have been strolling Players some have run away from thier [sic] crediters [sic] & some, I believe have run away from something worse, here have been parsons who were never ordained, & some of the Barristers come out common Soldiers, & these are the sort of people who give themselves the greatest airs and puff most about thier [sic] families, one of the ladies who is at the head of the Society is the daughter of a Taylor another who gives herself the greatest airs in the place came forth from a Gin Shop, & I do assure you thier [sic] manners are not at all superior to thier [sic] former state. You mention Mr. Livingstones brother, we did not even know he had a brother, pray what is he? Mr. L-- was only introduced to us by a letter from (3) letter 2 one of our ship mates of whose history we know no more than his, only he appears to be one of the best creatures in the world, his name is Dove, a Scotch man & a Surgeon on this establishment, he was particularly kind to Betsy on the voyage & she has continued to correspond with him ever since, his letters are extremely entertaining giving an account of all the countries through which he has passed, he has been chiefly in the Mysore country, Betsy preserves his letters with an intention of sending them home some time or other as they will afford some amusement to you & my mother & give you quite a history of the places, you see I only intended to add half a sheet to my letter, but one thing seems to spring out of another & I could go on for ever just as if I was chating [sic] with you, only I feel rather depressed when I consider how long it will be before I hear your answers to my wise prate. I have been very busy drawing some more such fine figures as I sent you by Templer-- but this set is for Sir T.

Strange & he has requested me make him some little sketches from a book which was translated by Sir William Jones he is going to send it home as a present to his sister in law & this I have had the presumption to undertake.<sup>119</sup> I had made some which he saw & admired so

<sup>119</sup> Sir William Jones (1746-94) was a Puisne Judge in Bengal and is best known for his work on Indo-European languages and for founding the Asiatic Society of Bengal. The translation referred to here is probably Jones' version of *Abhijñānaśākuntalam*, the celebrated fifth-century drama by Indian playwright Kālidāsa. Jones's translation, entitled *Śakuntalā; or, The Fatal Ring* and published in 1799, was so popular among Western scholars that, in the next seven years, it was reprinted three times in Britain and retranslated into French, German, and Italian. One of Mary's illustrations, entitled "Scene from a Sanskrit drama," is preserved in the South Asia Collection,



much that he begged them, some time or other I shall send you something of the same kind, indeed I give away all my (4) things as fast as I do them. When I am improve [sic] a little I shall send G-- Samuel something but I am quite mad at myself for not being able to do Sky's & back grounds, & it is very hard work to find things out without any instruction. The Girls who are educated for this country either learn very little or when they come here they think of nothing but husbands, for none of them do any thing worth looking at or are capable of giving one the smalest [sic] assistance I do not see any thing they do well except dancing & making watch ribbons for the young men, who give them pearles & diamonds &c in return & many of them have no more decency than to accept of them, I have seen a girl here whom I have been very slightly acquainted with sit down & tell me that a string of pearles & diamond locket she had on was given her by one man who made love to her, her diamond brooch by another her bracelets by a third, one emerald ring by a fourth a diamond ring by a fifth & so on as far as nine or ten, & I know that some of the young men who gave them to her are nearly ruined by extravagance & have spoken with regret of the sums they have ~~saeriffeed~~ expended upon this girl. This method of making the most of themselves occupys most of thier [sic] attention, but this finery don't look quite so genteel to our old fashioned eyes as to theirs who have had a proper education for the situations they fill. (5) I suppose Mr. Temple calls upon you pretty often as he always mentions you in his letters to his son. I assure you Temple is a very fine young man and I really believe as good as possible. here are very less who have been so well educated or who have in any respect such proper notions, I hope he will get on in this profession & be a comfort to his father who is as honest & as good a man as ever breathed. I supposed Mr. Clarkes Scotland plan is gone off as Richard has not yet recievd [sic] any letter from thince [sic] you would be very much surprised to see Richard I do not think you would know him at all he is grown such a tall stout young man, but his face does not look fat in proportion to his body & limbs but that is owing to his fine long chin, the servants all call him Chinner Darah, which signifies little-master, or young master, but we think the name as it sounds, very appropriate. Our gardens are of this time in perfection for vegetables we have every day abundance of green peas french beans young potatoes very fine Sallads Carrots turnips & sevelal [sic] sorts of greens, all this you will think very fine whilst you are choeking [sic] over a dirty coal fire, & glad to put up with a good pease pudding or a dish of meally potatoes, but our sorrows come on as yours go off & in May & June when you are refreshed by every beautious [sic] flower & fine temperate weather we are scorched up with a burning land wind & have scarcely a (6) blade of grass left in exposed situations it is here we have then

fine fruits to relieve us & the trees are always green, but most people have thier [sic] skins not only scorched but covered with that vile tingling disorder the prickly heat, and great boils I think myself the luckiest [sic] creature in the world never to have felt any of these teasing complaints. & am quite singular in not having had any fever or any disorder whatever, by way of seasoning to the Climate. I am howevr [sic] very thankfull [sic] for my good fortune & am not so presumptuous as to expect to escape for ever tho here are some instances of persons who have come here with very good constitutions & have taken good care of themselves who have lived here to an old age without a days illness. I want one of my mothers letters very much as she gives me a description of the Tupsley family.<sup>120</sup> how are all the young ones & is any increase expected? I suppose you have soldered up all this kind of news in the tin case, once more God bless you all & good by for this time.

Yours ever affectionately,

M. Symonds

I hope Ned and Nancy do not take it amiss that I do not write to them but I consider these letters as much to one as the other.

**Letter\_025\_EG\_02-1803 (Mss.Eur.C.240/2, ff. 107r-110v)** Elizabeth Gwillim to Hester James, February 1803

(1) imagine that you & he were not in my thoughts, but when a distress of this kind has happened, whatever has been written in the joy of the heart, is read with great pain. I shall dwell no longer on this painful subject, but hope to hear a good account of your health & James'. —

Besides Mr. James letter we had a most pleasing letter from Mr. Gwillim [words crossed out] by which it appears he is well & Mrs. Gwillim better. I pray constantly for the preservation of the old people through the sharp Winters & what is worse severely cold summer that I hear you are having. —

I have a basket of seeds from Mr. Whitely which appear to be very good they are sown in all ways & places. I shall (2) write particulars to Lizzy, but I mention this as it is possible I may not have time to write by this ship to them. — I have been frequently

<sup>120</sup> In reference to Mary's sister Ann James and her husband, referred to as Ned and Nancy below.

disappointed by the ships sailing [sic] in a hurry — the moment the Government dispatches are put on board, they hurry them off.—I had a long & valuable letter from Lizzy, & Polly one from Mary, they gave me infinite pleasure as they contained news on the subjects I am most of all interested about. — The chief of the contents was of your history, & the state of the garden, which I like to hear of as [ Elizabeth to Hetty, February 1803] Feby 1803 [in pencil]  
My Dear Hetty,

I understand a ship is to sail in a few days from this place, & shall not lose the opportunity of acknowledging the receipt of a letter from Mr. James, to Mr. Gwillim, which came by the Skelton Castle. The unhappy news it contained of the loss of the dear child of whose engaging ways I had just before read so much, lowered my spirits very much. I never wou'd allow myself to dwell this much on my expectations & for fear of what might happen I have forborne to speak on the subject in my letters to you, so much so, that I was almost afraid that you would it brings me home in imagination.

I hope you will not grieve yourself about our disappointment in not having our things by the Skelton Castle. I conclude that they will be safe & that they will come soon. — We sent to Captain Harrow for them & he answered that they had been put on board his ship but but [sic] that the Directors had ordered these & other packets sent without a regular order, to be unshipped— This is a new regulation, amongst many others lately made, which it wou'd seem is hardly worth their while to make. They have increased the difficulty of sending so much by pinching every body of part of their former allowance of room & in other ways that I fear that I shall not be able to have the trifles I want unless I can get (3) some arrangement made. The Captains & Mates of the ships make their money by the sale of the investments they bring out here & therefore they do all in their power to discourage people from sending out — that they may be obliged to buy of them however —they shall find it difficult to stint me into compliance with the usual demands. It is now ~~better than~~ two years since we made our marketings & I have only laid out one Pagoda which was wantonly done, for a flower & besides that I have not spent a sixpence on any European articles of dress; neither can I said to be in want. I shou'd have been glad of a cap & hat or two, because I do not like to give my time to make millinery otherwise I have many materials remaining & cou'd go on for a twelvemonth rather than pay 10 or 20 pagodas for a fright of a cap, very little better than my own making. — Indeed a desire for a variety and fashion is the chief foundation for wants of this kind, for the air here is so perfectly clean that nothing spoils. That individual cap that I bought of Mrs. Toussaint to go to Court, I have in these two years worn a hundred times, changed a flower & sometimes a feather & both cap & plume are as clean at this moment, as

when I bought them. — I have two straw hats never begun on, but I know not how to trim them & have (4) not a bit of ribbon left. I have given all the world watch ribbons & now shall be begging. I have but two pair of English shoes left & they must be treasured for the country are poor things & lose their shape directly. I still have a great many gloves left but Polly has not & those are very dear here. — Mr. G. has plenty, but he is hoping that you or James sent him some shoes & a hat as these articles are here dear & bad— 10 Pagodas for a cocked hat— I really believe Sir Thomas Strange's has been worn ever since he came here, & his round one is worse. Mr. Gwillim's was a new one, but in the rainy season in our first house everything was damp, & the poor hat was mouldy all over several times in the dry season the spiders & ants took possession, and some Ponchies (as the black people call insects) have eat various holes in it; in some of the most conspicuous of these, the old taylor (whose picture you have) has sewn up with black thread. such as it is, it is always worn on dress occasions. On common days he has a beaver coloured one, bought here about a year ago the sea spray having spoiled the black one— this is of no describable form —this much for Eastern magnificence. But in other respects Mr. Gwillim is particularly neat, as he is never ragged & his linens particularly (5) neat, but the washermen beat out the cloaths so fast that rags are no disgrace here. The six winter months he wears the usual dress of the place, except that his coat is generally black—an English cloth coat— & white waistcoat & breeches made of a cloth called Izzerry, a sort of fine white Nankeen— as white as snow— in summer he wears for dress, & in court, black coats of China Taffaty & coloured ones of a very pretty China manufacture of silk & muslin in very small stripes. They are very pretty & look when new just like a silk coat for court— they soon get shabby but they cost only about 3 or 4 Pagodas— In mornings & all day indeed at home, he wears white jackets of the same Izzery—all men wear this dress in the hot season, having it all clean every morning— Being so often beat upon the stones & dried in a broiling sun, you may easily grasp how soon they fringe out— I have tore up several of my Scotch muslin gowns & they were just tinder.-

It was very unfortunate Mr. Strange forgetting the order, because the ship that was to have brought it the Admiral Applin came in on, or near the 24<sup>th</sup>. of Sep:t & the Skelton Castle the 24<sup>th</sup>. of Jan:y just 4 months— for the Monsoon (6) being near, the Skelton Castle was not coming in before Oct:r after that time no ship can come in till Christmas is passed.—

The seeds (the letter excepted) were the only part of the things I was very anxious about & seeds ought to be here before Xmas, or else they are too late to sow— our rains are in Nov:r therefor Dec: & Jan:y are to us what June & July are to you. In these months we eat

peas & french beans, Cabbages, carrots, turnips, lettuces of all kinds in perfection —as to fruits; the oranges are here in high perfection at this time Dec:r Jan:y & Feb: being the season of oranges of every description— for we have various kinds tho' none I think, better than yours.—

Mr. Gwillim tells me that the packet will close tonight. I can therefor add little to this nor shall I likely be able to write to anybody by this hurrying ship, if it really sails. We are at present in one of the sweetest houses that you can fancy for a quiet country habitation. It is a house lent us by an Armenian at the place called the Mount— properly, St.Thomas's Mount— we live at St. Thomas, the village of that name being near our house this place is six miles from my home & nine from the Fort. The road from the fort to this place is said to be the most beautiful & (7) interesting in India—

The Place is very charming & a great change it being recorded very cool at this time of year. for about three miles you come to this place it is a sort of forest scenery with roads winding under the groups of trees in various directions all constantly filled with travellers & droves of cattle of various descriptions, & population equal to a street except that the roads or accidental pathways, are more scattered— the cattle resting— or moving on has constantly the appearance of beautiful Italian pictures. This place is such a place as one of the dresed [?] villages about London. Perhaps Clapham Common is most like it. English soldiers in Barracks with their Musick evenings & mornings. Here are about 40 or 50 Villas in the Italian stile [sic] inclosed in gardens of most luxuriant foliage—The greater part of it is tolerably level but yet the Mount itself is a hill of considerable height— tho' rising from a flat— about a mile further on, the Mountains begin a country almost like Wales except that constant circumstance that the hills rise from a flat country they are all like the Mount, but higher composed of huge pieces of hard dark coloured granite as rough as any we saw in Merionethshire. At the top of the Mount there is a Chappel [sic] & some fine Banyan trees ~~besides~~ amongst the Rocks are several homes belonging to the Padres. The Catholick religion is here in its glory— There is a broad staircase partly cut in the rock, & partly of (8) granite steps wide enough for six or eight to walk abreast with seats on each side. The view from the Chappel [sic] is fine, but the fatigue of going up or rather coming down very great Up & down this place however all their processions pass & Heathen as well as Christians go to see Saint Thomas carried out they call him the God— I have the pleasure to hear their Bells which I like much.— This place has just the air of a beautiful English village & we walk a great deal—

The soil here is fine, & therefore I have sowed my seeds by Dr. Anderson's orders. He has put some in this ground as have many of the good gardeners.—I have sent some to

Lord Clive yesterday. — Several of the flowers are come up tho they have only been sown three days. —

This is the first ship, in a few days another goes & I imagine for sometime we shall have opportunities of writing every week. — —

I long to hear from you & now look for the Devaynes Company's ship<sup>121</sup> with great anxiety. May God bless & keep you all I hope my next letters will bring me one from my Mother written at your house I am very anxious to hear how my poor little Tom James is. Remember me to all & believe me.. [no signature]

**Letter\_026\_EG\_02-1803 (Mss.Eur.C.240/2, ff. 111r-114v), Elizabeth Gwillim to Hester James, February 15, 1803**

(1) My dear Hetty, Madras Feb: 15th - 1803 -

I have wrote you one letter & now must again trouble you with another but first let me wish you good luck & let me hope you will be well when you receive this I will presume to hope no farther if any other good luck be added to it I trust I shall be grateful to God for it. --

At present we are all well & thank God have been so all this cool season. ---

On the arrival of the Skelton Castle we sent to Captain Pitman for our Boxes according to Mr: James description of them, in his letter which we received by that ship. In answer, Captain Pitman sent a note, saying that he had had our boxes on board his ship; but that the Director had thought proper to order those & some other small parcels to be un-shipped & sent to the India House as they had not issued an order for their shipping. that of this he had given timely notice to the gentleman who sent them but, that he had to regret that his sailling [sic] orders arrived before the above had been regularly arranged - & that he had only a basket of (2) seeds for us. - This note was dated by him Jan: 25th: 1803. We had heard by chance that many packages had by an new regulation order been unshipped because they had been sent on board without an order but as Captain Pitman said he had given timely notice to the Gentleman we supposed that to be either Mr: James or Mr: Livingston & that the Boxes wou'd be sent by the Devaynes & therefore waited very patiently till that ship came in which was on the 13th: of Feb: just about a fortnight after wards - by that to our surpize [sic] we found nothing for us by that ship but letters - your letters by the Devaynes were written near two months after Mr: Jame's letter by the

<sup>121</sup> Perhaps in reference to William Devaynes (c. 1730-1809) who was the director of the African Company of Merchant as well as being five times chairman of the East India Company.

Skelton Castle and in that you seem to have had no information of the fate of our unfortunate boxes which I almost fear we shall never see --- We this day sent to Captain Pitman again who says he thinks he sent notice to Mr: James but he came away in a great hurry & that the boxes were landed at Botolph Wharf. I fear you may never hear that the boxes are in England till you have this letter & if so many things will be spoiled [sic] if the whole be not lost.

- When Mr: Templar left this place he desired Polly to open his letters - two came to him by the Devaynes & the contents of those which are one from his father & one from his mother give us some insight [word crossed out] this extraordinary affair. Their letters are nearly to the same effect stating that they had prepared a Box of Books &c to send to him but that by some new regulations they cou'd obtain no order for shipping them & that such severe measures had been taken with respect to a Captain who had ventured to take some parcels that they {the Captains} were all too much intimidated to take any & therefore his things cou'd not be sent 'till a Packet went which wou'd be soon - from this I conjecture that Captain Pitman was either this Captain spoken of or that he being frightend [sic] had them put on shore anywhere out of his ship leaving them to chance & probably only telling somebody to give notice who has never done it

Feb: 22 - since I wrote the above we have laboured to get what information is to be had about our boxes; but can obtain very little. - Captain Pitman is so ill he cannot be seen & is unable to speak & I think is very shy of the subject - he says now he thinks he gave notice but he sailed [sic] in a hurry - The Captain of the Devaynes says he saw in a Warehouse at Gravesend such boxes directed for us. - I therefore cannot help thinking that Captain Pitman seeing harsh measures used towards those Captains who had ventured to take things, in his fear landed what he had at the first place he cou'd to get rid of them out of his ship. - We cannot find that they are liable to be siezed [sic] & I shou'd hope if lost Captain Pitman will be liable to pay for them & for this reason I imagine he does not like to say much **(4)** on the subject -- just one week after the Devaynes on Sunday the 20th: Feb: the Ann & Eliza extra ship arrived - she has nothing on board for us but brought us your's & Mr: James' kind letters one of your's dated the 27th: of Aug: the other & Mr: James's 4th: Sept: - I am very happy to hear so favourable an account of your health. - & Pray God for its' continuance. - -

I am very happy to hear you have had all the things so regularly from me & am sorry you did keep Mrs: Hollands shawl for yourself the only reason we had for putting that for her was that as she is in mourning & that had less show of colours - Your's is much the finest shawl but hers is

newer -do not be surprized [sic] but none of the white shawls are new at least not one in hundreds - The Moormen during their power in this country engrossed the whole trade of shawls - Tippoos Palace was full of shawls - & were served out to the merchants as from a Warehouse - & all so kept are worn by the great moor men in turn - when they sell out therefore they seldom part with the new ones they wear a different pair one on the waist or as a cloak & one on the head every day<sup>122</sup> - at night it is folded up & packed down & perhaps does not come in turn 'till next year - however some are so worn & others so eat with Puchees<sup>123</sup> - that one seldom sees a white one without many darns -- That shawl of yours is quite new - wou'd cost three times the finer of Mrs: Hollands - hers is not so fine - It is the fineness & thinness they are esteemed for because such are light. -- Perhaps I shall see a shawl with that border (5) it is not uncommon but very pretty. - I am glad you found out about the fans - I have had no opportunity of writing to Captain Miller but I will write soon - if you see him tell him so - Mr: G. has written to Mrs: Shephard & I sent her a piece of muslin for Handkerchiefs - I sent two Palampoes & some scraps for rarities by a Mr Prosser Chief Mate of the United Kingdom - he is an acquaintance of Harley's Powell & brought us a letter from Mr: W. Cam. - one Palanpo is for you & the other I shall tell you what to do with - I hope you will get your pearls - safe - I am in grief I can get nobody to carry a shawl for my mother - I think hers must be wore out & that yellow is a poor thing. & I am sorry James is robbed of it Mr: Longdill I feel much obliged to & to Mr: Livingston I wish you find somebody to tell you how to inquire after the boxes. - I can tell you nothing. - I send this in a great hurry but shall write again in a few days - I think the freight wou'd have been reasonable - I hope you will be able to send me some hats & caps for my head is a great fright & I want handsome morning caps sadly but they must be trimmed ready - handsome caps for breakfast - for dinner - for ball & a one or two bonnets will last an age. - Notwithstanding this ill luck you must try what you can do (6) I write in a great hurry as the salute has fired & I fear the ship is going

with all love's &c &c

<sup>122</sup> Arthur Wellesley noted with concern that the clothing of Tipu Sultan, the ruler of Mysore who Wellesley defeated in 1799, were becoming used as "relics". See Nicole M Hartwell, Framing colonial war loot: The 'captured' *spolia opima* of Kunwar Singh, *Journal of the History of Collections*, 42 (2021).

<sup>123</sup> In southern India *Kambli Poochi* or "blanket worm" is a common insect. It is the larva of a moth, either *Eupterote* sp. Or *Lymantria* sp.



I remain your's

Affectionatly [sic]

EGwillim

St: Thomas's Mount, Feb: 22d: 1803. -

-I direct this to Mr: James that in case it shall please God that you are on a Country ramble I hope he will read it & see what can be done. -

I have wrote a short letter to my mother Hetty therefore need not hurry herself to write to her - I only told her we were well &c God bless you

**(7)**[blank]

**(8)**By the H.C's ship Marquis Wellesley Mr: James -

No. 39 Bishopsgate Street with

London Feb. 22d. - HGwillim 1803

**Letter-028-EG-05-1803 (Mss.Eur.C.240/2, ff. 117r-120v), Elizabeth Gwillim to Esther Symonds May 7, 1803**

**(1)** Madras May 7th: 1803. -

My dear Mother,

Sir Henry has undertaken to write to poor little Tom & therefore I address myself to you. I had the pleasure of your letter with his & one from Mr: Gwillim senr: and indeed the most charming Packet I have had since I came into this Country - 'till now we thought ourselves almost

forgotten, thank God the good news the letters contained found us all very well. I will not dwell on the loss of the poor children for distressing as their loss is their lives are too uncertain to be depended on. -

I was extremely happy to see a letter from little Tom, I had been calculating his age & I flattered myself you wou'd set him to write I have the happiness to hear from everybody a very pleasing account of the mildness of his disposition & his attention to his learning I am sorry to hear that his health is at all impaired as after all that is most material to him. I have no doubt but he will learn very well if he have time & opportunity given him which is as necessary as instruction. - I hope now to hear-~~of~~ from him by every opportunity. - I am sorry it is not in my power to send from hence all I cou'd wish, it is only by the favour of anyone **(2)** going that we can send & I have hitherto had many things to send to various people who might think me negligent & therefore till I get opportunity I hope you will not think we have forgotten you - Mr: Wm. Cam gave a letter to Mr: Prosser & his ship calling here I have sent by him the half of a white shawl with a narrow border for you - the other half I have kept for myself - I have also met with a square shawl with green spots & sent it to Mrs: Gwillim as I know she always longed for one like Mrs: Shepheards. it is old & not fine but certainly if one cou'd get them they are the best for England I promised Mr: Cam two waistcoats but the Gentleman wou'd only carry one I have therefore sent him another. & one for Mr: G. senior with a Palanpo for Nancy - I am sorry to find your square of shawl shou'd be lost - but upon the whole I have been very lucky in the things I have sent. ---

I cou'd never learn any particulars of the death of poor Mr. Edwards,<sup>124</sup> it was very improper to send to this hot country a man afflicted with insanity - he died many miles from this place - his effects were brought down here to be sold & Mr: Gwillim wou'd have brought some little trinkets of hair to send to Mrs: Edwards & gave orders for them to be purchased but they were given to her by the creditors & I hope **(3)** she has received them tho' they must be a melancholy sight to her - I thought Mr: Wm. Barrol much improved at least he behaved very well here. We had seen such a shewy [sic] mode of behaviour that I was almost afraid to ask him however he came twice & had I thought he wou'd have behaved so well I shou'd certainly have shewn [sic] him further civilities his stay was very short. - Mr: Gwillim desired us in his last letter to shew [sic] what civilities we cou'd to two of the Hathways who were in this country - they were not of this settlement but of Bombay. I am sorry to say the letter was too late tho' indeed I believe neither of them were in the habit of coming here I did not know they were in the country but about a fortnight before we had the English letters Sir Henry had a letter from one of them who was an

<sup>124</sup> Robert Edwards was an East India Company surgeon.

Officer in the Artillery saying that he found himself very ill & under the necessity of getting out to sea for his health that he was little able to bear the expense but that his brother who had died somewhere in these districts had he believed left some property & he requested Sir Henry to enquire into the business - [words crossed out] he answered the letter but it arrived not 'till the day after this young man had also died. Poor Mrs: Hathway has lost three sons in this Country but as the girls have died in England & all of the same kind of decline I shou'd imagine it cou'd not be by the climate. This young man I find is a great loss - He was remarkably studious & his (4) death is attributed to his close application - He was one of the first san[s]crit scholars & understood also the Gentoo Marhatta & Canara languages<sup>125</sup> - from what I have heard he was not worth much & indeed tho' probably he might have risen very high he was too young to have acquired anything - His studies too must have been very expensive - what he had he left to a black woman whom he kept & by whom I fancy he had children - He had some sanscrit [sic] books which were of considerable value & many comissions [sic] were sent from Madras to purchase them but they were sold to a Bramin a Minister to a Rajah of that country to the great regret of the English gentleman & they sold for 800 Pagodas - that is between three & four hundred pounds. ---

I am glad you have settled your affairs without parting with your home & the more so if these people turn out respectable --

Your daughter Mary is still Miss Symonds & when she may be otherwise I cannot say there have been several suitors but they are not approved of - Sir Henry has orders to dismiss one in a great hurry & he certainly was too much of an oddity ~~that~~ tho' certainly very droll & entertaining besides a Colonel & very rich - There is one that appears to be a very great favourite & has been for this twelvemonth but tho' his person and manners are more agreeable I fancy the purse falls much short - He is a Captain in the King's service<sup>126</sup> & I believe in as good circumstances as one young in the army can be His father is Lancashire copper miner & he has been chosen without leaving his profession for his knowledge of the process to work a copper mine lately discovered by the Company (5) shou'd it succeed he may become very rich; but the affair is at present unsettled - many difficulties arising in the course of it. He appears to be a great favourite & I think a very tender hearted man & certainly very good natured - He is certainly very much like Mr: Thos' Gwillim but smaller featured quite as brown I think him very handsome but here, as brown approaches to black, it is not the fashion to admire it. However, I believe he is thought handsome - He is but 28 which she seemed to object to, but I think the objection does not seem to stand - I shall let you know from time to time how it goes on. - She is to manage the whole

<sup>125</sup> i.e. Telugu, Marathi, and Kannada.

<sup>126</sup> Captain Ashton, mentioned in Mary's letter to Hester of February 7, 1803.

affair herself for I think she is old enough to judge & I shou'd not chuse [sic] to interfere - Indeed I see nothing to object to - The very wealthy matches made here are generally girls of 15 or 16 to men of 40 at the youngest, lately 15 to 54 & this does not seem to be approved of besides that the Lady is past the age to please these gentle youths. -

I was very sorry to hear of Mr: Tho: Gwillims illness and also that he had not been promoted which after so long service is very hard when one ~~when~~ sees young boys get on as they have done. I am rather surprized [sic] neither he nor John have written to their brother. - As for Hodges the account Mr: Gwillim gives us of his going on is really shameful -- he says the impediment in the Boy's speech is worse yet the father perseveres in making him a clergyman, & has now in addition to his own family his cousin Winter. It is very grievous to hear such an account. -

I have not gone on with my account of the Natives having been drawing whilst (6) I was at the Mount - but I have not forgot it - I find you did not admire the taste you had of our vegetables at Brompton<sup>127</sup> - I know now what it was you had - it is but a bad substitute for spinach - I use the young leaves of it for sallad [sic] as sorrel. - Every sort of English vegetable grows here in perfection except for Windsor beans Cauliflowers and artichokes - & these grow in Bengale but the natives do not understand the culture of our things & therefore it is only where the master of the house understands & watches the garden that things are good - We are but just begining [sic] to understand it I have a vast many fine cabbages but they are not yet fit to cut they grow short & close & so fine a bloom upon the leaf that they look quite comfortable indeed we have so many screaming birds to pick up every grub & fly that our vegetables have never a bitten leaf - we have no trouble to wash from insects - I forgot to tell Hetty to send me bags from Covent Garden of herbs constantly - mint grows here well & so does sage but it is not exactly like ours - but Thyme [word crossed out] Marjorem [sic] I have not tasted since I came here I will beg of her therefore always to put me up a small bag of both & a little Parsley & Baum [sic] - savory I do not like - I like the Lemon Thyme best but both are good. - It is odd enough to write to you what I want Hetty to do but I shoud [sic] be glad if she would get made for me a very small pair of [word crossed out] tongs & a fender & indeed a poker & shovel wou'd be as well if they were small the fender must be brass & so must the tops of the tongs &c for nothing of steel will keep here in the sea breeze. - the fender must be three foot 5 inches (7) long a little bowing out & a little sloped out as the chimney is in a circular part of the room. I have got an old marble table to make a hearthstone & my chimney [sketch of marble tabletop] is much admired but I believe the Bricklayer has forgot

<sup>127</sup> Presumably in reference to vegetables grown from seeds that Elizabeth had sent to the Brompton nursery.

to make a hole at the top of the chimney for it smoaks [sic] most horridly in the room & I never could hear of anybody who saw any smoak [sic] coming out at the top in the outside of the house - however it is to be altered before the Monsoon as it is it was a great comfort to me during the Monsoon. - The trees & Hedges are very green & pleasant here now & all in full blow - It is very surprizing [sic] when we have no rain, the grass is very much burnt up. This is the time we have to expect the petty Monsoon, the wind is very high but I see no sign of rain - we had only one shower this time last year that was 4 months after rain we had eleven days rain the last monsoon & that is all now for 16 months the longshore winds have been intolerably bad unless we shou'd have rain I fear the season will be very severe. - I shall in this only add my love to Ned & Nancy & the Children as I have written a very long letter to Hetty. & some others & hers you will see. - We shall have an opportunity of writing again soon as a ship waits to take home Lord Clive. - I hope you had your shawl - gloves & stockings to make amends for the loss of your shawl. - Pray do not neglect to let us hear of all our old friends and acquaintance [sic] - you have not sent me any town news who is married &c &c - you seem to be a country Lady (8) I am happy to hear that my Pidgeons [sic] are increased tho I cannot but lament the loss of the poor old hen but there are kites all over the world - as far as I can judge - Believe me your most Dutiful Daughter

EGwillim

Mrs. Symonds

**Letter-029-EG-05-1803 (Mss.Eur.C.240/2, ff. 121r-121v) Elizabeth Gwillim to Hester James, May 7, 1803**

(1) My dear Hetty,

May 7th:

I have here inclosed two sheets for my Mother, as it contains family news I thought it as well to leave it open to you - & it may save you the trouble of sending off your long letter - The ship is to sail tomorrow & the wind has been so high that Richard to his great mortification has not been able to go over the surf - nobody has been to or from the ships these two days - To go to a ship is his greatest pleasure & he has risen at 4 oClock these two morn: to go down to the seaside but cou'd not go - I have given Mr: Prosser a great many things to carry which he has promised to do Mr: William Cam gave him a letter he is a near relation of Mr: Harley's Powel. he has desired me to send the things & makes no doubt If he shou'd I shall be much obliged to him & will thank

you to shew [sic] him any civilities in your power - Greater part of Mr: Whitleys trees are on board but a few are yet here they have travelled twice to the Beach in the Bullock Cart  
The surf is tremendous. - I suppose I shall get them sent let them know as soon as you hear this ship is come - your's affectionately EGwillim

(2)

Mrs. James

**Letter\_030\_MS\_XX-1803 (Mss.Eur.C.240/2, ff. 122r-127v), Mary Symonds to Hester James n.d. [1803]**

(1) 1803 (in pencil)

My Dear Hetty,

Yesterday I had the pleasure of seeing several agreeable [sic] epistles from English friends. Sir Henry reciev'd [sic] them by a ship which arrived here from the Cape, the letters were put on board her by an Indiaman which was detained there; amongst the letters is a very short one from you, in which you mention poor James's illness, we are happy to find however that he is in a recovering way. Alas! poor Billy! why would you be so hasty? to swallow plumbs & stones. I know he has a good digestion & therefore [sic] hope he is recovered, but I sincerely pity you who having been confind [sic] to a sick chamber attending an illness which could not be avoided were alarmed & fatigued by one so foolishly obtained. Betsy has the pleasure of recieving [sic] a very lively letter from my mother, who appears by her writing to be as well as we wish her. Mr. William Cam mentions her as being remarkably so--you will perhaps think I am troublesome in mentioning all these letters, but my reason is that the ship I write by will sail tomorrow & therefore [sic] Sir H & Betsy will not have time to address them all & it will be some satisfaction to the writers to hear that they are come to hand, so I shall tell you that we have one from (2) Mr. Gwillim one from Ned James one from Master Tom one Mrs. Shepheard one Mrs Hargreave, they are all nearly of the same date; the latter end of September. Sir H. has a letter from Mr. Clarke but poor Richard has none, indeed they do not write to him as often as they should considering how anxious he is about them & how good & regular he is in writing he could not help crying yesterday when he found he had no letter, but it is his aunt's silence he

complains of most, because he says she is fond of writing, & has not so many engagements as his mother. I wish you could see with what glistening eyes we all meet round a packet of letters. I have little news for you but thank God we are all very well. I hope you have recieved [sic] by Mr Templer some representations of Hindoo draperies &c. and I have now sent some specimens of the materials which form these graces [?]. I promised Nancy Green the Chowleys,<sup>128</sup> & I have added to them a piece of muslin which is called the Cloth & forms the other part of a Hindoo Lady's dress I have also collected some of the ornaments worn by these lovely damsels & I think the bracelets will give you a fine idea of jewelry, however they will serve to help you in forming a notion of the (3) smallness and delicacy of the hands over which they pass, some of these are the largest size they make & yet I doubt if amongst your friends you find one who can put on & off a pair of them. The young girls fill thier [sic] arms half way with them, but they have a great many more varieties one sort which they are very fond of is made of glass like the rings which were worn in England a few years ago. They have them of every colour. These are not the ornaments of rich people, they are only worn by those who cannot afford a sufficient quantity of gold silver & jewels. I suppose you will be acquainted with Mr. Prosser the chief mate of the United Kingdom he has been so good as to undertake to carry home many things for me. he was introduced to us by a letter from Mr. Mrs. Cam he is related to Mr Powel, who is Harleys partner I have sent by him some more drawings for your amusement, & Betsy intends sending some more shawls to be divided amongst her male friends for waistcoats. I think you will like the pattern of the shawl & it will have a good chance of arriving in proper time for the winter.

5

Betsy has sent a little box with some small bottles of atter [sic]<sup>129</sup> & my friend Capt. Ashton who helped her to pack them, has writen [sic] his own name on one of them, from which perhaps you will (4) imagine [sic] him to be a pretty little fellow but I assure you 'tis no such thing he is as tall & stout as John Gwillim & just such a rattle brain. Mr. Templer knows him, but he is grown vastly steady since he has been appointed to the copper mines.

You asked me in one of your letters what sort of pickles would be most desirable & I assure you that Mr James's notion was very right for I have never seen a red cabbage since I came into this country. I have been told they grow in India but it is not hereabouts, wallnuts

<sup>128</sup> Possibly "cholis," blouses worn under a sari.

<sup>129</sup> Attar, an essential oil.

[sic], cauliflowers & mushrooms are never to be had here except what are sent from England & capers are always sent out. I am very happy to have the pleasure of telling you that some of the things you have had the trouble of sending are arrived The box of milenary [sic] sent from Mrs Toussaints is all come in perfection every thing as fresh as when it was packed. we find it a very usefull [sic] supply for I assure you we were become very shabby in spight [sic] of all our economy. The box contained two cloaks, two turbans, two undress caps, 2 bonnets & fancy hat & some flowers & a set of green combs, which I think truely such valuable ornaments as those are very acceptable (5) to me. Betsy likes a good cap & so do I, now & then but these things make a variety & look light & pretty Betsy says I look better in thim [sic] then [sic] in a more formal dress. She is praying & wishing one wig had come, but there I do not agree with her, for if only one had come it would certainly have been torn to pieces in scrambling who should have it. one's hair is much a torment here it will not curl. We were quite surprized [sic] to see our old acquaintance the wire bonnet come in fashion again I look at Betsy in hers & fancy myself in Thanet place<sup>130</sup> this just what was worn whin [sic] we were there, I am very greatly obliged to you for your beautiful long letter of the 6th of Oct,<sup>r</sup> 1802. it gave us all great pleasure for your letters are so satisfactory, from them I always know exactly how you are going on pray tell James he is a scurvey fellow to think I shall marry a black man, when here is such choice of white ones to be had, however as he seems to have set his heart on having some little black nephews to nurse, I will try to accomodate [sic] him with a few for if I ever marry it is more than probable there will be a few ready. who shall be sent over for his amusement. without loss of time, I will enquire into (6) the matter very soon. The Hindoo dress I have sent you will perhaps immagine [sic] to be made of stuff which will not wash from the appearance of the weaving but that is not the case I wished you to see it in its present state or else I would have had it worked, it would thin [sic] be a very nice muslin it is the way they weave all the thin muslins here it hasmuch the look of Chamblee.<sup>131</sup> Mrs. Toussaint entrusted our parcels to a Mr. Anderson of the Castle Eden & Mr J-- wrote me a letter saying that Mr. Anderson would take charge of some polampores<sup>132</sup> & some stuff which I had bought for his mother; so I took the opportunity of puting [sic] in one for you which I have distinguished from hers by two small leather directions sewed on them, & least they should be torn off by accident I have also writen [sic] your name & mine in ink on the Edge in two or 3 places I am very much obliged to George Samuel for geting [sic] the things

<sup>130</sup> Thanet place in London was near the Inns of Court at Fleet Street, Mary and Elizabeth probably spent time there when Henry Gwillim was being trained as a lawyer.

<sup>131</sup> Cambric and chambray are woven cottons.

<sup>132</sup> Hand-painted and dyed bed cover.



for me I hope I shall receive them safe, Poor fellow! he is all goodness, I am truly sorry to hear of the sad state his mother is in for tho' in the course of nature she cannot last long it must be very distressing to him to see her suffer & linger (7) he is indeed a good man, & I am sure he has been a very kind friend to us, I grieve I have not found it in my power to draw something tolerably well to send him but I hope I shall improve & I certainly shall not forget any English friend. Since I began this Richard Clarke has recieved [sic] one letter from his father dated St Andrews 21<sup>st</sup> Sept,<sup>r</sup> 1802. I shall send you a fan made of flowers which I hae [sic] dried in the sun if it falls to pieces it cannot be helped for they are only intended for one evening The natives send them to us almost every day with long garlands to wear round the neck, & bracelets for the arms, & many other inventions by which they perfume themselves. I did not understand your observations about Nancy Green having sent out a black which would not be admired, but your last letter seems to explain that you alluded to her picture, whereas I thought you meant that she had dressed up a black doll to shew the fashions & I answered to it accordingly. I do not agree with you in thinking Nancy has any disadvantage owing to this circumstance for should she ever pay us a visit as I hope she one day will, it will certainly be advantageous to her by adding that of novelty to all her other charms, but perhaps you will (8) say she could have spared that one & so indeed she might for she has many that will never change & can never tire. I don't know what James will say when I tell him that your picture gets many a kiss from my beaux, & so do all the others, I have one beau who kisses it every time he calls & sometimes he pays his respects to my mother in the same way--

I am quite charmed with the description of pretty gowns & c. &c. &c. which tell me you have sent us I wish I could see them they should not get mouldy for want of use your allspice necklaces which you mention & all sorts of cheap ornaments of that kind are very desirable to us if sent out when they come in fashion for we are in parties almost every day, we generally meet the same people so that if one has an expensive thing of that kind one gets tired of wearing it often without a change even those ladies who have the finest pearls & diamonds are quite glad of those things for variety I should think when your acquaintance with Indians increases you will frequently be able (9) to send us a small packet in the particular charge of some person, which is better than sending great quantities at once for if it is lost it not so much value & we shall not have long to wait for its being [illegible] the miscarriage of the things you sent by the Skelton Castle I regret much more on your account than ours for I grieve that so much trouble as you must have had should be lost. I hope you will understand the curious drawings I send you they are all sorts & sizes but if they have no other recommendation they are true representations as far as they go I send you all I colour & shall continue to do so for they will entertain you &

your friends & I know you will take care of them, Betsy begs you will not give any of them away for slight as they are we may be glad to look at them when the originals are not present. I have not done any of the miniature painting a long time I left it off partly for want of proper materials & partly because it took up so much [---word cut off--- time?] & Sir Henry said it was nonsense [sic] to [---word cut off---] my time drawing a parcel of foolish concieted [sic] girls instead of drawing [---word cut off---] natives & other things of this [---word cut off---country?] which my friends at home [---word cut off---would?] want to see. but when the things [---word cut off---G.S.?] has sent arrive I will have another fit of it. I hope he has sent me some fine (10) small brushes & I want to know if I ought to use more gum in the colour of if any thing should be rubbed on the Ivory as a preparative for its recieving [sic] the colour. This is a genteel way of writing on two sorts of paper but I have no more small, so you must excuse it

You have had wrong information about sending things from Bengall to us for I assure you if any parcels are taken there by mistake or otherwise it will be six months at least before [---word cut off---we?] get them away but it is more often the case that they are lost altogether unless we have notice of thier [sic] being there by letter with the make of the ship & the description of the packages & we can then write to some friend to enquire for them. If packages are not enquired for in a certain time they are sold as Sir Henrys porter has been. I have not patience with you & Mrs Gwillim why don't you cut your shawls, the reason Betsy sends long ones is that the squares are very seldom to be had & when they are they are [word cut off ---uch?) easier in proportion she says the piece that comes out will be so nice it [words cut off] the tooth ache as any little pain [words cut off] has jackets & Jirkins of all sizes now [words cut off] & Sir Henry always wears it next his skin [words cut off] it quite the invalides friend

[Words cut off ] shall try to write a few lines to my [word cut off] this opportunity & I have written to Lizzy Pray give my kind love to all friends & give Master jemmy fifty kisses from me tho I am not much pleased with his Postscript I suppose he never expects to see me again (11) in Old England or at least thinks I am to stay here these twenty years he talks of my sending home my brats to him when they are ready for education. I thank him, but I intend to bring them myself if ever I have any, however he shall be accomodated [sic] as I promised in the beginning of this

I hope jimmy has recievd [sic] his new stick by Mr Templer my good friend I long to hear of his safe arrival in England, if you see any thing of him say a thousand kind things from

me. I hope he has read my letters. I think it is now high time to conclude this scrawl so God bless you all & preserve your health.

Yours most affectionately,

M. Symonds

[Month and day cut off] 1803 inside of the bag of large brown beads you will find some small ones take from them what you like & send the remainder to Mrs. Pontet I have enclosed a list of the parcels we have sent by Mr Prosser probably many of the trees will be dead

PS I have sent some brown beads for Mrs Pontet & I have written to her about them, so you will be so kind as to send them to her as soon as you recieve [sic] [word cut off] them & I have told her you will show her the drawing &c of the natives & when you pay her bill you can take off the price of the palampores & stuff which I have sent her, The large palampore cost £1-18-0 & the two small ones £2-0-0.

I do not know the price of the snuff [?] yet, but I will send you word of it the next time I write which will be very soon.

**(11)** This letter has the piece of palompa

By the EIC ship Baring

**(12)** Mrs James

No 39 Bishopsgate Street

London

Gwillim

**Letter\_031\_MS\_08-1803 (Mss.Eur.C.240/2, ff. 128r-133v) Mary Symonds to Hester James, August 19 1803**

(1) My dear Hetty,

Betsy is now writing to you and I have no doubt but she will say all that is necessary, in regard to acknowledging the receipt of the parcels and letters you have been so good as to send us, but as you express so much pleasure in receiving [sic] letters on any subject, I will not let slip this opportunity of sending a few lines, at the same time, I do not think it is a very certain conveyance, as we have at present every reason to think you may be at war with France before the ship can get to St Helena, in which case she will be very likely to be picked up, as she is not able to make much resistance and will sail alone. She is however commanded by a very brave man, whom you may have heard of, as he was much talked of for a very gallant action off the Cape last war; his name is Gordon. (2) We had great hopes that we should have had the satisfaction of acknowledging the arrival of the Union with the parcels from you but she is not yet come in. I received one letter from you by the Wexford, which you had directed to come by the Union. The Wexford arrived here on the 4th of Aug<sup>st</sup> And the Calcutta which sailed from England on the 12 of April arrived here on the 6th she did not bring any letters, but a passenger told us that they saw and spoke the Union off the Cape therefore we are in hourly expectation of her and the Earl Howe; with our new Governor.<sup>133</sup>

I have been vastly Gay ever since the arrival of the packages by the Cumberland, Mr. Livingston (was?) very kind and attentive in getting [sic] them all on shore for us, and I have the Pleasure to say they were all in high preservation, both eatables & wearables. I admire your choice of the gowns very much because they are so neat and useful. The plain muslin frock with lace down the front has been lent out to half the settlement for a pattern. My shoes fit very well but Betsy's were a little [sic] too long but she has had them very ingeniously altered her maid told her one day if she pleased she could send for the shoe maker to cut a piece out of the middle. Betsy did not much like the notion (3) of it, but as the girl was very solicitous she told her to give one pair. which he did very well by opening the shoe all round and then cutting a piece out of the upper leather between the vamp & the quarter, and then sewed it together again and cut off the soul [sic] at the toe. she has had them all done so. The gloves you sent are the most beautiful I ever saw both the leather and the making but I am sorry to say they are all spotted except the white ones, but that is always the case with all but Limerick gloves,<sup>134</sup> unless you could get any friend to promise to keep the box with them in his cabbin [sic]. for it is owing to the damp of the hold. The flowers Ribbons and indeed every unmade

<sup>133</sup> Lord William Henry Cavendish-Bentinck, who was Governor of Madras between 1803 and 1807 and later became the Governor-General of India.

<sup>134</sup> Limerick gloves, so called because they were originally produced in Limerick, Ireland, were a popular style of glove in both Ireland and England during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

article we think most beautifully chosen and so are the Turbans, but I should have been glad to have found a little of what one may call useful things such as neat straw or chip bonnets such as you and I used to buy in the spring. I really think all the flowers ribbons and every unmade thing is precisely what I should have bought had I been on the spot with all the experience I have had in coming here. The jewelry I will fairly own is not quite the thing except the peppercorns we were very glad of them, as they were quite a general fashion and every body had them (4) but poor Miss Frasers little red beads are quite too pretty for this place. The pearl necklaces were made up too fine, that is there is too much of it & the beads are not so good a sort as some Betsy brought out with her, but the ropes are quite beautiful, I wear mine with a gold chain and the other beads of the necklace I shall use to mix in my hair they are very handsome for that purpose, in future you need not trouble yourself to send many varieties of those things only a neat necklace & earrings once a year for each of us, something pretty good from Grays or any where else, so it is new & not too expensive, perhaps we grow a little nice in the things by getting a number of little things in the country as varieties. I have three sets of cornielion [sic] of different colours and a set of garnets which have been given me. I wish when you send next you would pack a few fans of a fashionable size any comon [sic]? things will do such as you give 1/6 or 2/6<sup>135</sup> each we have some here but very fine ones which are too dear for common use, or else the common brown paper China fans which are so rotten that you wear one out of a hot day. (5) I hope to God you will recieve [sic] all the things safe by Mr. Prosser of the United Kingdom, he was so kind as to undertake to carry a great many to you, & he is such a good natured creature that I am sure he will do every thing in his power to convey them safely on home, but all my fear is least [sic] it should be war and the ship be taken. Poor Templer! It was surely very hard to be detained after so long an absence from home, and he is such a warm hearted good young man that I I [sic] am sure he must have felt a great deal on his arrival. I suppose he will be gone to sea again before you will recieve [sic] this, however should you see him remember me in the kindest manner to him and tell him, that his friend Ellis has been back again at Madras in the Trident he has been to dine with us once & we took the old walk in the evening to the Bridge and then to the swing, which I had not visited before since he left us, and also tell him that little Sophy Dodson was to have been married yesterday to Cap<sup>tn</sup> Cramer of the Navy, but she has met with a sad accident, as he was driving her out in a Curricule they met another carriage with troublesome horses which took fright and run up against them, and the pole (6) of the carriage struck against her side and broke two of her ribs and otherwise hurt her so much that she was carried home quite lifeless, she is however likely to recover in a short time, & then the wedding will be celebrated. This you will think is quite enough of people you are not acquainted with.

<sup>135</sup> 1 shilling 6 pence; 2 shillings 6 pence.

Mr. Lane whom you mention, as Surgeon of the Earl Howe, is arrived in the Wexford, he was in the Earle Howe last voyage, he is now living with us and is a very steady sencible [sic] young man, he gives the same account of young Barret you do, but he blames him very much for going out to India at all which he says was only occasioned by vanity, as his father offered him a share in his business, which would certainly be a much more respectable situation than any he could hope to obtain here. Mr. Lane has a great deal of pure Herefordshire humour & he entertains us all very much with his droll, he has not the least idea of affectation of finery & I think (7) he would amuse you. I don't know if I shall send any thing to you by him, as he is going to China and therefore [sic] will be a long time before he arrives in England, and I hope to have many opportunities of sending soon as several ships are waiting here for the arrival of the New Governor, I have sent you a Moor womans dress quite complete by Mr. Livingstone. I say quite complete but it wants one garment which I thought was not worth sending as any body may know how to make it, being only a pair of full trousers of red silk, which I do not think you would be tempted to try on if you had it. I have drawn three women very badly but they will serve to shew how the veil is worn. I shall send them by this on the next opportunity. I fear you will not think I have thanked you sufficiently for the trouble you have had in collecting so many pretty things for us but I assure you I feel truly thankful and often fancy myself troting [sic] about with you for them, I think you must have (8) made a fine rummage, wherever you bought the ribbons. I hope Mrs. Shepheard has reciev'd a piece of muslin Betsy sent her by Captain Mash & a letter I wrote with it. All the sweet meats you made are remarkably fine I never saw any so beautiful, and so are Mrs. Whitleys apricots the flavours is just as good as when they were first done I am sure, and not the least fermentation your strawberries and in short all your presents have kept the flavour the same as the first day. I hope you will not mention what I now say as all was well meant [?] but in truth Mrs. Whitleys raspberries have fermented & lost their flavour, for want of sugar, but the apricots make amends for all they are just as my mother used to do them quite clear & firm. Mrs Chambers's damsons came remarkably good, and I must not omit to tell you how acceptable your two bottles of goosberries [sic] were they were quite a treat to me, I have brought out only one bottle yet I made two tarts with it for particular company. I wish you would send Mr Temple, a good scolding he has (9) shaken the table & just now he knocked down the ink pot in return I have sprinkled him a little, but he will not be quiet he is inclined to be lazy & therefore wishes me to be so, and Richard is reading aloud at the same table, some stupid play that Col (Trafford [?]) has written. I tell you this to account for the blunders in my writing. If any change takes place in the tuckers<sup>136</sup> of morning handkerchiefs I like you to

<sup>136</sup> A "tucker" is a handkerchief "tucked" into the bodice, a kind of fichu.

send one or two patterns from [name unclear] or fashionable warehouse but not from the common ones I hav[sic] got some habit shirts [?] from a Lady who came out lately. I must say you are the very best housekeeper I know your pickles are beautiful as well as your preserves indeed all your things are the best for poor Mrs. Chambers has been cheated in her wallnuts they are too old & have hard shelles [sic] inside but yours are in perfection & your cucumbers [sic] are [word crossed out] as green as a ribbon.

Be so good as to tell Tringham, to pack all the sugarplums, in glass, if he puts them in tumblers & corks them or covers them with bladder they will come dry & the tumblers will be very acceptable, but don't put them in decanters **(10)** because they are of no use here. The damp of a ship is too great to send them in boxes as many of them were all run away and others were stuck together in lumps the almonds were all in one & so were the barbery sugarplums however they are just as good to eat tho not so handsome for the table. I think it is not worth while to send capillaire<sup>137</sup> it is too sweet to be grateful in this hot country. The Raspbery [sic] vinegar is much admired, and a few bottles of Brandy Cherries would be very acceptable as also a few bottles of Noyau<sup>138</sup> & Cherry brandy the Noyau [?] Betsy brought at Gunter's in Berkeley Square has been very much admired you could order half a doz<sup>n</sup> bottles some day in your way to Brompton. I have little to say of our own family as thank God, we are all quite well & Sir Henry has borne the last season very well indeed the Land winds have been remarkably mild & we have lately had fine showers every evening which have cooled the air & made every thing appear green & pleasant, I shall not scribble any more at present as it cannot be many days till I shall write again, so God bless you remember me to Jemmy & thank him for his scrap of writing **(11)** for I am very glad to see his hand tho I had rather see his face. I fear I shall not be able to write to my poor dear mother or Nancy Green but it is much the same when I write to you as writing to all and I hope it will ever be so pray give my kind love to all my friends & believe me.

Ever your most affectionately

Mary Symonds

August 14th, 1809 Richards Clarkes birthday & of course a Gala-

Please tell Templer that we kept the 29 of July in all due form & drank the Grog.

<sup>137</sup> Capillaire, a syrup prepared from the maidenhair fern, formerly supposed to have medicinal properties,

<sup>138</sup> The word 'Noyau' (French for kernel) replaced 'ratafia' in the late 18th century.

August 19th

I shall keep this open as late as I can in the hope of being able to tell you that the packages are all safe, as the Union came in yesterday & we have just sent on board to enquire for them I am told this ship will sail this evening, & should the packet close before our messenger returns from on board, still it will be some satisfaction to you to know that the ship is come safe

(12) Mrs. James

No 39 Bishopsgate Street within  
London

H Gwillim

**Letter-032-EG-08-1803 (Mss.Eur.C.240/2, ff. 134r-139v) Elizabeth Gwillim to Hester James, August 14/15, 1803**

(1) My Dear Hetty,

It is now a good deal more than two months since I received all your packages sent by Mr: Livingston & Mr: Longdill in the Cumberland & Lushington everything came safe & well & such delightful packing we never before saw. - All that we have had to lament has been that such an unusual time shou'd have elapsed without the power of writing to thank you & make you easy about them - The expectation of a War has kept all ships here & nothing can sail untill [sic] we receive news from England which is of course waited for by us with the greatest anxiety we have had news by an American ship so late as the 6th: of March obtained from a ship she saw come in to St: Helena as she was about to sail to this place & in that nothing decided of peace or War<sup>139</sup> - I intend sending this by Captain Gordon Commander of the Wellesley a private ship who waits only 'till some news arrives & will then sail instantly but will not be in England 'till xmas - so it will be one year (2) before you can know the fate of your care & kindness for us - at least by this but I hope other ships will go from this place that will be quicker with you. - The Castle Eden which

<sup>139</sup> Britain had declared war on France on 18 May 1803.



brought our things from Mrs: Toussaint has been detained all this time in order to take home Lord Clive & every day we have been in expectation of a new governor - above all other attentions we must thank you for the delicate stratagem of the small package by the Harriett which came as perfect as you sett it out & has been more useful than any thing else in the way of dress indeed the essence of all good appearance but had that not arrived the boxes did not contain any more ornaments of the same kind which you seemed to say, but perhaps you mean in the Boxes which were to have come by Cap: Pitman & which are not yet arrived ~~having those things~~ indeed no ships have come since you have been promised the order

- I am extremely sorry you shou'd have vexed so much about them - As they are safe we think ourselves well off for we were at the Mount four months & did not want the things very much the only consequence has been that we bought ourselves a set of common gowns & these muslins you have now sent instead of being made up now will be laid by - & by your next sending you must send us made up gowns alone & not **(3)** any muslins unless it shou'd be something [sic] very striking - The Cumberland the Lushington the Harriett all arrived within a day or two of each other such a profusion of Packages to open such letters & papers to read - my head has hardly received it - such a variety to have to talk to people who had seen you & cou'd give us an account of your looks! - this was the first pleasure of the kind we have had & much we enjoyed it. - as for the Papers - Sir Henry has not yet got through all the Gloster [sic] Journals &c - Tho:' he has particular times once at least a day & sometimes more frequently when one at least is read - at first he began to read in bed of a morning as soon as a ray of light came instead of ~~reading~~ going to ride out & in this way having skimmed over all the news - they were replaced in bundles & from that time have been carefully perused at the opportunities I have above mentioned & may possibly have contributed much to his health as he certainly is induced by them to give a sufficient [sic] time to what he is about. -

I am sorry you had doubts about sending Mr: Waite those kind of things are all in the way here - as being at an Inn wou'd ruin one of those young men - we asked him to the house, which is always an easy thing to do for **(4)** young men here for they put the sophas [sic] out in the Porticoes & Galleries as you wou'd call the Verandas & they use neither sheets nor blankets He stayed with us six weeks his ship being detained all that time & then proceeded to Bengall he is the quietest & most orderly being I ever had in the home his brother has taken great pains with him to instill into him good & decent notions & he is very respectful - It is indeed a great credit to his brother for he is quite as weak as Herbert Bethell & wholly unfit for his situation except by his decent manner. - His brother sent by him a present of brushes powder &c which with your allowance are certainly a good stock - but we are four of us & use a great many - besides the insects eat all brushes that it is

difficult to keep them out. - You can tell Waite if you see him that his brother behaved remarkably well & recovered his health surprizingly [sic] whilst he was with us - every body remarked it. --

Amongst the innumerable things sent me I hardly know which to thank you for first - but first to put out of the way the things of little interest & yet of Value my cases of China & of Wedgwood came without any fractures & now my sets are very full & compleat [sic]. - Next Mrs: Chamber's damsons are excellent - but her Walnuts too hard so that being generous - I put those for the company **(5)** & have opened your's to give Mr: Gwillim one now & then - you know it his only pickle & if the shell is hard he cannot bite them & Mrs: C's were too old she told me so in a letter but she cou'd get no other. Of her things I shall say no more here as I shall write to her.

- Next Mrs: Whitleys apricots are the very best that ever were eat but the currant jelly is not good at all - But the apricots are exceeded by nothing but the strawberries you made me which are so delicious that they scent the room as indeed do the Rasberries [sic] - all your sweetmeats are the finest I ever eat - not the least fretted - except the apricot which is a little I shou'd have thought it very good but most likely she getting her fruit fresh off the tree they became harder. - You have no idea how pleased the people here are to smell strawberries such numbers of people who came out boys -& have not seen any - they are not to be bought here without buying them in large cases with many other things & then it is only one small Pot - I have given a few away to my very best friends - treated all the company who have come with a fine dessert & I believe I am not a little envied - I never was a picker before but really when I eat those strawberries I feel as if I was back in England & it is such a pleasant fancy **(6)** to indulge now & then - that I frequently rob the Pots tho' Mrs: Mary who by the way begins to be a little Tabithaish<sup>140</sup> warns me that things will not last for ever & desires me to recollect that I cannot have my cake & eat it &c &c

We had the Governor & his train at dinner soon after the good things came & I assure you his Lordship did ample justice to all my varieties & begged particularly to know where & how I came by such excellent things - the like of which he had never had the good luck to come at - at which he seemed a little hurt - till I explained to him what friends I have to do nice things for me, since which if anything is very good - he asks me - Well Lady Gwillim have you got sisters to do this for you too? - The Poppy syrup is as fine as possible & I had some in the middle of one night & Mr: Gwillim boasts much of having prescribed it for me - sometimes when the weather is very hot we have no proper ~~apetite~~ appetite and are as you are sometimes tormented with such a gnawing pain as if of hunger that we cannot sleep. - But above all things the herbs you sent me are

<sup>140</sup> An old maid; perhaps from Tabitha, a formal antiquated name. (From "Regency Lingo" <https://regrom.com/regency-lingo/>).

most agreeable & have been the occasion of my eating many hearty meals that I shou'd have gone without this hot (7) weather. I was almost longing for some knotted Marjorem [sic] & if you had desired to favour me ever so much you cou'd not have given me such a treasure - The Marjoram retains its flavour so well as if it was just picked but the

~~thyme~~ Thyme has scarcely any taste but that need not prevent you from sending both lemon & orange Thyme another time for it may be accident however the sage loses its flavour so much that we are obliged to put a handful into a duck what flavour it retains puts us in mind of home; whereas the sage that grows here is the tree sage & has a very different taste. All the Herb seeds Mr: Whitley sent me I have tried in all ways & given them to other people but I never cou'd get one to grow nor ever hear of one that did however I do not despair & hope to try again in the Monsoon As for mint - I used to have great difficulty about but I learned at the mount how to manage it by cutting it down short frequently & now I have as large as your dining room as green as grass thriving in [?] all this land wind & I think it is nearly as well flavoured as in England - Sage & Marjoram & Thyme you will please to send by every opportunity. - as also Parsley seed & red Radish seed. - I am quite amazed at your skill in pickling - such charming green cucumbers. It is very extraordinary (8) but we have none of those small cucumbers here a few large ones are produced & the roots are burnt up. They are very nice indeed. I value them much & very rarely give out any - We were all very glad to see the red cabbage but I fear it will not do to send out - except to eat directly for when we opened the jar it was red & fine as possible but it turns directly black & soft by being exposed to the air. -

Aug 13th: I took the pains to write so far but the ship cou'd not sail as we are still in uncertainty of Peace or War - The Calcutta & the Wexford came in by which I have had some of your letters stating that you had written fully by the other ships which have been seen but are not yet come in we expect them every moment - Mr: Lane is with us I shou'd have thought you wou'd have known him - poor man he was like enough to suffer in our opinion & yours by his acquaintance with Barrol however it appears that he is as much disgusted with his manner & conduct as we are - I have assured him as I did you that he behaved very well here - Sir Henry is not a little angry with him for Locking up James's stick - I hope James will get his waistcoat by Mr Prosser & indeed I am very anxious about those things as I sent so much by him - He is very good natured at least I think so & gave me the sweetest Canary bird that ever was - It was his companion out & I think it a great compliment - If you shou'd see him pray tell him it is in the Verando [sic] of my bed room & sings from day break to Sun set - I never loved any little bird so much - I am sorry to hear the Whitleys do not ask you to sleep there in rainy nights I wou'd not tell Mr. G. because he is sometimes (9) full strong in anger - & I think that a little ill natured. I am sure

it is not the girls' fault - I have sent them some seeds by the Captain of the Wellesely an extra ship which takes this to you as they have unexpectedly opened a Packet - as I did not know it 'till today & have nothing prepared I cannot write much - I had by the Wexford your letter, one from Lizzy - one from my mother the boys drawings which I really think very pretty, particularly one soldier, the book of the loss of our poor old ship Hindostan which I was glad to have. And now this puts me in mind of Captain Millet I certainly wou'd have wrote to him as he desired at St: Helena but the ships had sailled [sic] to that place the day before I received his letter & there was no other opportunity for many months afterwards I underst[and] from reports here that he was coming out again & therefore I did not write indeed we have been in constant expectation of seeing him from the time it was possible for him to return till we heard of the loss of the Hindostan. - I was much pleased with his conduct in many respects the ship was clean neat & orderly & many comforts I never thought a ship cou'd afford, which however was only our want of knowledge - Sir Henry is not pleased with him. He was certainly parsimonious to a degree & did many selfish & Jewish things - In the first place he affected great liberallity [sic] about the price of our passage & wou'd not fix the price till every ship was filled & then in a hurry named nearly double we were taught to expect we ought to pay - & since coming (10) we find it really was at least three hundred pounds more [tha]n anybody has paid for the same Next place he made a favour to Mr: Gwillim saying that by taking his money here Sir H. wou'd save 100 pounds on the exchange but we found that instead of rating the pagoda above the market price they had put it 9d: under so that instead of saving he paid abouve [sic] 100 pounds more than he ought in that way - Upon the whole it was a compleat [sic] bad concern - between the agent & him the agents appear to have been the friends of Capt: Millet instead of doing properly for their employer Sir Henry. - Over & above this they made a mistake in drawing the draught & put down 2500 Pagodas instead of 2250 Pagodas - which was exactly 100 pounds more than the proper sum - the whole was left to the agents, as we cou'd know nothing of this but Captain Millet must, & however he might over reach in a bargain, presenting a Bill drawn for 100 pound more than the sum agreed cou'd not have escaped his notice - Our luggage was not in his agreement, as the company gave separate leave for that an unlimited [sic] quantity in the gunroom a dry place but he put our things in the Hold where they were very damp & injured to get that room for himself - On account of our going with him & our having so much of the Gun room allowed us he was allowed to take only half the number of Cadets the other ships took which is a great advantage as the price allowed for them is less than they cost the Captain - Yet when we got on board he gave us only Sherry & bad Port wine & excused himself by reason that if he put it on the table the Cadets wou'd drink it - However he never sent us a drop into our Cabins which he might have done - We understood none of these things at that time but

we find since that all the other ships had Madiera [sic] constantly Claret always sent into the Cabins & occasionally (11) brought forth; Now all these things being explained you may suppose Sir Henry is not a little angry and as he is not apt to conceal his opinions when he has formed them, I dare say it will come to Captain Millets ears - which is of no use now & therefore I am not desirous it shou'd - for this reason I wou'd not wish you to mention anything about it particularly at least not about the presenting the draft for Sir Henry has written to Ware about it to apply for the return of the money & perhaps he may give that up, as a mistake certainly he ought. - As it stands at present we have paid 300£. - more in price 100£ on exchange & 100£ in a mistaken draft of the agents - all of which being in Captain Millets Pocket he oug[ht] [to] have been liberal.

-

Polly tells me she [word missing] so much to you on the subject of the co...[word missing] & pretty things you have sent us that I need send no more than thanks - as I shall want to write a short letter to my mother & one to Lizzy Thoburn to thank them for their nice things & for the very elegant present they sent us - The earrings [sic] were most acceptable to me I think you told me you had not seen them - they were Cornelian with heads upon them & quite a new fashion mine were the first & I have yet only seen one other set - I did not want any thing so much - with my best wishes for your health & James's & for good news from the people old & young I remain your's most affectionately

S. Thome Aug: 15th: 1803. -

EGwillm

Most likely I shall write another letter by this ship

(12)

Mrs: James

No. 39 Bishopsgate Street

Within

London

HGwillim

**Letter-033-EG-08-1803 (Mss.Eur.C.240/2, ff. 140r-141v) Elizabeth Gwillim to her Mother, Esther Symonds August 16, 1803**

(1)

Madras- S. Thome

My dear Mother, - Aug: 16th: 1803. -

As a most unusual time has elapsed since we have had any opportunity of writing from this place, I avail myself of the first opportunity to write a few lines to you to let you know we have been very well this summer - Thank God the weather has been unusually mild & we have not been a day without showers - St. Swithins has the same effect here as with you - & 'tho' the natives are not acquainted with the name they know that rain at the end of June & beginning of July is generally followed by a long season of showery weather - I shou'd much like to know if you had also a rainy summer. --

The apprehension of a war has prevented any vessel from leaving this place for near three months - just at a season when we expected to have had opportunities of writing every day. - We have with us at present Mr: Lane of Hereford who is surgeon of the Wexford - which came in about a fortnight ago - It brought me your kind letter which was a great pleasure to me & poor Tom's drawings, which I think very well done. We had besides the pleasure of a letter (2) from Mr: Gwillim Senr: - I am sorry your shawl was lost - but as so many things came safe I count it cheap duty on the rest - I am sorry it happened to be yours - but as soon as I heard it I sent you a square of a very fine strong white one, which is quite new & we seldom get the white shawls new - I sent it by Mr: Prosser of the United Kingdom who I hope will have got it on shore for you before you receive this. - I am sorry you grieved about my things as I hope to have them all safe - but I fear my gammons may be a little the worse - but I do not know that they may as the old Bacon keeps well in this country a long time. My caps &c will not be very fashionable but as I have had the good luck to get all my things that have been sent out since, we are quite fashionable & must keep those for the useful. Mr: Livingston brought me all my cases safe & we are looking out at the sea every hour to see for the other ships - Mr: Lane has kept Mr: Gwillim & indeed all of us laughing constantly with Hereford news. I have not heard so much since I used to have Mr: Thomas Gwillim with us - I believe we have had it all over from the highest to the lowest in the town - pray how do his sisters go on? He seems like a good brother & talks very rationally upon all subjects - He is very obliging in offering to carry things & therefore I shall give an orange colourd [sic] shawl which I bought with a narrow border & Nancy can wear it long if she pleases or cut into two squares - It is a fine one but very thin - however if you shou'd be so unfortunate as to lose your white one you must cut it between you (3) We are yet in a state of uncertainty whether we are to have Peace or War the last news was 30th: April & then it was Peace - shou'd there be

war I think it like enough that they may catch our ships & if Mr: Prosser's ship shou'd be taken - (The United Kingdom)- you must all be content to lose your presents. - Mr: Lane will not be soon in England, because he is going to China but I see no chance of any ships going from hence. Sir Henry undertook last time to write to Tom & I shall not have time now but I hope ships will be going - Lord Clive has taken a house to go into as soon as the new governor comes but we are tired of expecting him - I wish Mr Charles Yorke<sup>141</sup> had come out for this is a very young man<sup>142</sup> & really such a situation requires both age & experience. Lord Clive is a very good natured country gentleman; but as a Governor very inactive Lady Clive wa[s] a very clever woman & as quick as [word crossed out] as possible I believe she wou'd be very glad to have him safe at home but some strange infatuation keeps him here, surrounded by men, who to serve their own ends make him do extraordinary acts. --

I did not know 'till I saw the English papers that you had taken so much notice of what is done here else I shou'd have told you that the tomb (or rather grave for the tomb was not then built) which Polly drew was that of Alli Hassein the young Nabob about whom I see many paragraphs - The Moor men consider him as a saint. - I fear he fell a Martyr<sup>143</sup> - The French ships come to take possession of Pondicherry which is a days sail from this place down the coast - but our good old Admiral Renier<sup>144</sup> did not chuse [sic] to let them take possession 'till we knew Peace or War. They were lying at anchor before the place when a Corvette arrived from France what news it brought we do not know - but in the night they all cut their Cables & ran away leaving some money & some Ladies whom they had landed - We all concluded the Corvette brought notice of a war. They went as supposed to the Isle of France<sup>145</sup> (4) I shall write further if I have time - In the mean while with the love & duty of all I conclude myself your dutiful daughter

EGwillim

Mrs: Symonds

Capuchine Lane

<sup>141</sup> Perhaps Charles Philip Yorke (1764 - 1834), a British politician who served as Home Secretary from 1803 to 1804.

<sup>142</sup> In reference to William Bentinck, who was born in 1774 and was therefore only 29 when he became Governor of Madras.

<sup>143</sup> Ali Hussain was the nominated successor of the previous Nawab, Umdat ul-Umara but had refused to transfer the administration of the Carnatic to the British and had therefore been deposed in favour of his relative Azim ud-Daula. As Elizabeth hints here, the EIC were suspected of having poisoned him and this drew condemnation in the British press. Mary's painting of Ali Hussain's tomb is South Asia Collection PIC106.30.

<sup>144</sup> Likely Admiral Peter Rainier, commander-in-chief of the Navy's East Indies Station.

<sup>145</sup> Mauritius.

Hereford

HGwillim

**Letter-034-EG-09-1803 (Mss.Eur.C.240/2, ff. 142r-149v), Elizabeth Gwillim to Hester James, September 3/4/10, 1803**

(1) My dear Hetty,

With one of your nice pens I have the pleasure to tell you that we have at last received our 6 cases & the further pleasure to say that all that was material was uninjured - The earthen ware all whole & the books unhurt - The gowns, caps, hat, ribbons, flowers & everything of that kind just as you put them in to the cases such delightful packing I never saw - Captain Millet put the boxes I brought out in so damp a place that I had not one flower but what by the rusting of the iron wire had lost its head & the smaller kinds I cou'd never repair - The things Mr: Livingston brought me out came exceedingly well every flower was quite fresh The gloves alone were spotted - & some pieces of white ribbon were turned so yellow that we cou'd not use them but this I attribute to their being made of bad silk for other pieces being in the same papers were quite white - The better & handsomer kinds of white ribbon carried best & nothing in all Mr: Livingston brought was injured in the least - But this which has been lying about in different places so long I expected to find the worse however the gloves were just as they were put up & the ribbons as white as snow - even the flowers which you packed in Mr: Gwillim's hats that had no tin case were as if they had been that moment made - The drawing & writing paper you sent is also quite good that is the paper directed to me. but Mr: Gwillim['s] packages of letter paper was very mouldy & many (2) quires only fit for common notes or excercises [sic] - [words crossed out] 3 Gammons of Bacon appeared indifferently being so much rubbed as to have nearly lost the outer Rhine [sic] but on cutting two of them we have found the meat perfectly good & as red & white as ever with however as you may suppose a considerable loss of rancidness [?] on the outside - The ham seems quite dry & will I hope be good. -- The worst account I have to give is of the sweet meats. Impatient of so long a [word crossed out] confinement two or three pots [words crossed out] had broke their prisons & escaped - The jam in the pots had lifted up the tops of several pots but it is not bad - it is as good as that Mrs: Whitley made but quite unlike your's - two bottles of Cappilair<sup>146</sup> had fermented & the corks had fled out -- A few of the lozenges are pretty good & some of the lemon & barberry drops but the Sugar-plums presented the most dismal appearance: all their paints, red, blue, & green in-a

<sup>146</sup> Syrup of Maidenhair, or Capillaire.



streams like a marble paper cover of a book - Richard Clarke has been very happy as he was freed from the usual restraints upon the arrival of sweet meats, he had now no charge, but not to make himself sick - Polly tells me she has written to you by the Wellesley particulars of the other things & has therein desired you to pack dry sweetmeats that is almonds carraways lozenges &c in tumblers bladderd [sic] down. - The wet sweetmeats that is gooseberry hops cherries called dried Cherries, & currants &c I do not wish to have as we have plenty of things of that kind. - And I shall take your advice & write to Mrs: Chambers to do me no more. Rasberries [sic], strawberries & apricots are the only fruit I wish for or that are desirable here (3) I shall tell her if she can send me some Welsh Cranberries to do them. When I asked her to do them it was because I really feared you never cou'd have time & ~~really~~ now I am rather unhappy about it. I fear you do too much. - The immense [sic] trouble you must have had to collect all the things for us & pack them must have been a dreadful fatigue - I can only say that they are most admirably chosen; but to enumerate all the particulars wou'd be almost endless. If we had had these things last year they wou'd have been pretty well worn out by now but wou'd have been then very new fashioned for they are many of them quite new to us now. The beads like steel beads in that large turban which by the way becomes me exceedingly I never saw any thing more beautifully fitted to a head, - those beads were quite a fashion here & so were borders of feathers round the hats such as that round the blue hat: I shall perhaps change the beads & put some others - I think we like this millinery better than what Mr: Livingston brought those two turbans he brought one muslin one crepe with gold I like very much but do not fit on in a moment like most of these & besides there are many worn here so like that I shou'd think the same hand had made them, but we have nothing here like that large turban - & that other bonnet with flowers & the yellow bonnet both of which suit Polly exactly. There is a very elegant lace cap with yellow ribbons quilled between the rows - that is quite becoming to her - she looks better in yellow & pink than any other colours - The green round hat does very well for me & a sweet cap with open work (4) across the caul & laylock ribbons - & two others these are extremely pretty - upon the whole these we consider as the newest fashions as they are quite so here The habit shirt is most beautiful & was sadly wanting - as we had no good pattern - for my part I contented myself without but that did not suit Miss Mary & she has really made herself some by immitation [sic] that are by no means beautiful Mr: G who has as you know a great aversion to seeing women wear any thing like a man's dress is constantly reproaching her with their unbecomingness. - The Muslin cloak & bonnet I have taken to & I never had anything more becoming than that calash bonnet, it is so nice & so white that it seems as if it had been made without hands - Even Mr: Gwillim praises that bonnet & I always like a bonnet of that clear kind to shade the face - Mrs: Toussaint's muslin bonnet she sent me I did not much

like It was made upon a wire & it struts out & leaves the back of my long neck bare. - Our gowns we have to thank you & Nancy Green for, they are very pretty & well chosen - some of the sleeves are lined which in future you will please to tell Nancy not to do, as it is very fatiguing to us. If the fashion will not do without a lining she can put a bit of thin muslin - The stuff like lace in my gown I never saw before I think upon the whole it is great luck that we have got all our new things to receive the new governor in - There is a great importation of finery on the occasion The Lady has seen nobody yet. We are to go on Monday The governor has received the gentlemen - I do not know a soul on board any of these ships that are going **(5)** home except a Lady who cannot carry any thing. - Mr. G. is just now gone to call upon Lord Clive who has taken a house in our neighbourhood - Let me not forget to thank you for the jewelry the two pair of earrings of enamel & pearls are very pretty & acceptable and so is the little gold chain as mine is quite spoiled [sic] Polly has a very handsome one which was given her I wou'd not like any Jewelry of a kind inferior to that as one pair a year is quite enough - The amber necklaces we are very glad of - I shall I suppose know on Mr. G's return when Lord Clive sails they say very soon. The Union arrived, & the Wexford about a fortnight ago - on Sunday night the Walpole came in & brought intelligence that the Governor had put back to Rio Janairo [sic] but after this intelligence had been bandied about & put everybody off guard the very next day about 11 oClock in the morning the Governor arrived in the Earl Howe - We had notice that the ship in which he came ~~had been~~ was to put a flag at the Mast head - so we have been looking out a long time for this signal - The Governor did not land till Tuesday morning - and I hear the Lady<sup>147</sup> has been very busy ever since - He says she is not very well - but my man who is a relation of the servants tells me she is very well but more than busy all day to see open all box, put all things - That she is very good-natured lady that seeing the carpenter sweat very much she desired him to eat some fruit - & to go & rest 'till he was cool - He went to look at her yesterday according to their custom, by favour of his relations - I asked him how he cou'd think of going to stand in the room with her so long, suppose, said I, she had asked who is that servant? what place has he? what **(6)** wou'd you have done Ah, says he she never can find face so soon, besides great many will be going to room all day five, & ten, & seven. No, she never can find face so soon, after ten days we never be going." Now all these creatures, you are to know make these visits in the bed-room & dressing room. - & I dare say she is not a moment without having a hundred eyes upon her. - They have had three of the most dreadful days I have ever felt. I have been in a constant tremble, such a sullen gloomy heat as we seldom have here. The Weather has been very moderate this summer 'till the middle of July but the end of that month & August has been very severe at least to me & many others but Sir Henry has been better than

<sup>147</sup> William Bentinck's wife, Mary, née Acheson (1787–1843).

usual indeed he has thank God been the support of the Court, for Sir Thomas Strange has been laid up with boils for 2 months. - We have had slight showers all the summer which give a dampness to the air & the weather has been like our Dog days in England. - Mr: Gwillim never dislikes damp, but I get my spasms just as my poor mother does. --

It is in vain to dwell upon melancholy subjects; but we all received a great damp by the death of Mr: Bethel. I endeavour to forget as much as I can but the loss of a person whose company we have so often enjoyed is not borne without pain - I am extremely concerned for Miss Bethel - I wait with great anxiety for another letter from you. It is remarkable we have none from you in all these ships, I pray to God to keep you all well; but the last letters giving me an account of the Influenza keep in fear I remember that disorder in 1783 & it was painful & dangerous - There are yet three more ships upon the sea I think you must have written & suppose the letters are in those Mr: Gwillim was amazingly delighted with a few words you had written on a paper as a receipt [sic] for the letter con- (7) taining the pearls - It was sent to him to shew [sic] the agents dilligence [sic]. It is provoking enough that we had not a letter by the same ship I suppose when they get the letters at the India House they put them on board as they like for one ship generally carries all the letters & the rest come without & if they come first it is very tantalizing - our house is most beautifully situated for seeing the ships come in & it is a sight so interesting to us that if a sail is spied we are all out in a moment; but really we feel so anxious that I do not know whether it is not more pain than pleasure I do not know whether I ever described this shore to you. We have no hills nor rocks near; but the coast is formed something [sic] like Aberystwith<sup>148</sup> the Fort - which is a large town stands out as the Castle there does: Then we may fancy the Black town to be just where the bar was that is, where all the little Vessels used to lie - & so just the same it is here, All the ships lying in this part except the Kings ships which anchor more out & near the Fort - Then on the other side from the Fort to my Home at St. Thome the shore has only gardens &c but just as my House stands it is like as if it was on the road that leads from the town to the turnpike near Mr: Watkins's house & if you were in a house so situated you would just have such a view of the sea. Mr: Watkins's row of houses wou'd be represented by tall groves of Cocoa Palms &c & the great Rocks are other tall groves - The flat place is a sand marsh in which a river winds very prettily & is a Lake in the Wet season - These groves shut us out from the view of the sea on the right & left but leave us an extensive opening & if we go up stairs we see the Fort & the signals on one hand & on the other the Vessels (8) coming in from England They pass close by us & when they come near the Fort, Anchor & salute - Richard gets up [word crossed out] atop of the House we all squall out from below to know what signals are seen through the glasses - After all this perhaps we

<sup>148</sup> Aberystwyth in Wales.

have two days to pass before the letters are delivered - It is about three miles from the Fort to the end of the Black town on the one hand & the same to S. Thome on the other. - I did not consider it as very dear paying Mr: Livingston 10 pounds for the freight of the boxes they were very heavy - He made a sort of apology to me & told me he thought it very high, as formerly he cou'd get things out for 3 pound a ton. -- The trouble you had was all I regret for I dare say the boxes wou'd have cost as much if they had been sent by land from London to York. [word crossed out] We shall not in future want such heavy packages. - Two guineas & half on the shawl is rather more than than [sic] it was worth; but I wished Mrs: Gwillim to have it soon, & that is the usual price given to the Smuglers<sup>149</sup> [sic]. I was in hopes he cou'd have got it on shore - Mr. Longdill's losing that [word crossed out] square for my mother was as bad a loss. - It is odd enough that they shou'd have fixed upon the price of 2 ½ guineas for the price of landing the shawl: but it shows how well they know the price of things in India. - The two orange colourd [sic] shawls I sent for you & Mrs: Gwillim cost 40 Pagodas the one had large sprigs as large as cou'd be cut out corner ways of this sheet of paper - & the other small sprigs the size of a Mulberry leaf - I cou'd never discover that the one was better than the other but I did not see any [word crossed out] defect in either & I generally put the servants to look & they are as keen as needles - These smuglers [sic] I find usually charge 25 pr: cent upon the vallue [sic] & two & half guineas was about that as those were cheap. - I told you once I wou'd give (9) you the price of shawls but I forgot to do it. It seems odd enough but as you have given me some advice about the purchasing them I will tell you - I gave 25 pagodas for Mrs: Hollands which is the regular price here & 20 pagodas for the same kind with a narrow border all round but no sprigs at the end such a one I bought & sent half to my mother by Mr: Prosser. - Your thin white one I gave only 20 pagodas for but if new that shawl is 70 pagodas that is 140 pagodas for a pair & you cannot buy them under of that fineness & work in the border that had the large sprigs - I have never seen such a thing to sell here & that came from [words crossed out] a great Cawn<sup>150</sup> our neighbour whom Mr: Gwillim had much obliged by giving him some Law-advice & he wou'd not let me take any present of him. - I gave 25 pagodas for the yellow shot I first sent you for waistcoats & 30 for the orange colourd [sic] shot I last sent. A shawl will make 6 waistcoats a pagoda is worth from 8<sup>0</sup>/6 to 8<sup>0</sup>/9: as the exchange runs those kind of shawls are called gown shawls. The Moor mean [sic] make their Jammas or gowns of them - this dress is the same as the Jams of a child & gives name to it - One is sure they are new as they cannot wear them without

<sup>149</sup> Protectionist policy had led to a series of bans on importing Indian textiles to Britain from the seventeenth century onwards. Smugglers helped circumvent these bans.

<sup>150</sup> Khan, likely someone associated with the Nawab of Arcot.

cutting them up. I bought a shawl for eight Pagodas of a Guzzaratty<sup>151</sup> man who is my great friend & lets me have things at my own price. so I thought it pity to lose it & I bought it Mr Lane being here & he has to bring to Nancy but I fear he will not be with you till next July. - I have also given him a piece of worked Muslin for a gown for Mrs: Chambers which Please God you receive you will please to send to her - I have more Waistcoats for James as soon as I can get **(10)** anybody to carry them. - It is lucky enough if one knows anybody going in a ship, to give charge of any parcels they are frequently better taken care of at least sooner delivered - & sometimes the destination of the Vessels is changed. In this way if Mrs: Toussaint had not given her son that box, in all probability I shou'd have lost it - As you had so particularly said these 6 cases were on board the Union as soon as we heard that ship was arrived - we sent a man on board to know if there were these said boxes for us, enquiring by letter the answer stated was, that there was no box or package of any kind for us. This intelligence vexed us much. I receivd [sic] it just after I had closed my letters sent by Captain Gordon - some days elapsed & in the meanwhile I fretted [?] over your letters & meditating on the contents I was fully persuaded the cases must be there & Mr. G. got a gentleman who was acquainted with the Purser to write & by that means we at last learnt that they were on board but we did not receive them till 10 or 12 days after the ship arrived --

-Sept: 4th: I have this moment heard that an overland dispatch arrived last night bringing news from England dated 17th: of May - States that War is declared & brings the Kings speech on the occasion - Lord Clive therefore will most likely be detained for a Convoy. --

Sept: 10th: The idea that the ships woud [sic] be detained made me discontinue my writing but Lord Clive called yesterday to take leave of us, as he has resolved on going without Convoy & they sail tomorrow - this leaves me but a few moments to add to this. All letters & all communications will now be very uncertain for some time - I hope you will get the things by Mr. Prosser, but I think it likely that the ship may be taken. -- I have no opportunity **(11)** of sending anything by these ships but I shall send just a basket of seeds by Mrs: Davies. If I keep them they will be spoiled [sic] so I may as well venture When you receive them pray send them directly to Mr Whitley - This Lady goes on account of her health & if she gets better talks of coming back from St. Helena instead of proceeding to England, therefore I cannot send by her the little trifles I have ready - Mr: Lane carries a shawl for Nancy James which you will forward & a Muslin gown for Mrs: Chambers. - You will have to pay 25 per cent on them which will be 16 shillings for the shawl & 20 shillings for the gown I gave 10 pagodas for the gown & the same I gave for one sent to Nancy Green by Mr Prosser - I gave 15 for each of the Thoburns but I fancy they were finer but I have not seen the same patterns since - We have just paid our Compliments at the Governor's

<sup>151</sup> Gujarati.

House but it is all bustle at present - I think it likely if Mrs: Davies comes to England that she may call upon you therefore I tell you who she is. Her father is Mr: Penrose surgeon in extraordinary to the King her mother is dead, but her stepmother was a Miss Lucas of Monmouthshire who used to be at Dr: Cam's. she was rather an old maid & very good humoured & is said to be very amiable in her disposition I think you can hardly remember her as you were then very little Mrs: Davies is a large woman, but was when I came here extremely handsome. She is very genteel & well bred & has been in good company. Lady Blount Sir R.d Symonds's sister, sends her cloaths [sic] & she appears to have been much with them & many high families. - But it excited the curiosity of all people here & I confess mine also to know how a beautiful young woman very fashionable [sic] **(12)** shewy [sic], & well educated, came out the wife of a disagreeable looking little man with one short leg - of course quite lame excessively vulgar & low in his manner and an assistant surgeon tho' not bred to that profession & in reality [sic] knowing as I hear nothing about it - Such is Mr: Davies - He reports himself to be the son of a Clergyman & I understand she has one child with her father & one with his - Davies is quite a Cockney & his friends live in or near London - Mr: Samuel whom you spoke of in your letter was as perhaps you know engaged in Topham's paper & so he came to marry Mrs: Wells's sister - Mr: Samuel came out here & took to the Law - in which he has been successful & clever He also is the Editor of the Madras paper<sup>152</sup> - The report here, true or not I cannot say, is that when Mr: Davies brought out his wife he sent to Samuel & that Mr. Samuel then knew little of him but reported that Davies was a kind of head Devil or scandal hunter for the Newspaper which he & Topham edited. How he came to get out an assistant surgeon & how he came in possession of a woman of that kind is matter of astonishment. - She was slightly spoken of at first but has since been extremely well received everywhere & indeed her conduct & manner are amongst the best here - Samuel took him into his home & employed him in the newspaper department superintending it himself, but since Mr: Samuels absence he does the whole. - They have always lived together. Mr: Penrose lives at Hatfield in ~~Hert~~ Hertfordshire. - You will see by the papers what Prizes have been taken in these seas. [word crossed out] Admiral Renier<sup>153</sup> is an excellent old man but we have no great force here. We hope you have sent us some. I wish Tom Gwillim cou'd get a ship & come out to us the **(13)** Naval officers have a good life here - & these seas are without danger. - I wish we had your letters I think you must have wrote in some of the ships - The pens here are so soon spoiled [sic] that I fear this writing will be worse than any the Land wind splits them as you write with them & this sheet is one of the best of the paper you

<sup>152</sup> Emmanuel Samuel, see D. G. Crawford, Roll of the Indian Medical Service, 1615-1930 (Uckfield, England: Naval & Military Press, 2002), 279.

<sup>153</sup> Admiral Rainier.

sent me that I have tried it the damp has taken the size out & it all runs sadly perhaps it may recover itself a little. - It vexes me much I have no time to write little Tom nor to my Mother at least I fear I shall not so pray let them know. - This war will make us very anxious to hear as often as possible but write all about yourselves, not what may be in the newspapers as we have all that sooner, for the same reason I omit to tell you of things here because you get that news sooner in the overland dispatches - I shou'd have liked to [have] had the price of our millinery the rest I can guess - If Please God we shou'd be well a little assortment of dress January or February will be acceptable. You say you will send out in the autumn & that will just do. We are rich now. - If the lace used is the same breadth as all I have, for mine is all the same, pray mark where it is to go; but do not buy any - If a broader lace be required we must have it - I observe a broader kind used on some things I do not want it unless it be necessary. - **(14)** do not send any more large Ostrich feathers except what are put in the Caps for I cannot pin them in - It is a great art - If feathers are worn I shou'd always like one or two Caps with a plume well put in, just for grand visits - but people putting them in ill, only looks shocking. Polly certainly can do those sort of things but I like it all ready for me & I am glad you have not forgot "if it fits, it fits" - for here I have still less patience than ever to throw away time in dress - I rise at eight in the morning Breakfast & the accounts take my time till then; from ten to twelve is all the time for writing learning or drawing - only 2 hours out of 24!! & yet more often than every other day - people come & take up those two hours. - at twelve oClock comes Luncheon time, as we call it Tiffin, - we are ready to faint for food - indeed if I have been detained I often do, in the extreme heat - after this meal we are so oppressed with heat that it is quite a force to do anything - at this moment I am writing after Tiffing [sic] - at 3 o'Clock we dress at 4 we dine, sometimes sleep a little between Tiffin & dinner but I never do it if I can keep up. - between five & six we go to walk about the garden to see it watered & seeds sown or else we go out airing - whic[h] is all the exercise we have. - If we walk in the garden; we drink tea & go out at eight oClock **(15)** to make visits & as the places are so far from one another we do not get home till near eleven at night - If we go our airing at 6 oClock we have sometimes a little time for writing in the evening, but it is not to be depended upon Visitors may come in or we dine out - or we have company, large or small is an equal hindrance - or there is a ball. - in short if I get my two hours in a day it is all I expect. When I was at the Mount, I was very free & I have an offer of the same house which I think I shall accept when the Land winds have abated; but at present we cannot leave the Sea. It has been dreadfully hot, 'till these three last days & now it is very dead. - May God Almighty bless & keep you all is my constant prayer - I shall close this now if I can write more I shall but we never know. - Give our Duty, love &c to my Mother Mr: Gwillim's family to Mr: James to Ned, Nancy & the children - my love also to Nancy

Green (I hope I shall be able to write to her) & to the children & Mrs: Beaman. - I wonder you do not find some news to send me about our Indian Ladies I think you must hear some occasionally. Believe me ever most affectionately your's; E.Gwillim (16) Mr: G. is much pleased with the ribbons you sent us & so we are all -

By the H.C's ship Castle Eden

Mrs: James -

N.<sup>o</sup> 39 Bishopsgate Street Within

London

HGwillim

**Letter\_035\_MS\_09-1803 (Mss.Eur.C.240/2, ff. 150r-153v), Mary Symonds to Hester James, Madras Sept 10th, 1803**

(1) This begins with a

ball Madras Sep<sup>tr</sup> 10th,

1803 My dear Hetty,

I have already written one sheet of this letter, but by some untoward accident or other I have lost it, and at present I assure you it is a very considerable loss to me tho it contained nothing very material yet it is provoking to lose a letter, and at present I am amazingly busy, with some curious subjects for my pensil [sic]; I have got an old woman to stand, to me, & a Moor man to sit, both of whom are so handsome that I should be very sorry to lose the opportunity of drawing them, I am obliged to take them when I can have them as they sometimes serve me tricks, they promise to come three or four times and sit to me, but after the first or second time, they go away up the country, and I can see no more of them, you must not be offended with me for making a short letter or account of my showing, because whether I write or draw I assure you; the only happiness I have in it is the hope that it will one day serve to amuse you, and all my dear friends at home, Betsy has written you an account of the safe arrival of the long looked for parcels which came by the Union, it is to me wonderful to see how well the things have all kept, one of the Gammons of Bacon was (2) dressed on Monday last for a very large party



[words crossed out] ( all the gentlemen of the profession to whom the Judges give an annual dinner,) the Bacon was admired beyond any thing at the table and they all said they thought it far preferable to the finest Ham. A few of the jam pots had lost thier [sic] tops and some corks had blew out of the capilaire the sugar plumbs and carraways had suffered as I have already told you the last did, not from keeping but from being packed in paper instead of glass, henceforth you will have them put in tumblers and wound with bladders; I repeat this, as I think it probable you may never receive the letter I have sent by the Wellesly, [word crossed out] she sailed a few days before we had the news of the War<sup>154</sup> and a French privateer has already been seen in the Bay. This is some of the new paper but it writes so greasy that I fear you will not be able to read it, almost all the paper that is brought out to this country either is greasy, or else it blots. I am quite charmed with the collection of Millenary [sic] and dresses you have sent us in the packages we last reciev'd, never was poor gentlewoman so much in want of a straw bonnet as I was before they came, but indeed we (3) three found something of every sort, and all our wants are supplied I am sure it must have been an immense [sic] fatigue to you & poor Nancy Green, to buy them and pack them. I can perceive that these things have been made at some fashionable places & tho they have been kept a year in bondage yet I prefer them to the newest fashions made at any common shop, you see we are a little nice. Our things have arrived at an excellent time, just on the arrival of the new Governor & his Lady, which circumstance has made us all alive here has been visiting the new folks, & taking leave of the old one, Mr. Cockrane<sup>155</sup> has given two grand balls this week the one to his niece who is just married & the other as a farewell to Lord Clive this last was meant to be most magnificent, he had prepared a great many fireworks & transparencies in compliment to Lord Clive which were to have been seen before supper the supper was in a remarkably fine stile [sic] the tables were all laid in the Garden under an awning erected for the occasion, at about eleven oclock we heard a violent noise outside the house, some people supposed it to be the fireworks beginning to be let off in the Garden. (4) This paper was so bad that I had not patience to write any more upon it.

(5) & ran to the door to look out but in one moment the doors & windows, began to slam too & fro & the thunders rooled [sic] & the lightening flashed with such torrents of rain as you cannot easily imagine [sic] all the fireworks were extinguished, and what was still worse the supper, & the building which contained it were washed away, there was poor Mr. Cockrane at the head of about a hundred black servants, trying to save something from the wreck but they gathered up custards, whiped [sic] sillabubs, Sandwiches, & bunches of flowes [sic], all mixed

<sup>154</sup> The Napoleonic Wars, which had begun in May 1803.

<sup>155</sup> Basil Cockrane was a wealthy Scottish merchant.

together at last however it was discover'd that a great deal more supper had been prepared than the tables would hold & with that & the fruit which was not injured, they made one handsome table inside the house which was quite enough for all. These things are part for shew as nobody ever eats a lot Lord Clive staid till four o'clock in the morning & they finished the evening [sic], or rather the morning, very gaily, by the way you must tell Mr Templer if you see him that Miss Cockrane is at last so (6) condescending as to give her fair hand to his friends Mr Hoseason.<sup>156</sup> I wish to tell Mr. J-- all the news, but I wont [sic] write to him again till I have heard from him, all these things would entertain him because he knows all the people but I fear it is very dull to you who know none of them. I hope all our friends will get safe home who sailed from this in the begining [sic] of the year but it is much to be feared [sic] they will ( many of them) be picked by the French In the United Kingdom I sent many things for you & letters, & in the Asia, & Dover Castle a great number of letters. The two last we have very little hope of as we have heard they were at St Helena before they could have heard of the war there. The sheet of paper I miss contained little more than an account of our health which thank God is soon given as we are all well, & should I find it, I hope it will do equally well for the next time. Betsy has written very fully to almost every body by this opportunity therefore [sic] I shall only add my kind love to Nancy, & James & the Thoburns, & c & C with proper remembrances to all my dear friends, & a sincere wish for the arrival of that hour which will restore me thier [sic] society, & then I hope never to part from (them?) again for any consideration, as I am convinced that no consideration can ever make amends for their loss, the meanest cottage with (7) you all will ever be far preferable to me, to a palace without you. May God bless you & keep you, for many happy days, with your most affectionate sister,

Mary Symonds

We shall send nothing but letter this time as Lord Clive is determined to sail without waiting for convoy so we don't think it very safe & there are some Palampores in his ship already for you & Mrs. Toussaint & the snuff which I could not tell you the price of before it is 6 Bottles at 4 shillings each I cannot send bills of these things because we buy them of natives who cannot write any English several ships have been captured by the Fleet here, under Admiral Rainier, Cap<sup>tn</sup> Johnson of the Victor has taken a very likeable [?] prize which will make him & his crew

<sup>156</sup> Thomas Hosaeason, Secretary to the Commander in Chief.

very rich, it was a present going from the King of Cochin China to Boonaparty [sic]<sup>157</sup> & we saw one prize brought in yesterday Dutch I believe

(8) Pleas to send this back to me

By the H. C's ship Walpole

Mrs. James

no. 39 Bishopgate Street

Within

London

HGwillim

**Letter-036-EG-10-1803 (Mss.Eur.C.240/2, ff. 154r-159v) Elizabeth Gwillim to Esther Symonds, October 20-21, 1803**

(1)

Madras-

My dear Mother, S. Thome, Oct: 20th: & 21st: 1803

Bitter Rain

& rainy Weather

We have not failed [sic] to write to you by every opportunity and I hope you have had letters from us by the United Kingdom which sailed [sic] 10th: of last May. We have since written by the Walpole & Castle Eden both of which sailed [sic] in September the latter having Lord Clive on board. It is a most wonderful thing, that he shou'd, with his immense fortune have chosen to stay so long from his wife & children, his native Land & fine Estates filling a place of great emolument, so much to be desired by many Noble men, of smaller fortunes, & greater fondness for Publick [sic] business. - He was extremely good natured as a private Gentleman; but his whole time was given up to his garden & the fattening of Veal and Beef leaving other matters to the care of a few people who contrived to hold him in a sort of thraldom & lead him to their

<sup>157</sup> From the Emperor Gia Long of Vietnam to Napoleon Bonaparte.

purposes. - worse people **(2)** than many of them you cannot conceive Lady Clive is said to have greatly desired his return. I imagine from what I hear on all hands that she must be a very clever woman & cou'd not but see with pain, that he was losing that credit which His name of Clive ought to claim him in India.<sup>158</sup> - such an influence had the few people about his house gained over him, that he does not seem to have had courage to support the very few he brought out with him - who were all obliged to return to England disappointed [word crossed out] He never made the least provisions for them - tho' offices of the most lucrative kind were crowded upon most unworthy people - The Natives, a timid gentle, but subtle & [word crossed out] fraudulent people; esteem vigilance as the highest virtue, not only in a Magistrate but in all others who possess any kind of power: according to their Scriptures, conceiving, that the sin of an ill action devolves upon him who by activity might have, but did not prevented it. - They have besides an utter aversion to all low **(3)** employments, particularly such as tend to the gratification of appetites. With them therefore you may suppose he was held in no great respect. - He does not seem to know anything of Botany his gardening was chiefly for culinary purposes, except such collection as Lady Clive had desired to be made. Indeed the study of Plants wou'd have been esteemed highly by the Natives. Tho' their mode of studying Botany differs from our's at least our modern mode - such respect have they for the vegetable tribes that many of the more useful plants are venerated as Divinities. But their books & descriptions are exactly in the stile [sic] of Culpepper. & a plant is seldom ~~not~~ selected as a remedy for any natural quality but for the influence which some Planet [word crossed out] is supposed to have over it. - -

This reminds me of giving you an account of the Medical skill of these people which I have been several times going to give Mr: John Gwillim but as he has not written, & you tell me **(4)** you communicate all useful information I shall leave it to you propagate [word crossed out] whatever may be beneficial [sic] to the world that can be drawn from this source. - I must first observe that they begin with an a firm belief that every created being bears in the inside of his skull [sic] the hand writing of Bramha in the Devanagara or Sacred characters<sup>159</sup> & that the time & manner of his death are distinctly written - These letters they assure you are all visible on the pieces of the skull [sic] which they collect after the burning & bathe in Milk (as we read in the translations of the Poets) but in the Calee, Yogam<sup>160</sup> or Iron Age, the character in use is so much changed that it cannot be read. You will readily see that the markings in the fissures of the skull [sic] is what they mean. - As it is utterly impossible even to the Gods themselves to change this decree of fate,

<sup>158</sup> Because of the military and diplomatic victories of his father, Robert Clive.

<sup>159</sup> Devanāgarī, the script used to write Sanskrit. Elizabeth's explanation here mirrors that given by Nathaniel Halhed, *A Code of Gentoo Laws* (London, 1776), xxiv.

<sup>160</sup> The Kaliyuga.

medicine is sought merely to relieve pain & not with a hope of prolonging life, and thus the conscience of an unskillful Physician is [word crossed out] secured from any deep wound & much slander prevented. - (5) As they never form an idea of any Natural cause of diseases; but that they are the effects of sin or of an evil-eye or Fiends (Pisaches)<sup>161</sup> so they can expect no remedy in the natural qualities of things & therefore Conjuraton is peculiarly depended upon but [word crossed out] however efficaceous [sic] the charm may be the manner of administering it, is certainly very extraordinary, [word crossed out] to our notions, for example, my Maid being much afflicted with the cholick [sic]<sup>162</sup> gave a month's wages, for about half a pound of lead, which having been properly prepared by incantations, she wears at the pit of her stomach; being rolled up & fastened by a string round her neck, & many other remedies of the same kind might be mentioned. A servant for whom Sir Tho: Strange has a great affection, had several fits, of a sudden and dangerous nature. upon which the Doctor instead of sending him a couple of bottles as our's wou'd have done, sent him two (6) young black Dogs and a bit of red gum, or earth, with an order, whenever a fit came on again, to cut the ears of the dogs, & having procured a little blood, to rub the gum in it & apply it to different parts of his body [words crossed out] repeating certain texts - As for female complaints such as Hystericks [sic] Night-mare, faintings, disturbed rest & the like, they are constantly supposed to be the consequences of unclean spirits having possession of the Patient, - she is therefore conveyed to Manar-swaamy (a God whom the Bramins disown)<sup>163</sup> & the Poo-jalie (the Priest of that God whom they also disown) by with Bell, Book, & Candle terrifies her into convulsions, when the Fiend is supposed to quit his hold. - But tho' they vainly expect from their herbs & roots supernatural effects, they find real ones; & have many excellent medicine amongst their Vegetables & which they apply [word crossed out] frequently with great success. and indeed there is a knowledge of Plants even amongst (7) the lowest of the people that shews [sic] a great attention to the productions of nature, altho' they have formed no notion how the

<sup>161</sup> PISACHEE, Skt. *pisachī*, a shedemon, m. *pisacha*. In S. India some of the demons worshipped by the ancient tribes are so called. The spirits of the dead, and particularly of those who have met with violent deaths, are especially so entitled. They are called in Tamil *pey*. " (*Hobson Jobson* p. [714](#)).

<sup>162</sup> Colic, referring to gripping pains in the belly.

<sup>163</sup> Manar Swamy is described by Francis Buchanan as a local god in Coimbatore (Francis Buchanan, "Customs of the Coicular, near Coimbatore: from Dr Buchanan's journey from Madras, through Mysore, Canara, and Malabar" *Annual Asiatic Register...for the Year 1807* (W. Otride and son and others: London, 1809), p. 947.) and an interesting image of "Rajah Manar Swami" as an archer was made in c. 1801-5 by a local artist in Madurai ("Figure of an archer. 'Rajah Manar Swamy'", British Library online collections, <http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/apac/other/019wdz000001063u00034000.html>). He is also associated with Shiva as Mannareeswarar. ([https://greenmesg.org/temples\\_chennai/r/royapuram\\_mannar\\_swamy\\_temple.php](https://greenmesg.org/temples_chennai/r/royapuram_mannar_swamy_temple.php)).

qualities of vegetables act on the human body. -- They divide all diseases into [word crossed out] hot & cold & certain plants are supposed to be suited to [words crossed out] cool & others to warm; but from what I can learn an English Physician wou'd neither agree with them as to the nature of the disorder or the power of the herb; however as their experience is better than their reasoning their patients are relieved. - As I am upon this subject I must not omit an account of their Surgery of which however there is little to say Their employments are less dangerous than ours & therefore accidents less frequent When wounded or bruised they soon recover even from such wounds ~~indeed~~ as wou'd destroy an European; for as they neither drink spirituous or fermented liquors & ~~feed~~ live almost entirely on vegetable food their blood is generally in a pure state - They have a great abhorrence of the use **(8)** of a Lancet & rarely open anything & never bleed but with leeches. - Almost every Tree yields them fine aromatick [sic] gums and the seeds, oils - which they use generally for salves in the natural state - Many trees on the roads have had the smooth bark so frequently wounded to procure the gum, that they appear spotted like a Leopard's skin by the small cuts drying into round spots - Their unskillfulness however makes many disorders fatal to them which are easily cured by us. - If a Limb be broken it is not the office of either Physician or Surgeon to cure it nor yet is the Conjurer called in but wisely considering that Men are but Clay they send for the Potter. These potters make their ware of the same kind of red earth as our garden Pots are made of, but of a finer kind. They first set the bone as well as they can & then taking a quantity of clay inclose [sic] **(9)** the limb round the fracture & for a considerable way above and below. Having done this they lay it over a slow heat (as great however as the Patient can bear) and the clay being thus baked round the limb there is no danger of the bone being displaced. By practise they know very well how long a bone will be in setting firmly & when they suppose it to be safe they break the Pot which surrounds the fracture & the cure is performed. The Surgeons say that in simple fractures their extraordinary method succeeds admirably well; but doubt much whether it wou'd as well suit an European constitution subject to inflammation [sic] - If the Limb be much shattered their method is not so likely to succeed & they never amputate. - I have not forgotten the enquiries you have made about the Natives but Wars & Rumours of Wars keep us in such a state here that we have had few opportunities of writing & no previous notice. The **(10)** Packet closed suddenly yesterday by the Union before I had time to send my letter which was all I intended to send as there is greatest reason to suppose she will be taken or if not that her passage will be very tedious - Mary has written to you by it to take the chance her letter was just in time. Today the Packet is opened for a Cartel which will not be taken; but we have only a few hours given us I shall therefore not add much more; but as it will most likely be the last opportunity of writing before the monsoon I cannot let it escape. - Our weather is become pretty mild & pleasant

& the monsoon appears to be approaching very fast which is the reason of the ships sailling [sic] so soon - yesterday Mr: Gwillim diverted himself all day with the notion of your business of Butter buying - conjecturing whether you gave the threepences, or sixpences, or ninepences. I believe the day put him in mind of it for indeed the three last days the sky has been overcast & almost constant rain night & day exactly I dare say such as you have had The rain generally begins the latter end of Oct: in a good season & the Bramins say if there be no rain on the 15th: a long season of dry weather is to be expected, which here is a terrible evil - Saint Swithin was as liberal **(11)** here as in England<sup>164</sup> - we had showers every day for two months which has made everything extremely verdant - we had dry weather for about three weeks & now the rains begin again. My home is so well secured against the rain that we felt no inconvenience thank God, last monsoon & I hope we shall not this I have the happiness to say we are at present all well. I only wish I cou'd hear as much of you all. It is extremely unfortunate that we had not a letter by all the last ships - I fear now we shall hear nothing 'till February of March. I shall direct this to Hetty as I have only time to write one letter & have no opportunity of sending anything but a few seeds which if they shou'd never be delivered will be no worse than lying here for the insects devour everything in spight [sic] of all our care - They are for Mr: Whitly & will be directed to Butterworth's - - -

I hope Hetty will be able to let me hear soon of the arrival of Mr: Prosser as I gave so many things to his care which I wish to hear of. He seems extremely good natured & I shall be glad to see him out again. - I have sent by Mr: Lane a gown for Mrs: Chambers & a shawl which I bought very cheap for Nancy I thought it wou'd be comfortable for a child if she did not admire it. - I have sent in the seeds some Sandel-wood beads to put in your cloaths [sic]. - two rows - a summons is just arrived & therefore with love **(12)** to all & ten thousand good wishes to say that I am ever your most dutiful daughter

EGwillim

Mrs: James - No 39 -

Bishopsgate Street within

London

Received July

25 1804 At

Clapham

<sup>164</sup> St. Swithin was bishop of Winchester from 852 to 862. In popular belief, if it [rains](#) on St. Swithin's Day (15 July), it will rain for the next 40 days.

**Letter\_037\_MS\_10-1803 (Mss.Eur.C.240/2, ff. 160r-162v) Mary Symonds to Esther Symonds, n.d.**

(1) My Dear Mother

I address this to you least you should imagine [sic] I am neglectful of you, although I consider my letters as to the whole family when I write to Hetty, I shall tell you in the first place ( because I think it the most important part of a letter) that we are all perfectly and I think Betsy



gets strength and flesh and her present employments keep her quite happy I almost wish you could see her in her glory; that is, with about twenty black men round her, a table full of books, the floor strewd with baskets of seeded branches of trees, and she herself standing in the midst with her cap snatched to one side and talking away till she is quite fatigued. The seeds and plants are collected from the Hills, and woods, by some poor country people, and she gets some of the native Doctors to give her the common name, the Brahmins tell her the Sanscrit [sic] and the Books are consulted to find out the Linaean [sic] names so that with collecting plants &c raising them in our own garden, studying the Language & manners of this county [sic], & now & then drawing we continue thank God to amuse ourselves, and fill up all our time, without being indebted to (2) to the society of the place, which is stupid enough in all concience [sic] I have written to Hetty by every opportunity, but I fear some of our letters will go to the Isle of France, as the ships sailed just before we heard of the war, and they had no Convoy. It will be a very long time betwen [sic] the last letters we reciev'd from England & the next we shall have as you all neglected to write by the last ships of the season, which I assure you was a great disappointment to us, and just now the monsoon is seting [sic] in so that no more can arrive here till Jan<sup>ty</sup>, or perhaps Feb<sup>ty</sup>. You will I suppose see a great deal in your newspapers about the war in India, most likely you will know much more about than we do, as every thing is kept extremely secret by these Governments, and I thank God the seat of war is very far from us; a very great victory has lately been obtained over the enemy which it is thought must soon put an end to this war, but it has been obtained at a terrible expence, one English Regiment [sic] has been quite cut to peices [sic].<sup>165</sup> I knew many of the Officers who are killed, & wounded, some of them were our shipmates, and Colonel Maxwell of the 19th Dragoons, who is killed, came out with his wife, in the same fleet with us, we have always visited them & he was at Colle [letters obscured] with Sir Tho<sup>s</sup> Strange & Sir Henry, and he was a very sensible, pleasant man; his wife is now at Madras (3)

It is reported that the Marattas left 23 thousand on the field, our loss is supposed to be 15 hundred<sup>166</sup> By the last fleet Sir Henry received a letter from Mrs. Busington [?] of Winsley, which she sent by her son who came out a cadet. I am much surprised that such dashing folks

<sup>165</sup> Possibly in reference to the Battle of Assaye, 23 September 1803, part of the Anglo-Maratha wars.

<sup>166</sup> William Dalrymple, *The Anarchy: The Relentless Rise of the East India Company* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019) p. 372 puts the casualties at Assaye at 1,584 for the EIC's army and 6,000 for the Marathas.

should think of sending a son in such a situation, as it can only enable him to live with economy, for many years, and taking the inconvenience the Army is exposed to in this country and the unhealthiness [sic] of the cli[mate] in some parts, together with sending a child so you[ng] friendless, into a foreign country I think it would be better to provide him in any way at home, then to send him out in that situation. I am sure if the Parents could see as we do the danger of thier [sic] situation they would sooner make Tinkers of them; but I suppose their vanity is chiefly concerned, as they are unable to put them in high situations and unwilling to see them in low ones, certainly they do not consult their childrens happiness Poor Mrs Hathway has lost three sons here, and tho one of them is said to have had some property when he died, yet he had so far forgot the necessities of home, that he left it all to a black woman whom he kept.

You mention in one of your letters that Ned and Nancy are obliged to leave Tupsley, and we are very anxious to know if they have got another Place to thier [sic] account and where it is. I hope they will get an advantageous situation I suppose thier [sic] family & Hettys has increased by this time, from the comments we had (4) they have our dayly [sic] prayers for both thier [sic] safety

[word cut off] hope you will send us a particular account of the grain and other productions of the country and the price of all sorts of provision as it is a great pleasure to us to know the truth on those subjects, and besides you cannot concieve [sic] how anxious the families who are returning to England with moderate fortunes, are to know those matters, for they have such ridiculous ideas of the expence of England that you would laugh to hear them talk upon the subject, most of the people here know no more of England than if they had never seen it, and some of them who have been there for a year or two, and returned can talk of nothing else, but the wonders they saw and the desire they have to return to it again, but for want of knowing what they ought to do, and to pay, they are imposed upon far beyond immagination [sic]. I shall endeavour to write a few lines to Hetty by this opportunity but as we have very short notice of the ships sailing I cannot [words obscured] very long letters Betsy is also writing a letter or two tho we are told by all the knowing ones that it is ten to one if ever the ship arrives in England we send letters by all and therefore [sic] it will be hard indeed if some do not escape. I suppose you and your boy are enjoying a good fire, now whilst we are boiling in our [word cut off], but however I hope the time will come (5) [sentence cut off] together with a good Elder Bishop. For many days the last hot season the thermometer was at an hundred and three in the siting [sic] rooms and at the same time it was 130 in a Tent, this you wi[sic] own was

warm work for at the same time if you let in the wind it scorched you like a flame and if you shut it out you were suffocated, but yet it is very extraordinary that the hot season is thought particularly healthy both by the natives and the Europeans, and what I think wonderful is that through all that heat, tho not a drop of rain falls, yet the trees continue beautifully green, and many tender looking plants throw out new shoots without a drop of water. I think you will rub up your spectacles, and scold at me and my my pens [?], but you know bad writing is a family failing, however as you have got some young eyes about you I shall make no appologies [sic] but if you put my nephew Tom to spell it out I hope the trouble he will have in doing it will serve as a lesson to him to attend to his writing that he may make all his aunts ashamed of themselves by scribing beau[tiful] letters to them which will be no trouble to read, and I will answer for their [word missing] happy to recieve [sic] them. We are vastly glad to see (6) such progress made in the [words missing] & Harry, I really think you will have two great artists but joking apart, it is really curious to see how well they have drawn the figures, pray continue to send us specimens of thier [sic] performance, as I shall preserve these to compare and by that means we shall be able to judge of thier [sic] progress, I want to know who little Ned grows most like & if Charles continues as handsome as he was. I wrote to Mr John Gwillim last March by the Dover Castle and as we have heard that she was safe within 3 weeks sail of England I hope she escaped the French Fleet, there was a Lady and two children of my particular acquaintance on board, the Lady was never in Europe before her name is Compton & she is the wife of one of the Lawyers here her youngest child is a Goddaughter of Betsy's. The Husband has sent her home to be polished such a wretched a dawdle as she is you never beheld. I believe her Father or Grandfather was a Frenchman & therfore [sic] they call her a french woman but the fact is she neither writes or [word cut off] any Language fit to be seen her English is the [word missing] that, one can scarcely understand much [word missing] her, I dare say you will never meet with her, [word missing] God Bless you all and pray give my kind love to all my dear friends & believe me

[word missing] affectionately yours M. [word missing]

**Letter\_038\_MS\_10-1803 (Mss.Eur.C.240/2, ff. 163r-166v) Mary Symonds to Hester "Hetty"  
Symonds James, October 20, 1803**

(1) October 20th,  
1803 My Dear Hetty,

I have scribbled a few lines to my mother just to satisfy her that we are all alive and well & for your satisfaction I intend doing the same as it is reported that the Union will sail in a day or two at farthest the packet is to close to night she sails without any convoy or companion and therefore [sic] stands an excellent chance of being taken, but as all the ships that have sailed from this for the last year, have run a great risk, I think it necessary to write by all, We have told you over and over again of the safe arrival(s?) of the good old Packages in the Union, and how smart they have (made?) us I hear that the Cap<sup>tn</sup> of the Skelton Castle ( who first took those on board is dead on his passage, if so he has paid his debt & his sins must be forgiven, we also hear that Cap<sup>tn</sup> Mash is dead, is it true ? I hope our [word missing] Mr Prosser is arrived safe with all his Packages [word missing] we sent by him all we could [word missing] (2) [cut off] sorts Mrs. Toussaint will [word missing] by [word missing] [Castle] Eden, her snuff & Palampores and also one for [?] you, the price of the Palampores I told you in a former letter the snuf [sic] cost 4 shillings each [word missing] When we have heard something [sic] of the state of Europe, & can send with tolerable certainty you shall have some more drawings &c, as I am always going on, slowly in the old track [?] This is the first monsoon day we have had, it now blows hard from the Northward and rains torrents, we are all praying for a heavy monsoon as the late dry season has occasioned a scarcity of rice in some parts; which is a dreadful thing in this country as the natives depend entirely upon it for thier [sic] subsistence, in Bengall they seem to entertain some apprehension as Lord Wellesly<sup>167</sup> has issued an order that no grain of any description shall be exported from there. I suppose that will come a little hard upon us for we recieve [sic] the greatest part of our (wheat?) from thence. There has been a great Gala lately given by a native a pretty rich one you may imagine [sic] when I tell you he determined to spend 12 thousand pounds in Entertainments on this occasion, it was his Eldest sons wedding two of his daughters and 3 or 4 other relatives [words missing] married at the same time, altogether [six] brides, & six bridegrooms, he invited all the [word missing] in turn; when he asked us Sir Henry told him he did not like to meet a great (3) [sentence missing] a dinner for about twenty [words missing] requested us to bring our own party, as we [word missing] a very few I had a better opportunity of observing all the decorations; & when I came home I made some memorandums, since which I have been trying to make a model of the whole, in pasteboard; when it is complete I shall send it you with a description of the whole, it

<sup>167</sup> Richard, Marquess Wellesley, Governor-General of India 1798-1805.

will just go into a bandbox & I shall request some person put in a cabbin [sic], & if the people at the India house take it We shall have no great loss & they will have no great gain. It will now be at least 3 months before we shall be able to write to you again as no ship can be in the roads during the monsoon; therefore [sic] do not alarm yourself or blame us, as you did last year; for the same delay always happins [sic] at the same season. All your Jams & jellies keep amazingly well & Sir Henry is very fond of a lick [?] particularly the strawberry [word missing] make excellent custard pudding [word missing] you add a little jam as a great improvement to them, we have had custard pudding at least 4 times a week ever since we came into this country, I own I am a little tired [?] of them, & therefore somtimes [sic] order another not [?] by way of [?] society, but as soon as it comes on the table he says, sure tis very hard I never can have that [?] pudding I am so fond of the other day I said I feared the (damp?) of the weather would spoil some of the sweetmeats, good god, says he why (4) [sentences missing] though, I sent any letter to my (mother?) yesterday by the Union but I had not time finish this bef[ore] the packet closed, however I am more fortunate than I expected for Mr. Rackets who is part owner of the Matilda is just come to tell me she will sail this evening, with french prisoners, that is the prisoners are sent away at our expence there will be no great dangers of her being taken, & she is a good sailer & will probably be in England several months before the Union, Betsy is making up a parcell [sic] of seeds for Master Regi, which I believe she will send to Mr. Butterworths<sup>168</sup> with some books Sir Henry intends returning to him, being imperfect. I do not know if Richard Clarke or Mr Temple will hear of this opportunity of writing as they are both in the Fort & we have only two hours notice therfore [sic] you can tell thier [sic] friends that they are in good health & as gay as larks.

Mr Gwillim sent to me last night after he had gone to bed to (put?) one in (mind?) of the Hereford [word obscured] who he said were going about in thier sattins [?] with the little [word obscured] to taste [word missing] & he says nothing can be heard in the town today but six pences three pences & nine pences, I wish I was within hearing of them, I wrote to Mr.

Wilby some weeks ago & so did Sir Henry, Mr. W-- sent a letter to a Mr. Wales as an introduction but poor young man he was so ill all the time the [word missing] that he could not come on shore and a few days ago I heard that he died soon after his arrival [word missing] in Bengall. I know the Captain [of the] (5) ship he was in, & he spoke very highly of him he was the son of the Mr. Wales who went round the World with Sir Joseph Banks, & was afterwards appointed a Master at Christs Hospital, I believe Mr Wilbys brother has the situation now. If

<sup>168</sup> Wieldon and Butterworth, printers of legal works.

you mention the young mans death to Mr Wilby I think it possible it may be the first news he will hear of it, but I do not know any particulars as the ship is not yet returned from Bengall, [word cut off], it was the Lushington, in which also Mr. Waite and Mr. Longdill came out from little Longdill [word cut off] disappointed in India, he came here before [word cut off] January and found the weather defightful [sic], [word cut off] this time he arrived in the midst of the [words cut off] and he has been frightened out of his wits [words cut off] the climate ever since he has been here, [word cut off] which the government send (him?) about [letters obscured] to place, without giving him proper notice to [word cut off] which hurts his dignity mightily; he is a lively little creature, but I think him rather pert and forward, he is just now gone to [word cut off] to attend some troops who arrived here from Bengall. They are a supply [words obscured] to assist our people, to revenge the horrid cruelty exercised on our poor countrymen, which you with no doubt see on account of before this reaches you, that has hitherto been a most unfortunate war, the war with the Marattas at present (6) seems [?] a more promising appearance but the slaughter on both sides in the late victory obtained by Gen,l Wellesly, has been dreadful to think of. I knew many of the officers who fell, but thank God the seat of war is so far from us that we know less of it than you do, only we have our information a little sooner, but it is the policy of these governments to keep all thier [sic] measures extremely seecret [sic] and I fear many of them would not bear the eye of open day. [ word cut off] have at present a new, & a very young Governor,<sup>169</sup> of whom as yet we can know nothing [words cut off] last<sup>170</sup> who left us in the Castle Eden; is [letters obscured] [words cut off] regreted [sic] he led a sad sensual life, even [words cut off] his wife was with him he entertained [ word cut off] dirty black women in his service & after [word cut off] left him he had always five or six who were sometimes sweeping the house and at other times were admited [sic] to the embrace of his Lordship & his whole time was occupied [sic] in his attention to these amiables, in feeding Calves in raising vegetables, and in devouring [word cut off], the last being perhaps the greatest [sic] delight of all, as it is certain it occupied the largest portion of his time, the public affairs which he ought to have attended to were put into the hands of men, some of whom were too weak to understand them & they again (7) were supposed [word cut off] be the creature of [word cut off] have I fear, no claim to blessing of a quiet [words cut off] this on the same ground where the Father obtained eternal fame,<sup>171</sup> the son has I think(s?) brought on the same name, eternal disgrace. It is a long time since I wrote to Mrs. Shepheard I suppose you see her as often as usual & I hope she is well I fear I shall not be able to write to her this time &

<sup>169</sup> William Bentinck.

<sup>170</sup> Edward Clive.

<sup>171</sup> In reference to Robert Clive.

therefore [sic] request you will give our kindest regard to her, & pray tell her I have enquired for the Major Remington [word cut off] mentioned and find he belongs to the [word cut off] establishment & therefore [sic] it is most [ words cut off] we shall not see him in India. I hope [word cut off] has got his stick by Bonnelly [?] & the shawl by Mr. [word cut off] if he has with the addition of leather geb [word cut off] & a dashin new hat, I think he will be eied [sic] in Hyde Park-- be sure give my love to him, & to Poor dear Nancy Green, & be sure to thank her over & over for all the trouble she has had on our account which I am sure must have been a great deal, indeed you must all have had a vast deal of trouble in packing & purchasing Pray remember me very affectionately to the two Thoburns & all that family, & indeed to every kind friend I have left; and rely on it, when I find myself on English ground again, I will butter my feet, as we used to do the cats to prevent thier [sic] leaving the house God bless you, believe me most truly and affectionately yours.

Mary Symonds.

October 21, 1803

(8) you will have good fortune if you read what is already scrawled on this miserable sheet of paper you see how it all spoils on (carriage?) Betsy begs if you have not already sent her the [word cut off] of all the milenary [sic] that you will without loss of time send her the exact price of the worked (mustin[sic]?) cloake with braid [letters obscured], it was packed in Mrs Toussaints box Betsy wants [words cut off], as she has sold it to lady (tho/the?) one [words cut off] out with her being very little the [letters obscured] [words cut off] lady was very desirous to have the new one [words cut off] which Betsy[?] will [?] having a good black [words cut off] by way of variety

Received July 25 1804 Clapham

**Letter-039-EG-XX-1803 (Mss.Eur.C.240/2, ff. 167r-177v), Elizabeth Gwillim to Hester James, no date [spring 1803].**

(1) My dear Hetty,

I shall write you the first letter by this ship & it will be merely a letter of thanks & [word crossed out] business. - The Castle Eden arrived here on 18th: of April & on the 20th: being my birthday Mr: Gwillim's sessions day, -& large dinner company day & the day I came to the venerable age of 40 I received for the first time since I left England somthing [sic] larger than a

letter.

- The Henry Addington put in at the Cape & put on board the Castle Eden the letter & my box from Mrs: Toussaint & a basket of seeds - It was a lucky thing having the things of Mrs: Toussaint for otherwise I shou'd not have had them sent & we were really very shabby for want of them - we like them exceedingly - The ribbons were new to us but the bonnets we have seen before on others with envious eyes - but we were extremely glad of them the flowers & caps are very delightful I wish we had had some of the (joys) - I wrote **(2)** that word without thinking we call the trinkets joys & Miss Poll had the misfortune to lose her's, or the best she had out of bundle when we dined out in the country - but of all disappointments - our Wigs! how to make our heads suit the caps without wigs I know not - we have no idea - O why did not you get room for one wig! - And almost as bad Mr: Gwillim & Richard disappointed of the Squibs & Election Ballads - Mr Gwillim read your long letter & we laughed all of us excessively notwithstanding these were in some sorrows but we hoped they were at an end & you cannot guess how droll your letter was to us by being written at intervals. it was exactly as if we had been talking to you - as Billy is able to go into the country I shou'd think he wou'd recover. - I am very sorry James continues to have these stitches & spasms - It is the only trouble I have to keep myself from them for they are bad in this country. -

I had besides your letters many others indeed. I appear never to have been so well thought of before I hope to answer all in time & meanwhile hope **(3)** you in particular & indeed all will continue to write to us for though we have hither to been unlucky about getting things I hope we shall get on better - Mr: G. has bought himself a new hat & we have bought ourselves many muslin gowns indeed we were less in want of those than the millinery. Such a set as Miss Toussaint has sent out now once in about 6 or 7 months woud [sic] do for us very well, but I shou'd not want cloaks often we wear them so seldom Black lace we like much here with the white dresses but not unless it be very fine just a little & fine - the white lace shou'd be very white for here is nobody to wash it & really I cannot do it - I am very well off for lace of about 4 fingers breadth all mine being such but I see some come out in caps & hats very broad - I shou'd not wish any unless any different breadth is used - I have but one pair & a half of white gloves left - do you understand that? - but a great many colourd [sic] ones mostly lead colour which do not do at all well here. - That little worked cloak Polly has taken but both cloak & lace must be washed - I wore my cloak a year without washing but it is a sad trouble to get it washed when it is wanting. I have taken the other cloak of sattin [sic] stitch muslin & bonnet to match. I think that wire bonnet is so exactly like my appearance 12 years ago that I think of old times - when I say I don't want cloaks I mean not lace for them unless something [sic] very different in the



breadth is used - as for the cloak I shoud [sic] (4) be glad of a new shape frequently - in black figured patent lace or Muslin & we can put lace on them - the indeed black lace we have none at present & the next cloak I have I shou'd like to be black about this time twelvemonth please God I shoud [sic] be glad of it. ----

I have a perfect idea of the trouble you have to get our things put on board & I am very sorry I dare say you will be vexed when you hear of the things sent by the Skelton Castle being still in England & our Porter sold off at Bengal for want of being directed by the fault of Cap: Bullock who I suppose must pay for it. --I admire the broad lace on my cloak very much-- --I have not wrote lately so long letters as usual having been busy drawing birds &c.

I told you some months ago that the United Kingdom which brought our Porter had called here on the way to Bengal & I gave a Mr: Prosser Chief Mate charge of two large Palanpoes & some little scraps for Choullies - That ship is come back to this place & has been waiting some time for Lord Clive however by the news brought by the overland it is resolved that his Lordship does not go just yet Mr Prosser has therefore given me an offer to take other things (5) for me and I now proceed to give you an account of the whole -- The two large Palampoes &c as before mentioned. --- A piece of Bengal muslin done up as a gown to be given to Nancy Green with my love -- A square spotted shawl for Mrs: Gwillim And a white square with a narrow border for my mother this last is the half of a long one I bought & have taken half to myself. Square shawls are not to be had here but by chance & very old that for Mrs: Gwillim is not a good one but I know it is what she will like - we pay the same price for a bad square shawl as for a good long one which is finer & twice as large Bombay is the place for shawls. - I shall not send them frequently only to my own family or particular friends - that yellow was a gown piece which I bought & cut in Waistcoats for different friends I am obliged to cut them here for convenience in carriage. - I have bought another which is very fine & I think a great beauty I gave thirty Pagodas for it & it makes six waistcoats - four I have put up in separate papers like large letters & given to Mr: Prosser one Mr: Gwillim senr: one Mr: Wm: Cam one Mr G. Samuel & one for James. - I think he will like it better than his yellow one. - & I hope as letters they will pass without trouble. - Mr: (6) Gwillim ventured to send you some Pearls which by now I hope you have received. He sent them in a letter. - [words crossed out] I also sent by Mr: Prosser a small tin case containing some small bottles of Attar sandal Attar - Jasmine or more properly Nyctanthes Attar - & Rose Attar<sup>172</sup> - they are very valuable - I wish you to keep for your own use two or three you like best - The Rose is the most pleasant to Europeans & also most valuable

<sup>172</sup> Attar or Ittar, an essential oil derived from botanical sources. Nyctanthes is a genus of flowering plants in the family Oleaceae, native to southeastern Asia.

some of it I received in presents from Nabobs & some from Armenians - I shall probably want to send a present to some body or other & if you get it I intend to desire you to keep it carefully till I tell you to whom to send it - having first taken care of what you wish for your own use or to fill trinkets for your friends - It should be put in the Sun frequently in the hottest place you can find.

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Mr: Toussaint sent a letter to Polly desiring her to send his Mother's things by a Mrs:

Anderson on Board the Castle Eden which she has done 6 quart bottles of Masulipetem<sup>173</sup> snuff Two large & two small Palanpoes - Mrs: Toussaint is to have 2 small & one large and one large is for you - This ship is gone to Bengal & will not be so soon in England - I wish you to have one palanpo, - to give Nancy James another & to (7) keep one for me so you can either take one which Mr: Prosser brings or wait 'till the Castle Eden comes & then you will have three to chuse [sic] out of - that is, Mr: P.'s two & that one. -- Besides this I have sent by Mr: Prosser three pieces of coarse chintz they are the Petic coats [sic] that Portegueze [sic] (as we call them) wear I sent them that you might see how you like them I think they wou'd make up well in furniture - tell me which you like best & I will have some painted - these people cannot go out of their own way; but their patterns have a good effect Polly has done her bed with borders cut of these kind of stripes & it looks very well - give my mother one to cover a chair. - but be sure let me know if they are liked. - I sent besides some seeds for Mr: Whitley & a great number of trees. If he knew how many that he wants are packing up he wou'd grieve to think as I do that most likely none will be alive however Mr: Prosser's extreme good nature in offering to take them is very pleasant & therefore I send those most likely to live but the ship will have to pass the Cape in the depth of winter & most likely all will be washed overboard as Lady Clive's were - Polly has drawn some plants slightly & on that paper I have written some account you will please (8) to give him, the papers marked for him - they are rolled up with some drawings of her's - these drawings of her's she has sent that G. Samuel may see them & if they are of any use she will be glad - but you must afterwards not give them away, for slight as they are they are by much the best things I ever saw to give an idea of the people in the streets or roads here in crowds & so various in their dresses.<sup>174</sup> - You will see in one row a group of young Pandarums<sup>175</sup> in their salmon-colour'd muslins & their Moutren [?]<sup>176</sup> beads - or brown beads as you call them - they are a very

<sup>173</sup> Masulipatnam on the Coromandel Coast.

<sup>174</sup> In reference to Mary's paintings of street scenes (South Asia Collection PIC106.51-54)

<sup>175</sup> PANDĀRAM, s. A Hindu ascetic mendicant of the (so-called) Śūdra, or even of a lower caste. A priest of the lower Hindu castes of S. India and Ceylon. Tamil, *paṇḍāram*. (Hobson-Jobson, [p. 666](#)).

<sup>176</sup> In reference to *Vichouva-moutren*, a Hindu deity? Also known as rudraksha beads, these are the warty seeds of *Elaeocarpus angustifolius* (formerly *E. sphaericus* and *E. ganitrus*).

handsome cast of people I wrote you a particular account of them I believe in the letters I sent by Mr: Thackery one of our Doctors. I am extremely [sic] angry that he shou'd have kept the letters three months before he put them in the post - I cou'd have sent them in the packet to you & you woud [sic] not have had postage to have paid but he pressed me so much that I thought he wou'd be hurt if I did not give him a letter or two to carry - These Pandanums are vey well drawn & so are two Bramins sitting down in the same piece. ---

The heat of this country is so great that much cannot be done therefore **(9)** you must take care of all 'till we come to explain all to you - already are two of the seven years passed! - I have learned a good deal of the Gentoo language I cou'd write you a letter in it - It is difficult but I cou'd not get answers to my enquiries without learning the language & this labour must account for my not writing as usual. - We had a charming time of it for three months the weather lovely but this season has commenced very severely - the heat extreme & long- shore wind violent - hot sun & cold wind - constant head ach [sic] to everybody. - In one year we have only had 11 days rain they came altogether it never ceased - It began soberly but at length the wind rose & the last days were all storm of thunder & lightening [sic] - what do you think of a storm of thunder lightening [sic] [word crossed out] & rain for 20 hours - the noise tiresome to an excess - no possibility of sleeping & yet not the least danger, tho' the lightning was as bright as noon day & not a moment interval between the flashes - However we have had only this in the whole year - we want rain sadly - **(10)** but what is suprizing [sic] is that the country looks quite verdant - the roots of the trees go so deep in the earth - & the grasses are all runners that cover the ground 'tho' they do not rise an inch. & live by the dew. - It is very hot you must not expect much from us, to keep ourselves alive is business enough for the next 5 or 6 months -- I shall write to Lizzy or Mary - I have had letters from them & Whitley - you are very saucy about our plants - you eat the leaf & you ought to have eaten the seed vessel - Polly is stupid & thought you meant another thing. - I wish you had some good Moringas<sup>177</sup> to eat well stewed or cou'd see the tree, a lovely object, waving, light as air - sweet flowers - & the long pods we stew & they are as nice as asparagus not that they are alike but as much to be longed for - If you & Lizzy don't get me a tree I shall be very angry I wish I knew the Latin name - well I will tell you in the next letter (if it\_ have a name) - & you must see & remember it. - The root scraped is our Horse raddish [sic] & excellent. - Mr: G. continues pretty well I hope his Sessions will not continue much longer this is 26 of April I began on **(11)** 20th: - I grieve to send you the bottles of that Attar - pray send me some little things like those of a cheap kind - I think I cou'd get Attar if I had a few bottles. - I shall order Whitleys trees to you - & you will forward them if you get any. - I fear you have great

<sup>177</sup> *Moringa oleifera* or Drumstick tree, also called Horseradish tree.

fatigue by us which is a serious trouble. ---

I have bought some more Moutren [?] beads or nuts - I have great trouble to get the small ones - the large are best for Miss T. -- I shall send her some - I am glad you liked them. - with the Attar you will find some nuts like gingerbread nuts which I know you were fond of in former days they are the Natives perfumes - You must take [word crossed out] one of these nuts & with rose water grind it on a plate with rose water just as you wou'd Reeves's colours with common water & when you have got enough off it to please yourself rub it over your hands breast &c - It will look like dirt you will say - but never mind that this is cooling & gives a fine (Es...nel [word obscured]) smell the Natives are very fond of them our people say they are Physick [sic] - it is sandal wood &c &c &c **(12)** I wish I knew if it was very troublesome to you to receive all the parcels & I wou'd endeavour to send them to the proper people all these I have mentioned besides some from Richard to his uncle are consigned to your care & I fear I must also order the seeds & Plants for Mr: Whitley to you also probably you will not be troubled with many as I think they are likely enough to die on the road I have a beautiful Cockatoo - which I will send to you if Mr: Prosser will take charche [sic] of it at present it speaks a few words in three Languages but none in English but probably the saillors [sic] may make it more entertaining by then it arrives

I am much delighted with the pleasant account I hear of poor little Tom but I am sorry he is so delicate in his health I dare say he will come on very well tho' there be nobody at home to teach him if he has time & a quiet place to sit down is allowed him - If he cannot go out of the hearing of domestick [sic] arrangements it will not be possible to get on in learning - However unfavourable these necessary matters are, I have not turned my mind yet to think well of taking an assistant wife in You tell us you are almost tempted to wish the men had a plurality of Wives in which thought you are much more Asiatick [sic] in your notions than I am - A Moor-man who is living in London has, I see, given in the Asiatick [sic] Annual **(13)** Register a very exact account of the Moorish families concl[u]ding by observing that a man might as well live with two D-s as two wives<sup>178</sup> - I cou'd from what I have seen give an account by no means more favourable of the domestick [sic] happiness of such families and I assure you I think the men who indulge in such liberties have no great things to boast of for the women are extremely fond of their respective children, they altogether as much hate those of another wife & as to the Husband he certainly has no part of their regard; & whether he be fondled on or scolded it is only to obtain peculiar advantages without any respect to the state of the husbands fortune [word

<sup>178</sup> In reference to Mirza Abu Taleb Khan, "Vindication of the liberties of the Asiatic women," *Asiatic Annual Register*, no. 3 (1801), 100-107.

crossed out] Our English husbands tell us a great deal of their liberal treatment of us & the deplorable state of the Asiatick [sic] woman - this I assure is a fine story - I think they wou'd be a little more astonished if they were to hear an Eastern lady harangue: a Mill clapper & all our old similies [sic] are a joke to it the rapidity of utterance is beyond me to describe - besides which he may get his beard torn up by the roots & his ears bit & after all he is obliged to watch & humour the Lady for fear she shou'd jump in to a well or a tank - nay he is afraid to have many trees of the prettiest flowers grow in his garden lest she swallow a handful of roots or leaves & either by water or poison put herself (14) put herself out of the world which wou'd be the most dreadful disgrace to him - I can tell you a great deal upon this head some time or other in the meanwhile you may believe me there are more ways of keeping husbands in order than you can easily think of. ----

You accuse me of not having given you an account of the birds of this place I think as a contrast to the last subject I may as well tell you here. - The days here as you know are nearly equall [sic] in lenth [sic] & the morning breaks out suddenly. With the first ray of light exactly at the firing of the guns which give notice of day break, the crows awake as if they were really called by the gun & having as I suppose by the noise & confusion settled with difficulty their plan for the day they disperse & the King crow or Cowbird as it is called begins to call with [word crossed out] loud & very sweet [?] notes [word crossed out] It has but two notes but those are frequently repeated - It is much like the black bird & is very pleasing from the top of the Mangoe [sic] trees - It is of the same size as the black bird & colour but has not the yellow beak - "The ouzel cock so black of hue with orange tawny bill" - however tho' it is not so ornamented as the black bird & comes nearer the crow altogether I think you wou'd like it nearly as well the power of voice & sweetness is very charming - it has a remarkably long forked tail & sits as our magpies do on the cows heads & on the sheep from whence it takes its name & it is a great favorite with the natives - It continues to call greater part of (15) the day but chiefly morning & evening. - After this if the morning be pleasant numbers of birds begin to sing many of as sweet notes as ever I heard but they never go on to any warbling it is just a little song like a wren there are great numbers of these little beautiful creatures for ever nursing on the blossoms of the trees - We have a bird called Dyal of a fine note it is black & white & Bullbuls - or Indian Nightingales - I cannot say that their note is much like a nightingale it has no strength it is besides confused and almost too sweet - and exceedingly hurried like the noise people make with a cork on a bottle to induce Canary birds to sing at night. - They are very pretty some with Tufts on their heads - these are rather better singers - others with their tails up & wings down like a domestick [sic] cock, - They are constantly running under the rose trees of an evening. -

That with the Tuft is stated to be the true bullbul - but here are many kinds that are so called & I have drawn none yet because I have not had time to acquaint myself with the distinctions - with all these singing birds, & many others, you will suppose we have a fine concert - but the number of chattering & screamers & croakers are so continually making noises that one has seldom a possibility of hearing them. The crows here are of the sort called hooded crow or Royston Crow & so familiar that they come to the rooms & take biscuits [sic] off the side board if the breakfast is laid & the servants go out of the (16) room for a minute they are on the table eating the butter & the rolls & loaves they take up & not being able to fly away with them they drop them on the floors & a hundred times I have come to breakfast & seen the loaves carried out & lying on the pavement & 20 or 30 of these miscreants flying away in a dreadful fright, yet the natives are extremely fond of them & never kill them indeed they never kill anything. As the poorer sort of people who have no square within their houses do all their cooking out at the doors - it would amuse you I think to see half a dozen crows sitting within a yard of the Pot watching the process & conversing occasionally the natives only brush them away with their hands as you would a hen that came in the house - yet they are extremely [sic] quick & will not be caught - They [illegible] sift in the streets their grain of various kinds & lay it on mats or sheets to dry - a set of Crows are constantly eating away with the greatest composure - Occasionally with the Crows come Ravens I think rather smaller than our Ravens - The Natives who are perfectly superstitious hold these in the utmost detestation they are called Pariar<sup>179</sup> Crows - [word crossed out] Whatever is superior of its kind is called Braminy & whatever is inferior is called Pariar - thus we have Braminy Kite<sup>180</sup> - Braminy Duck<sup>181</sup> - Braminy Lizzard &c - & the contrary. - When the Pariar Crow sets up a croaking on the house or a tree the servants express the utmost anxiety. owls are still more dreaded notwithstanding they are very common - I have seen two kinds - the Common white Owl of Bewick<sup>182</sup> & ~~the~~ a small Owl - which is much like the English small owl. - These scream much of a night & are in everybody's garden (17) I had one given me alive which I drew but I really believe there was not a servant in the house but what was perfectly miserable the whole time it was in the house They begged & intreated & one of our horses dying by eating wet grass soon after the death was attributed entirely to the Owl & we were thought to come off very lightly. - so far, 'tho' more violent their superstition agrees with

<sup>179</sup> Or pariah, originating from a Tamil word, *paraiyar* in Tamil originally referring to a caste of drummers but coming to be applied more broadly to people of low caste or without caste.

<sup>180</sup> *Haliastur indus*.

<sup>181</sup> Ruddy Shelduck *Tadorna ferruginea*.

<sup>182</sup> Thomas Bewick, *A History of British Birds: Volume I, Land Birds*. (Printed by Sol. Hodgson, for Beilby & Bewick, 1797-1804).

that of our common people; but here the Cuckows are held in the highest esteem - to be lulled to sleep in the shade by the notes of Cokillas is the favourite idea in poetry - I have drawn three very handsome birds of this kind differing much in their plumage from our's - The notes I am not sure that I have heard for in the cages they are silent & I do not know the call - It is generally disliked by Europeans & as generally admired by the Natives - I presume it is somewhat [sic] like the notes of ours as all the names have the same first syllable Cokilla - Cokilla - Cuckbuck &c - Indeed we speak of the Cuckow with delight as attending us in a pleasant season - but from Chaucer & Milton it appears that it is a bird of ill omen in Love affairs - the contrary of which is here the case - Green Parokeets<sup>183</sup> [sic] are here very common & the Coracias Indicus<sup>184</sup> certainly the most beautifully colour'd bird I ever saw it is know[n] by the name of Jay by Europeans however beautiful these are I have no pleasure in seeing them in the garden because the notes are so abominably harsh

--- We have two kinds of Bee eaters<sup>185</sup> very common bright green with fine bent beaks & long feathers in the tail - & some Creepers<sup>186</sup> of different colours very little larger than the humming & birds they come to the Ipomeas [sic] a sort of scarlet convolvulus [sic] that blows profusely in our gardens. - & we constantly see Kingfishers they are very numerous. here are three kinds one large green & chesnut [sic] coloured - one black & white mottled & a small one the same as the English but smaller. - as for the sparrows tho very **(18)** [words crossed out] common I never see them but in pairs & they build their nests within the houses they come through the Venetians & build on the mouldings or on any books &c - They are slender in their form in which alone they differ - I have seen no house without them but never saw above one or two pair in a house. - We have Vultures in the open parts Common kites - & Hawks of a great many kinds - The moor people are very fond of Hawking & as a man in England goes accompanied with his dog so these people always carry on their fists a trained Hawk - I have seen 7 or 8 men standing to talk together in the street each with a hawk on his hand - They also train partridges & Quails the latter are to fight & I believe the partridges also - I have met people on the road with a partridge running behind them just as a little Dog wou'd follow a man - there are numbers of other birds which it wou'd tire you to hear of many as yet to me very little known I saw no swallows for sometime after I came here perhaps on account of the season, but we have many in some places

<sup>183</sup> Possibly the Rose-ringed, *Psittacula krameri*.

<sup>184</sup> The Indian roller (*Coracias benghalensis*).

<sup>185</sup> Quite possibly the Green Bee-eater *Merops orientalis* and the Blue-tailed Bee-eater, *M. philippinus*.

<sup>186</sup> Sunbirds, at least including the Purple-rumped (*Leptocoma zeylonica*), Purple (*Cinnyris asiaticus*) and the Long-billed Sunbirds (= Loten's sunbird *Cinnyris lotenia*) (all the three species figure in her paintings).

but they fly higher than with us & are by no means so numerous - I have seen none that make nests in any buildings. - I dare say you have heard but perhaps not of the Baja<sup>187</sup> or hanging birds nests - They come only to particular trees in the next garden to mine on a Date Palm the leaves of which are very high hang many many of these nests. - I sent you a nest by Mr: Templar which I hope you received. There is a chamber within for the family & a perch across the bottom for the young birds to sit in before they can fly - The bird differs in feathers very little from a sparrow - (It is a Gros beak) it is very tame & familiar & trained to various curious tricks. - But the pride & delight of the Indians is the Braminy Kite - It is a small eagle about the size of a common **(19)** Kite - well shaped of a bright Chesnut [sic] colour the head & neck snowy white - they go in pairs & a pair attend many Gardens mine is not so lucky the natives feed them with great care & consider them as Gods - They must see them every Sunday morning before they eat & whenever they see them make to them what they call Dunnamoolos<sup>188</sup> - a salam is a salute to a master a Dunnamoolos is to a God or a Bramin it is holding the hands up, closed as we do in prayer. - In the Garden we had at the Mount, on a Mangoe [sic] tree the Braminy Kites had a nest. a peculiarly fortunate circumstance & here theref[ore] on a Sunday morning the natives come in order to make their Dunnamoolos accompanied by a short prayer - Notwithstanding the Braminy Kite is held in such veneration they are by no means numerous & if the people did not know well where to find a pair they might go without breakfast very late on a Sunday: They are certainly beautiful - I dare say you cou'd see one at Parkinsons either under this name or under the name of Pondicherry Eagle - there is a print the first bird in Catesby's Carolina - if you shou'd meet with that book it is called the white headed Eagle. - I shall close this with an account of [word crossed out] ~~birds~~ Birds which I have as yet seen that are the same as the English birds - The birds the feathers of which I send you are the [word crossed out] Domestick [sic] fowls in their original state and are very handsome those & Peacocks are wild in the Woods of India. - And are brought to us by the people who live in the woods & who have manners & customs peculiar to themselves - They are (there is little doubt) the same people as the Gypsies in England, part of them ensnare birds & beasts & are wonderfully ingenious in imitating the cries of different animals to entice them part of them gather leaves used in the Curries & bringing **(20)** them into the towns cry them as our people wou'd along the streets; but instead of money exchange with the inhabitants for rice - Curry is the name of cooking with them & pillly signifies leaves - so they cry Curry pillly vankilliko<sup>189</sup> - will you buy my Curry leaves I - [?]

<sup>187</sup> *Ploceus philippinus*.

<sup>188</sup> Dandamulus (=దండములు, in Telugu).

<sup>189</sup> Perhaps the cry in Tamil. "Kariveppilai" is Curry Leaf in Tamil.



-others & the greater part are conjurers or perform in a better manner what the Gipsies [sic] pretend to do - This I mention because besides the history of the birds you tell me I have omitted to speak of the Conjurers Were I to tell you what they do, I presume you might believe me because I think you know I wou'd not tell anything I did not see; but the things these people do are generally disbelieved in England & indeed after these Juglers [sic] you wou'd despise ours - & their feats of activity are equal to their sleight of hand - They also charm Snakes - I think Polly sent you in one of her scetches [sic] a man in his fanciful dress with a Cobra capelle<sup>190</sup> - that is a large hooded snake reared up & dancing to the musick [sic] - but of this I shall tell you more hereafter - The curious enquirers have discovered that these people are the same as the gipsies [sic] their language the same that is corrupt Malabar - you know a book I had with little remarks on Birds & called White's History of Selborne - I saw the other day that - he says one tribe of the Gipsies called themselves [word crossed out] Curlipple<sup>191</sup> - & is desirous to know what it means - it means - all these people take the name of their cast from their employment thus some are - Hunters or poachers - some are conjurers & some currypili & they never change their employment but all the tribe [word crossed out] keep together & retain this name of the employment answerable to our surname -- I wish I had better pens ink & paper for the sake of your eyes if you intend to read this I hope you will discover through the bad writing that I am your's most affectionately -EGwillim (21)

The Birds in Madras - which I have yet seen that are the same as in England -- Swans

--

Geese & wild geese &c

Ducks - all sorts - wild Ducks Teal &c the same & very good eating -

Pidgeons [sic] all sorts -

Partridges - the same in appearance but dry & bad to eat - Turkeys

[sic] -

Quails -

The Raven

Royston Crow or something [sic] very near it -

Large white owl of Bewick -

Small owl. - D<sup>o</sup>

<sup>190</sup> Cobra de Capella or *Naia tripudians*.

<sup>191</sup> "Curleople" in Gilbert White, *The Natural History of Selborne* (London: Benjamin White, 1789) 195.

Kite or Puttock D<sup>o</sup> -

Roller --- D<sup>o</sup> -

Small strike or Butcher bird - D<sup>o</sup>

Brown Backed strike or butcher bird -

Sparrow --

Wood lark

English kingfisher -

(22)

Mrs. James - Bishopsgate

street within

**Letter\_040\_MS\_02-1804 (Mss.Eur.C.240/3, ff. 179r-183v) Mary Symonds to Hester James  
Madras, February 28, 1804**

(1) 1804

(2) Madras February 28th,

1804 My Dear Hetty,

Having this day enjoyed the great satisfaction of receiving [sic] two pretty little letters from my dear mother, & you, I sit down to answer them by the return of the Post, you will more easily imagine [sic], than I can describe to you, the pleasure these two letters have given us, when I tell you; that the last letter we have received [sic], before these, were dated April 1803; that a ship has arrived here called the Euphrates which left England the 29th of Sep<sup>tr</sup> without bringing us a single line from any one friend, and that the Admiral Aplin in which these letters came has been taken by the French, but by an unusual act of kindness the private letters were given up to Captain Rogers, who arrived in Bengall about a fortnight ago, from whence he forwarded them to Madras, I would have [sic] given the best of my possessions for three lines from you by that ship which sailed from England in the end of September, but we must hope

for the best & be thankfull [sic] to providence for so unexpectedly preserving these, my mothers letter is indeed a real comfort to us, for it is truly wonderful to think of her being able to bear (3) the immence [sic] fatigue of such a journey as she describes hers to have been & yet to have such good heath [sic] and spirits after it.

We have over & over again acknowledged the receipt of all the packages you were so good as to send us, by the Union, by Mr. Livingstone Mr. Longdill & Mr. Toussaint, & if you have been so lucky as to recieve [sic] all our letters [word obscured and crossed out] I hope think you cannot have been long at any one time without hearing of us, for I made it a note [?] ever since the war began, to write a few lines by every ship that has left this place The collection of things you sent us has been a constant source of amusement to us, besides the satisfaction we have in wearing, eating &c &c we are every now & then surprised with some new discovery somtimes [sic] in unrolling a piece of ribbon when we get off half the quantity out pops a beauty of another sort which we never expected to see, and the other day only, I discovered a packet of mottoes<sup>192</sup> amongst the confectionary, to be sure they were a little mouldy from having lain so long under some fruit lozenges which were damp but I set one of the little black boys, to rub them clean with 1 piece of flannel & now they look (4) quite fresh again. I am sure you would laugh enough, if you could but have a peek at us sometimes, trying on the things; for you have no idea how stupid we are grown already about putting them on, one of the caps with a yellow liburnum [sic] flower in it was tryed [sic] with the hind side foremost & indeed every side but the right, or even [?] that perhaps by chance but we could make nothing of it fit to be seen, although it looked beautiful off the head, so it was given up untill [sic] a lady happened to come from Europe with one the same which we saw her wear, & ever since, that cap has been a great favorite of Betsys; then there is a pretty cloake which was like to be lost for it was packed inside one of Sir Henrys hats & he of course chose to have the pleasure of unpacking them himself, which he did in a little side room & threw out all the contents of the box except the hats, supposing it to be only waste paper as it was very light the wind blew it under a couch in one corner of the room were [sic] it lay till the next day undiscovered, when the woman who swept the room brought it to light & we began to try it on, that is Betsy took it into her own room to try; she & her maid worked at it for some time, but not being (5) able to settle it she came into my room to know if I could find out the manner of wearing it, for says she 'I am sure it must be very pretty if we could but tell how to put it on. So I patted it down on the back & I put the strings under the arms, & then over the arms & then

<sup>192</sup> Women would wear mottoes of various sorts on their caps, often as political statements.

tied them round the neck & round the waist, but all would not do the cape stood out behind like a Shift & the lace would not quite reach to the elbows, which gave it a very odd look, so at last she took it off in despair & I began to turn it about on the bed & to lament over it when all of a sudden it came into my head to put it on another way, & then to our great surprise we found that we had been all the time putting it on the wrong side uppermost & that the thing we took for the cape was intended to be the peli[sse?] of a jacket & very pretty it is, & Betsy wears it often with the Bonnet made of the same muslin, which she calls her calash,<sup>193</sup> & she is quite happy in it because it hides the sides of her face which you know she always liked being so much afraid of looking bold (6)

I have trotted about nicely in your thick pair of green shoes not on the sea beach, because there the sand is very fine, & ones feet do not want any protection, besides I thought the sea waters would spoil the shape of them at once, so, I always go there in old shoes made in this country as they are of no value, but the thick ones I brought with me here to the mount where we are in the same house we had last year at this season, from this place we frequently scramble about the hills, which are very rocky & every where covered with brambles, & a variety of thorny plants which run close to the ground Betsy has been highly pleased with two pair of green shoes which you sent her, & she thinks they were not bought at the same place with the others as they (she wishes for some more the same) had no makers name in them, & they fit her better than any of the rest, indeed both hers & mine are in general a little too long. We were very much amused by your Idea of the cotton in which the pearls were packed, I assure it is not the wool you suppose it to be, tho' I think it a pity to undecieve you yet I must tell you it is nothing more than a bit of Bourbon cotton the same as that which maks [sic] the shining French cotton used for working the beautiful satin stitch so much the fashion at present, we have sent Mr. Whitley a good deal of the seed of it at different times (7) I do not intend to go scribbling on in one letter to make it of an immense [sic] length, because having nothing very material to say to you except that we are all well & comfortable, I think it will be much better in the present state of affairs to put a short letter into each ship four or five are expected to sail from this place in a short time but the day is not yet fixed, & I intend to go on writing every day a little to somebody or other till the last.

Poor Sir Henry is very angry at the late peace, which is not to be wondered at considering how much this country feels the ill effect of it,<sup>194</sup> it just served to give the French

<sup>193</sup> Or calèche, a woman's silk hood.

<sup>194</sup> The Peace of Amiens, which lasted until from March 1802 until May 1803.

an opportunity of sending out a fleet which has been annoying [sic] our trade ever since and they have contrived to destroy one of the Companies Warehouses. Our troops have completely succeeded in driving all the French out of the Maratta<sup>195</sup> Army which is a great thing for us as they are a mischievous [sic] decietful [sic] set. An officer of thiers [sic] has lately been discovered corresponding with his countrymen at the Isle of France he has lived in the English pay for ten or twelve years affecting to be a true friend to them, but has been employing himself to (8) find out the weakest parts of the country & lately whilst one of the Bastions of the fort was under repair & we were engaged with the Marratta's he wrote a letter to the French Admiral telling him the exact state of Fort St George & advising him to bring his whole force then to a particular part where he would find very little to oppose him. This correspondence he sent from a Dannish [sic] port & luckily it was intercepted by one of our Frigates, what will be done with the French man I do not know. As you do not mention Mr. Clarkes family in your last letter, I conclude they were in Scotland enjoying a fine cool breze [sic] I think a winter at St Andrews must blow away the cobwebs unless they stick close indeed, however it will make the children very hardy & Charles will be able to make his way in the world all the better for a Scotch accent, it is a great recommendation wherever a Scotsman is in power & that I believe will be found all over Great Britain & in all countries dependant [sic] upon her.

We are all very glad to hear that Ned has got a farm & that it is in the neighbourhood of his brothers I hope your next letters will give us some more particulars of the situation & I want to know if it is large or small & what is the principal produce of it I like much to hear some country news & the price of provisions &c (9) Poor Nancy Green was sadly used about her gown it was some months before we discovered the mistake of it's [sic] not being sent & when we found the peice [sic] of muslin lying here we were going to give it back to the man it was bought of, only it happened to have a mark upon it which when we saw convinced us of our error, as that is now otherwise disposed of Betsy intends to send her something [sic] else it will be a shawl if we can get any body to carry it & if we do I hope it will have the good luck to escape the nasty privateers which infest these seas in an inconcievable [sic] manner. Great fears are entertained here for the homeward bound China ships, & if they are lost you will lose some trifles which we gave to the care of Mr Lane & Mr. Livingston, but you will know the event soon after the receipt [sic] of this. I long to know if you have seen Mr. Prosser & his ship got off safe, if he had a good voyage he ought to have arrived whilst my mother was with you. I shall say no more in this but our joint love to every dear friend & a kiss or two poor jimmy, O why would he have a red coat. I

<sup>195</sup> Maratha.

am quite shocked to hear of his accident but indeed he must be so valourous. I am my dear Hetty  
ever affectionately yours

M Symonds

Feb.<sup>ry</sup> 29, 1804 leap year, now or never<sup>196</sup>

**(10)** I have put up a pair of Carnelian sleeve buttons for Mr. Wilby & a Trichinopoly stone  
for a seal, will you be soo [sic] good as to send them to him I will also send his wife a pair of  
Argus Pheasant feathers if any one will carry them for me they are valuable & bear a high  
duty therfor [sic] it is difficult to get any one to take them

**(11)** Received Oct<sup>r</sup> 17<sup>th</sup>

By the H.C's ship

Windham Mr<sup>s</sup>. James

No 39 Bishopgate Street within

London

HGwillim

<sup>196</sup> There is a tradition on Leap Day allowing women to initiate dances and propose marriage. If the proposal was refused the man was expected to buy the woman a silk gown or, by the mid-20th century, a fur coat. The tradition is supposed to originate from a deal that Saint Bridget struck with Saint Patrick.,

**Letter-041-EG-03-1804 (Mss.Eur.C.240/3, ff. 184r-192v), Elizabeth Gwillim to Esther Symonds March 7, 1804**

(1) My dear Mother,

Your letter dated the 20th: of August 1803 written in Bishopsgate street & inclosed [sic] in one of poor Hetty's, I to my great comfort received a few days ago - How but by a miracle I received it I know not but I thank God for it. - Hetty said in her letter that she had been to the India house<sup>197</sup> & had scarcely time to write by the Aplin. - Now the Aplins [sic] was expected here for many days; but [word crossed out] instead of seeing the ship, we heard~~that~~ the fatal news that it was taken by a French Privateer but that the Captain had been allowed to go to Calcutta.

Sir Henry was most outrageous against our ships of war in letting this come to pass & in short we were all miserable with the idea of having lost all the letters we naturally (2) expected by the Aplin - A few days after however a packet arrived from Calcutta by Post containing yours & Hetty's letters alone. - The Dispatches & the letters by the Mail we understand were destroyed & can only conceive that this must have been put in too late for the mail at the India house & brought by some private hand perhaps Captain Rogers himself who is a very good natured man & spent a day with us on his last Voyage. - If any other friend did us the kindness to write to us their letters are doubtless lost; - but these are in such a case a most providential [sic] favour -

Our old Admiral Renier<sup>198</sup> is an excellent old man; but whether he has too much to do for the strength with him or what I know not; but the Bay is over-run with Privateers here are no less than 13 that they know of besides 4 that have been taken. -

Four India-men<sup>199</sup> are now about to sail from this place under convoy - I know neither of the Captains but Captain Price, whom Mrs: Shephard sent. I hinted to him [word crossed out] something [sic] of carrying things but he did not respond & indeed in these dangerous times (3) it is a favour too great to ask - Polly intends writing two letters & I also intend writing two others, we shall send one by each ship If time permits. Perhaps we may write more but this at least we intend. -

We wait with much anxiety another set of letters from you, & hope they will bring us good news of Hetty's delivery & poor James's recovery. from his strain in his back which I am

<sup>197</sup> East India House, the East India Company's headquarters in Leadenhall Street.

<sup>198</sup> Admiral Rainier

<sup>199</sup> East India Company ships.

sorry to hear continues to trouble him. - We had a packet of letters from Hetty began to be written on the 30th: April 1804. inclosing a letter from Dr: Cam & a net for the hair - & sometime before we had another packet of nearly the same date, which contained a letter from Hetty to Mary; but neither of those came by the Glory which she expected wou'd bring them however they came & that is enough. -

I am happy to hear Nancy did so well with her little girl who I hope grows strong & well - I conclude by this time they are in their new farm where you will not be likely to visit them 'till the Cuckow, if he shou'd come so early, has picked up the dirt & called you & the boys to spend the Easter holidays with them (4) I suppose by the boys passion for drawing soldiers that Mr: Edward James is as staunch a defender of the Country as ever. - I am heartily sorry for their removal from Tupsley - It was a pretty distance from the town & made a charming retreat for you. - Hetty delights [word crossed out] me in telling me how active you still are in business, I often think of you & poor Phill consulting together. I never heard how it came to pass that you did not complete your treaty with the man who was to take the place -. I am sorry it happened by some accident that [word crossed out] a gown I sent to Nancy Green was left behind - our house was in perfect confusion with company & we are obliged to send the things loose on board the ships. I found the gown in a drawer afterwards & imagining it to belong to a Lady who had bought one the same was for sending it away. - I have disposed of it now - & have got a pretty white square shawl for Nancy which I shall send her the first opportunity - but the sending is the worst of the job - seeds or anything of that kind which have no duty we can send but of other things ~~they all~~ (5) every one has enough of his own --

I sent some things by Mr: Lane, the surgeon of a ship who spent some time with us on his way to China, amongst the rest a shawl for Nancy James - I fear it will be lost but you must not vex about it it was of no great value & only cost me 8 Pagodas; but it was cheap & I thought it wou'd look better than a Norwich.<sup>200</sup> He wou'd not undertake to run it for me but I was to give him 25 per cent which is what they give the smuglers [sic] to land things for them - for this premium they undertake to land the goods whatever they be & if they fail pay the loss - so much for honour amongst thieves and I am told they always pay if they lose the goods - You are obliged however to put the full value upon it for if they think the thing better than the price they detain it at what you state to be the price & say it was siezed [sic] - I fear the China ships will be taken because the French fleet which came out to take possession of Pondicherry took their course Eastward & we have already heard & so will you most likely long before this comes to

<sup>200</sup> Norwich was famous for producing dress shawls aimed at the middle and top end of the shawl market from 1800 to 1870. They were made using silk and worsted cloth in imitation of Indian designs.



hand, that they went to Bencoolen<sup>201</sup> & did all the mischief they cou'd, which was however of no great consequence, but they are **(6)** in those seas at present, & it seems more than probable will take our ships -- at least it is here generally thought so - I suppose you must know Mr: Lane but I do not remember him - he was apprentice with the Illustrious Price & is a son of Mr: James Lane's. I shall be sorry if he is taken, as he once before lost all he had gained, & he seems a quiet good young man, with much dry humour - I hardly know how to say I hope for I have many fears about it; but I shall be very glad to know that the united Kingdom comes safe, for by Mr: Prosser the mate I sent many things particulars of which I have stated amongst the rest, the half of a shawl for you I kept half for myself & sent you the other half I gave 20 pagodas for the whole shawl, the border is narrow but I wish you may get it as it is neat, warm & strong - 'tis not the value of it but I shall grieve that you are disappointed of the warmth of it as I flattered myself you wou'd have had it last Sep: & I shall be very glad to hear that the ships arrived whilst you were with Hetty in Sep: which if they had good luck was the time ~~the ship~~ she was expected to arrive I sent beautiful waistcoats &c - & attar of Roses & Palampoes ("no" apes nor peacocks" but a Cockatoo ---

The United Kingdom sailed [sic] from hence the 10th: of May 1803 - You say you thought the intervals long on account the monsoon I fear you will think this longer as it is so late before any ship sails this year. **(7)** We are now far on our journey through the third year in India & [word crossed out] whatever we say of the uncertainty of the Climate of England this seems quite as much so of any three travellers who had given [word crossed out] accounts of these three years seperately [sic], their histories wou'd have appeared to have been utterly false, so much as each year differed This has been to me very severe indeed tho' it has agreed with all the rest very well [word crossed out] During Seventeen months of the time I have been in India that is from the end of Nov: ~~1802~~ 1801 till about April 1803 - we saw only 10 hard days of Monsoon rain & one shower in the intervening spring & that was to me the pleasantest year we have had. It was the coolest summer & the country was quite verdant 'till just before the Monsoon - since that time we have seldom been a week without rain & the monsoon lasted three months - The torrents of rain which have fallen are astonishing - one shou'd have supposed all this wou'd have cooled the earth, but on the contrary the heat has been insupportable - The two former winter seasons we were glad to shut the doors of a night & put a blanket on the bed but this year the thermometer has never been below 82 - which as far as I remember must be as hot as you ever feel it in England. - The Natives **(8)** are much pleased with the season for it is a season of plenty. Rain is their wealth & their Glory - If we had not had such rains [word crossed out] there wou'd

<sup>201</sup> Bencoulen (now Bengkulu city), in Sumatra, an East India Company settlement.

probably have been a famine a dreadful calamity everywhere but to these poor people who make no provision for the morrow [word crossed out] horrid beyond description - All the parts about this place however dry in appearance & which have been barren ever since I came here were sowed with Rice & different grains the whole place has ~~been~~ looked like a corn country in England in June - they sowed in Dec: & now is the Harvest I suppose the greater part will be cleared in a [sic] about a week & the tanks that is reservoirs - or Lakes you may call them are still well stored & they will no doubt get a second crop - Their custom is to float the fields of Rice by which means the air is impregnated with damps & becomes to me very injurious - I suffered much with the same kind of intermittent<sup>202</sup> I had the first monsoon; but I was so extremely nervous with it that I cou'd not know what to make of myself - Dr: Anderson orderd [sic] me to go instantly to the Mount<sup>203</sup> which being high ground is like the Hamstead of Madras & here I have been these six weeks thank God I think now as well as before the monsoon & as fatt - I am much fatter than (9) when I left England but I change very often from fat to lean but not violently either way. - I am very fond of this place it is so like an English Village. The bells knell to Church on a Sunday. & the Church is at the top of the rock ·& But it is too high Church in every sense of the word for us - there is a broad flight of steps as high as to the top of St: Paul's in the rock, on the top of which stands the church & some fine trees. & some of the Priests houses at different stages - The religion is the Catholick [sic] in its' most superstitious form - But I believe I told you a great deal about this place last year & am only making repetitions - However it is a curious place & I must tell you somthing [sic] more about it. - in order to prepare you for a story which I have translated from the Telingue<sup>204</sup> language or as it is commonly called the Gentoo, & which I intend to send you by Captain Price, as I fear it will be too large for a letter. - I believe I told you that the Village of Saint Thomas (called by the Portegueze [sic] S. Thome) near which I live is an ancient & holy City of the Indians - by them called Mazoora pooram (10) or the City of Peacocks<sup>205</sup> - From that Village to this place & some what beyond is what they call a Stallam - a word which in some senses means only a place but in a religious sense means somthing [sic] like a Cathedral City or a Bishops see - a place where there is a great Pagodo [sic] with many others subordinate to it as you will understand if you read the story & which is a sacred Legend - for the Hindoos have a Legendary tale to every church as ~~we~~ have the Catholicks [sic] have of their saints. - Seeva [sic] & Vishnu are the gods to whom alone

<sup>202</sup> Intermittent fever.

<sup>203</sup> St Thomas' Mount.

<sup>204</sup> Telugu.

<sup>205</sup> Mylapore or *Mayilāppūr* (from Tamil *Mayil ārparikkum oor*, which means "Land of the peacock scream").

they raise great Temples - (or as we call them improperly Pagodas) but in every Temple the god is worshipped by a different name - or rather epithit [sic] [word crossed out], which has made many suppose their gods numerous thus they say the Lord of the rock - the Lord of the soull [sic] - The lilly [sic] white God - & so on - Seeva [sic] is the god worshipped in this Village & the district. - Now the worship of Seeva [sic] is the ~~most~~ more ancient worship but it is also the darkest superstition - The people are they [sic] prey of the Bramins who make their vices a source of wealth. - The followers of Vishnu have purer notions but even their worship has little but outward form **(11)** Some learned people think the Bramins are conquerors of the Indians & of a distant country It may be so but it is a dreadful religion these innocent people are taught. - Their virtues are not the growth of it but of their gentle natures & this false religion is some excuse for their errors. - It seems almost profane to compare it to Christianity - otherwise we might call the Seeva [sic] people the Roman Catholicks [sic] of India. --

This Village is believed to be the first place where Christianity was taught in India & St: Thomas the Apostle is said to have fallen a Martyr here --

As I was learning the Gentoo I thought it wou'd be a good excersise [sic] to translate the Stalla pooranam<sup>206</sup> or legend of this place & I therefore desired the Bramin to procure it for me. It is a Poem in their language as all these kind of works are; but it is not in their most extravagant stile [sic]. If you can get over the hard names I think it will give you a better idea of the religion of these people & their customs than anything I cou'd tell you and as you complain so much of the difficulty of reading my hand, I have put a native writer to transcribe it. - I have put a great **(12)** many notes to it at the end, or perhaps they ought to be called memorandums for as such I wrote them, they will explain to you anything you want to know & you may read or let them alone as you like - you must accept this story as a letter when it comes, for tho' not in my hand it was copied from mine & took me a great time to write, & the vast trouble of inquiring into the various circumstances is beyond your belief - You must endeavour to let me know if it affords you any entertainment that I may judge whether it will be worth while to send you anything more if I shou'd please God, translate it; or whether you wou'd rather have my account, if indeed you be not quite tired of hearing Indian History --

I told you long ago that I left the white world to Polly & as you know not & I do not think wou'd care much about knowing the greater part of the people here. Our scandal is not a whit more entertaining than that of an old Ladies tea table & ones only hopes is that it not more true - [words crossed out] Instead of hearing that an old lady stints her maid in bread & butter or gives the cold meat to the lap dog instead of a Christian we hear of one who has hanged up innocent

<sup>206</sup> Sthala Purana.

Polygars<sup>207</sup> (13) & another who is haunted by the ghost of a Rajah & such like morning chat --

I thank God we are all well just now & the weather and I shall add nothing more to this as it will be too large but begin anew - Give my love to all & my duty to Mr: & Mrs: Gwillim which also accept - I am sorry you & Mr: Gwillim have so much trouble to read my letters I wish they were better worth it - but this is a fatiguing climate & I write as fast as I can & seldom stay to read over again what I have written so that I fear it is strange blundering stuff. - we all join in love to the children to Ned, Nancy, Hetty James &c Believe me

Your dutiful daughter

EGwillim -

Mount - March 7th: 1804. -

(14) [blank]

(15) By the H.C's ship

Ceylon Mrs: James -

No. 39 Bishopsgate street within

London

HGwillim

Oct<sup>er</sup> 15 1804 Recevd [sic]

**Letter-043-EG-08-1804 (Mss.Eur.C.240/3, ff. 197r-201v), Elizabeth Gwillim to Esther Symonds August 12, 1804**

(1) Madras

My dear Mother,      S. Thome Aug<sup>st</sup>: 12<sup>th</sup> 1804

I hope it is still the

P. Wales's birthday not the

King's. -

It is probable that we shall have only one day to write, we have just had notice that a ship is to sail tomorrow (the Glory) - We all intend writing but not so fully as by the next

<sup>207</sup> Poligars, warrior-chiefs who controlled much of the Tamil and Telugu country in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

ships which will probably be in England as soon as this. -

I have the pleasure to say that by the blessing of God we are all in good health at present; but we have had a very severe season the heat has been beyond anything I had before felt & I may say I did not know India 'till this season. - The heat does not disagree with me nor the Land winds they soon cured my spasms & aguish complaint; but they are very distressing to Sir Henry who has suffered very much for three months. The rains **(2)** came on about a fortnight ago & he is quite relieved even by a single shower we have had it very cool with strong rain every day & I thank God I do not perceive that he looks at all the worse for his sufferings. - The Land winds are [word crossed out] dry & hot & bring with them a great load of fine sand so as sometimes to appear like a fog & [word crossed out] this sand is carried by the wind with such force that it is quite distressing to the people on board the ships [word crossed out] which are anchored two miles from the shore. - This wind dries up the pores of the skin & occasions a most intolerable cutaneous heat & an unquenchable thirst & of course restlessness; for sleep will not come on in this hot country without perspiration. To a person so irritable as Mr: G. you may suppose these winds are a terrible annoyance, not to be relieved by any medicine. He has therefore had little to do with the doctors for they have all told him alike, that **(3)** it was the mere effect of the wind, & when it changes he has immediate relief; but we have had four months of these winds this year - & during that time he has been unable to study or take delight in anything. Thank god they are now abated. -

I was truly grieved to hear of your being so much afflicted by the spasms last year I fear you do not keep yourself warm enough & those kind of complaints are in our family, I believe for I had all last winter & indeed frequently those spasms or stitches in my chest & various extraordinary catchings in my cheek or my jaw, my throat & all over me. They tell me it is only nervous from the heat; but I think it is like what you used to have in your jaw giving you a flush & start every now & then. - I get fat & have no other illness; but those kind of flushes startle one & I have not had any lately for the hot weather braces me **(4)** & does me good; but when a shower hangs over the house - I always feel have those nervous feelings. --

We have at present a young man with us whom Mr: Gwillim & Mr: James introduced to us a cadet a Mr: Biss - whose father I have a faint recollection of; but I did not know he was married nor that he lived in Hereford & here is a young man of 20 I feel quite an old woman - He is a fine young man & very well behaved Richard & he are great friends. He has been confined here for some time for tho' he had not much the matter yet the Doctors will not let them go to

Tripasore<sup>208</sup> to drill 'till they are in good health, if they have any friend who will receive them. - He has had a billious [sic] complaint which he had had on board ship for they had a most terrible voyage. I shou'd think from some mismanagement on the ship - We have besides with us another young man who is a very good & elegant lad. A Brother (5) in law of Mr: Plumer the Councillor [sic] who is on your circuit poor boy he has had the flux with blood, - we have also had for some time the assistant of Hetty's apothecary who came out surgeon of a ship & he also was sick - In short the season has been so severe that almost every one that came out has been sick; but I have heard of none dying. The Doctors have been cautious because so many accidents happened during the extremity of the heat with young people full of blood - I suppose you will have heard before you receive this of the loss of poor Temple - that stout young man was called away in a moment, almost, when no person entertained the least apprehension. - He died of health if one may say so, for he has never had any illness except a little billious [sic] complaint of a few days last year. - He [word crossed out] eat hearty & took too little excercise [sic] which was his only fault for he was a most honourable & valuable young (6) man & one upon whose grateful disposition I had had great reliance. Sir Henry had exerted himself lately much to serve him, & about a month before he died he had been made pauper attorney so that all his three appointments were nearly 1200£ a year besides what his practise wou'd have been as he was just admitted an attorney. I grieve for his father for he was an only child & [word crossed out] well worthy of a good parent. - He was as you know Clerk to Mr: G. which was 60 pagodas a month that is about 300£ a year. That appointment is now given to Richard Clarke who is manly enough for the office, & thank God has like Polly constantly had his health. --

I wish Nancy cou'd have staid [sic] at Tupsley for I fear you will sadly miss the chearful [sic] society of a family & that your Sundays will become very unpleasant unless you make yourself entertainment with the boys who to be sure must now ~~become~~ be very entertaining (7) I think that poor little Tom (who ought now to be big Tom) is now twelve years old, & I am very happy to hear he is so good a boy which I had no doubt. I am sorry to hear that Mr: Squires has quitted the school; but perhaps being wealthy he might not even if he had continued have been so attentive to the boys as he once was. - Mr: Gwillim tells me that in the course of correcting the boys exercises, the masters ought to to [sic] correct the English as well as the Latin & he therefore thinks that there must lately have been a great neglect in the school for poor Tom's letter is not well ~~very ill~~ spelled & that in words which must occur in every exercise - that is has for as. "he is nearly has tall has I am". pray tell him gently of it; because by then this answer

<sup>208</sup> Tripasore Fort, about 30 miles from Madras, was a training station for EIC cadets (John Murray, *A Handbook for travellers in India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon* (London: J. Murray, 1901), p. 343).

reaches him he will doubtless have found his mistake & be mortified & we attach no blame to him; but it certainly shows a negligence on the part of the school masters. - In other respects we thought he had written very neatly **(8)** & well at the same time I thought it best to tell him that he might be careful in spelling, which the learning another language, particularly Latin generally makes people; because the very exercises they write are an improvement in the one language as well as the other, & the Latin is in a great measure the foundation of the English. [word crossed out] A knowledge of that is the only means of being certain as to the principles of spelling, & the want of that knowledge makes us women so uncertain. - Few professions require men to speak or write Latin & [word crossed out] therefore the great use of it is to help men to know their own language well. --

As you observe the War has been a sad hindrance to our correspondence & even this opportunity by which I write now is thought so bad a one that few will write by it - Mr: Gwillim says he will not & blames me; but as I lost the last opportunity I am willing to try this. - **(9)** as I think it likely that Hetty will put this in the Post I shall make it no larger I fear that I sometimes forget the Post money & make the packets too large. -

After a silence of 10 months, for from the date of your former letters to the receipt of this it was so long, our joy was not a little to hear you were all so tolerably well ! & if I cou'd hear that you were not afflicted with those spasms I shou'd indeed be very much more happy. - The terror we suffered when we saw the ships come by after so long an absense [sic] was beyond all things we feared to open the letters, and as our fears were so is our gratitude to God for his preservation of you all, which is my constant prayer - We all unite in Duty & love to the dear children & beg you to give the same to Mr: Gwillim's family - I pray God preserve Hetty's little girl; but I shall not say much about her the lives of infants being so uncertain. - believe me your dutiful daughter EGwillim

**(10)** Mrs. James

Received this Feb 11th 1805

My things by the ships are all come safe -

**Letter\_044\_MS\_08-1804 (Mss.Eur.C.240/3, ff. 193r-196v) Mary Symonds to Hester James, August 12 1804**

(1) Aug<sup>t</sup> the

12<sup>th</sup>, 1804 My

dear Hetty

I wrote to you by the Tigress which ship left this place about a fortnight ago. I had then the pleasure to tell you we were all well, and that we had received some of your kind & truly welcome letters by the Fleet. Since that time we have received the remainder of them, together with the packages you mention. The milinery [sic], five irons, and the Pickles, Ketchup & Raspberry vinegar, are all in excellent order: but the preserves, I am sorry to say have suffered much: Mr. Biss tells me the ship was constantly rooling [sic] and full of water, which was the cause of the sweetmeats fermenting many of the pots were broke and others had lost thier [sic] tops: but those which were put in stone jars and corked down came safe. The milinery [sic] (as you observe) is a small quantity but as we had such an ample supply last year it is quite enough & it is remarkably pretty & very well packed, so that it all looked as fresh when we opened it as if it had been that minute made, we are indeed very much obliged to you for the great trouble you take on our account, and we are much indebted to all those dear friends who remember us so kindly & make such great exertions (2) for us, god grant we may all live to meet again, & that we may have the power to make you some return.

~~for~~ That this life is all uncertainty and that we ought not to promise ourselves any thing beyond the present hour, we have sufficient proof but yet there are few if any amongst us, who consider this sufficiently to keep thier [sic] minds prepared to meet misfortunes calmly, when it may please the Almighty to visit them with the afflictions which are common to all men, we have very sensibly felt the weakness of our nature in this respect



within these few days: poor Temple<sup>209</sup> had an illness so short and apparently so slight that it did not prepare us for the sad event which has taken place and consequently it has been a severe shock to us all, he dined with us on wednesday and Thursday, the 1st & 2nd of the month, & on Friday he dined with Mr. Disney a gentleman in the law: he was quite well & in remarkably good spirits, all the evenings at night when he was going home the weather was cloudy [sic] & threatened rain, therefore [sic] Mr. & Mrs. Disney endeavoured to prevail with him to sleep at thier [sic] house but they could not it however rained very little that night & we do not know that he was wet at all, the next day about 12 oclock he complained of a little sickness at his stomach which Sir Henry mentioned to us at dinner time, but the sickness went off & Temple said he was very well again, however the next morning being Sunday Richard drove into the Fort to Church & he called upon T- to ask if he would come out (3) to dine with us, but he found him very unwell & with a good deal of fever, he had a Dr. Scarman with him who lived next door to him, he said the disorder was of no great consequence & that Mr. T- would be well in a day or two on Monday Richard & Sir Henry went to the Fort to thier [sic] business & both went to see Temple but at separate times when Sir Henry called he had fallen asleep & therefore [sic] he would not let him be disturbed, but when Richard called he found him sitting up apparently well & the fever had quite left him, he said he should come to St Thome, perhaps the next day, this they told us when they came home & we all naturally concluded that the disorder was at an end, but the next morning, tuesday Richard went to business early; it being his court day he set off from home at 8 oclock & when he got about 2 hundred yards he met one of Temples men runing [sic] who desired him to make haste as his master was very ill Richard drove very fast, but when he came to the Fort gate (a distance of only two miles from the place where he met the servant) he saw a man runing [sic] with a note towards him, which was from Dr. Scarman, saying that poor Temple was no more he was taken ill at 8 oclock the night before & Scarman staid [sic] with him some time, but he did not apprehend the least danger, nor think the illness by any means of a serious nature, he left him quite tranquil at night & at six in the morning he called on him again, and still saw nothing serious, but he applied a blister [word crossed out] (4) because Temple complained of a tightness on his chest Mr. Scarman then went out to prepare some medicine and Temple told his servant to pat his back as he felt a fulness which

<sup>209</sup> Temple was Deputy Registrar to the Supreme Court of Madras.

he thought was wind, the man did so, & T- then said 'that will do' and laid down as to sleep, the servant sat down by him, & in a few minutes Temple called out "go and bring Mr. Scarman back I don't feel well," the man ran & returned with Mr. Scarman instantly, only from the next room, but they came too late, for his breath had passed away in that moment. Mr Scarman called in three Surgeons besides himself to assist at opening the body, as he wished for some witnesses least his credit should suffer, they found that his death was occasioned by suffocation from a quantity of blood & water which had gathered [sic] in the chest, and which it is supposed was the reason of his always expressing a disinclination to take exercise, his disorder is said to be extremely uncommon in this climate, so much so that Dr. Scarman thinks his assertion would have been doubted, had he not taken the precaution to call in three of the most respectable Surgeons here to bear testimony. What consolation you will have it in your power to offer to his (5) afflicted father I know not for what can we say in such a case, that has not been said a thousand times before & without effect. He who has lost his only child, whom he looked upon as the sure prop to sustain his sinking age, who reasonably hoped to receive the reward of of [sic] a laborious life in the credit & comfort he would derive from such a son, will sink under the loss of his darling treasure, and if it pleases god to preserve his life through such a trial, will most certainly for the remainder of his days, feel himself a miserable solitary being; for though he could not have parted with him to this distant country, without knowing that the risk he ran was very great, yet I fear, that these 3 years ~~of success~~ in which he had heard only of success & good health ~~of this son~~, may have removed all his doubts & fears & lulled his mind into a state of perfect security, how hard a task is it to awake it to such [sorrow?]: Poor Temple lived beloved by all who knew him & I believe there never was any person more generally and sincerely regretted, The families where he visited lament him as a relation but most particularly General<sup>210</sup> & Mrs. Trent: who I really believe loved him almost as a son. The good old (6) General attended his funeral, and Richard says when they were returning the Gen<sup>L</sup> went up to him & pressed his hand but was so much affected that he could not speak, I have since called on Mrs Trent & found her extremely low, they intend leaving this country in Oct: & Mrs Trent told me she had just finished a keepsake for each of her two favorites, (meaning Richard & Temple,) the day before poor Temples death. I hope you will know Gen,l & Mrs:

<sup>210</sup> Major-General Thomas Trent.

Trent in England, for she is a most charming sweet tempered woman & tho he is a little odd in some respects yet I am sure a better man does not exist.

I send this by the Glory which however is not thought to be a very safe ship, being a very bad sailer & the same ~~in~~ which so much wickedness & trouble happened, on her passage out, the particulars of which I wrote in a former letter, those disturbances gave people a bad opinion of her but as the captain who was a party in those troubles is killed & the others who were engaged in them are not to return in her I think it very probable that she may arrive safe Mr: Biss is staying with us at present and will will [sic] continue some days longer, indeed we shall part with him with regret whenever he leaves us, (7) he is so quiet and good humoured, the Cadets who came out with him were marched off to drill in a few days after their arrival, but Sir Henry procured leave for him to stay a little time with us partly because we wished to have his company & partly because he has had a little bile on his stomach, & therefore [sic] we wished him to be a little seasoned before he went to his own management he seems to have very good health & spirits, and I dare say he will do very well here, he loses no time by staying with us, as we have masters of all languages about the house, & he is very industrious & studies from morning till night, I am sure he will be thought a wonder if he goes on with the same anxiety, we have another very good young man staying with us, who is likely to remain some time as he has been very ill with a bowel complaint, and is so weak that he cannot join his regiment; he belongs to the Cavalry, & is Brother in law to Mr [Phinners ?] at the bar, an old friend of Sir Henry's, your friend the Dr: (as we call him) Mr Melliss<sup>211</sup> is an extraordinary being, a true Scotchman he has been very amusing to the young men, by his pretending to understand every subject that is started, & he is (8) as easy at first sight as if he had known you for an hundred years, he staid at our home as long as he had leave to be on shore, one day he came to dinner in such a dirty shirt & stockings that Biss who sat opposite to him could not eat for laughing to see him in that dirty trim talking away as is [sic] he had been my lord Duke, he puffed away about his introductions here & when they came to be explained they turned out to be a single letter from Miss Saunders to Mrs Floyer, a very vulgar woman a majors wife who is over head & ears in debt, the Dr: brought her out a box which procured him a dinner when he delivered it

<sup>211</sup> James Melliss (1781-1846) was a Company surgeon in Bengal.

safe, & that was all, he is a curious fellow all together, but not surprising to us who see hundreds of the same sort of ragamuffins come out evry [sic] year fresh from Scotland, & like him they all pretend to be great men I have given him some Argus Pheasant feathers for you five papers done up with a set of feathers in each, that is a plume of small ones for the front of the head & a long one to twist round as a bandeau, those you may dispose of to any friend you wish to oblige, & when cut & dressed a little they will make very handsome ornaments, besides those I gave him 14 good feathers of the best we could **(9)** pick out of 2 entire birds, & from them Betsy wishes you make two sets, one for Mrs. H. Williams and one for Mrs. Morgan, and Betsy wishes you to add one or two feathers to each besides the set.

The direction is to Mrs: Morgan is at the Revd Dr. Morgans Ely. I don't know who I shall

be able to write to by this opportunity, but I fear but few of my friends as our notice has been very short, so pray beg them not to be offended, for my inclination is very good, if the government will allow me time

I think in future, the quantity of made up milinery [sic] you have sent this time will be sufficiency at each time only with the addition of two hats or bonnets for each of us & some fashionable materials unmade of all sorts, that is I mean you should send 3 dresses for each 3 caps & two bonnets 6 pair of shoes & 6 pair of gloves a very little good jewelry & whatever you think proper unmade the comb with Wedgwood ornaments is very pretty I have seen the same but worn with an ornament in the front to correspond the blue necklace too is very pretty & so are the earrings [sic], I have copied the Turban which I think very handsome, & the pink cap, I wish you always to send a little unmade **(10)** material like the things you send as I can then copy them for myself & give up the originals to Betsy who you know does not like that sort of business. Your dilicate [sic] stratagem succeeded very well, but it was a little indiscreet to put such a suspicious direction upon it. I hope you have seen Mr. Lane & Mr. Livingstone before this & that the moor womans dress has not been so unfortunate as the Gentoo cloth. I am sure Mr. Prosser did his best for he is a good natured young man as can be, but I know the Custom house officers are very strict in their searches

& never will let a bit of chintz or shawl escape if they can help it. I have mentioned hats or bonnets to be sent, pray let them be of the plainest form that is work straw or chip, and as long as round hats turned up on one side are worn I shall prefer them to any other for our heads get so old fashioned that we dont know how to manage any thing whimsical at the same time we wish them to fashionable, just what you or I should have bought for ourselves in the spring. You say you don't know how to act about giving letters to young men, I will tell you; put all your letters into the publick packet and give them a few lines merely to introduce them and then it does not signify when they deliver them (11) if they will take charge of seeds & promise to keep them in their cabins it will always be an advantage to send by them, and when you meet with one you can trust like Lane or Livingstone you can send gloves or such small things as will not keep in the hold & request them to keep them dry in their cabins letters certainly are best sent by post, for however anxious an officer of a ship may be to deliver them yet perhaps he cannot get leave to come on shore for two or three after the ship arrives, whereas all that comes by post is sent over to us immediately We wish you to understand this clearly, as it is the greatest pleasure we can recieve, to see & converse with any person who has seen you, & as for Sir Henry he is so much dilighted [sic] when he gets hold of a Herefordshire man, that he talks to him all day without ceasing Herefordshire people & Herefordshire news are his dilight [sic]. Biss has delighted him, & the first night they entered upon the subject we had much to do to get him to bed at midnight, & Betsy says he began the subject again as soon as his eyes were open, he has talked of Lane ever since he went away & will be glad enough to see him again. I begin to be very economical of my paper for I have made this a long letter, and it is such a one as I hope I shall never have occasion to send you again. I am sure of tomorrow for writing & I shall employ it busily, I hope to write to Nancy green & the Thoburns, but I always begin with you, ~~but~~ I hope they will not be prevented from writing to us even if I should not have time to write to them for indeed our friends letters are our greatest comforts, remember me affectionately [sic] to them all, and pray give my namesake & Jimmy a kiss each. God preserve you all is the prayer of

Yours ever affectionately M Symonds.

Aug:<sup>st</sup> the 12th, 1804

(11) Mr<sup>s</sup>. James

No 39 Bishopgate Street within

London

**Letter-045-EG-08-1804 (Mss.Eur.C.240/3, ff. 208r-211v), Elizabeth Gwillim to Hester James, August 13, 1804**

(1) My dearest Hetty,

In return for all the kindness you have shown to us & the labours you perform for us in the midst of your own difficulties & vexations, I cannot help writing a few lines by this ship although I am assured on all hands that she will not be in England before the rest of the fleet which are to sail a month hence. --

Our things are all arrived safe that is the millinery & wearing apparel & I think it very well chosen - the ribbons thos [sic] of different colours are all come out of one as they always turn a little & the very blue whites come best - All the bottles of Catchup [sic] & Pickles are come safe being in bottles &c - and the upper rows of the preserves but all the under rows were washed out & many of the Pots as clean as they cou'd have been washed - The ship was I suppose sadly managed Mr: Biss has had a dreadful Voyage; but being his first he did not know it till compared with the account other ship's company [word crossed out]. - They buried their men two or three a day - They lost all their masts - they encountered an enemy who fortunately a la Francoise ran away & above all their (2) ship leaked [words crossed out] & they shipped heavy seas continually so that upon the whole it is a mercy of Providence that they came here at all - It is said that the Captain will be severely questioned but others say that the blame was not his. ---

I shall not so much to you upon a subject on which however I am most deeply interested that is the dear child. After the great disappointments in our family I place no

reliance on the frail being of little ones.<sup>212</sup> But though my observations & wishes about the little girl may, if God so please only come to be painful to you. yet you must remember that your's to me will always give pleasure & therefore I hope you will tell me all she does & all the pleasure her actions give you - I pray for her preservation; but I will not flatter myself with too much hope. - And after all it is better to lose them in infancy than when we have watched their early years & brought them to perfection - At that time to lose a child and a friend & one likely to confer honour upon one is very hard - my heart is torn for poor Temple - what will be his feelings when he hears **(3)** that that fine young man, and as good & honourable as he was well looking was called away in the midst of health - on a sudden nay that even his loss was occasioned by that very health at which every body rejoiced. Nobody cou'd be more beloved & respected nor have I seen such lamentation over any one as over him. I hope Almighty God will comfort his poor father to whom this must be a very heavy visitation. ----

I have desired Polly to write to you particulars of a request which [word crossed out] Lizzy Thoburn made to me & therefore I having several little letters to write shall say nothing on that subject but desire that you will manage the affair. --

I have sent little by your young Dr: because I hear he is likely to go to Bencoolen<sup>213</sup> & if it so it may be long before you see him for the extra ships are frequently sent coasting about. - I am always glad to see any friend you send & I assure you that somehow [sic] or other the Dr: has afforded us much [word crossed out] amusement for we had Richard Mr: Biss poor Temple [words crossed out] Mr: Tuston besides Mr: Gwillim who you know loves a laugh - & the Dr: having a good deal of that manner which we ascribe to Scotchmen & which certainly does belong to some of them. - They used to laugh when he went off to the ship which he seldom did

**(4)** & call all he did Scotch - I laughed too at their odd thoughts & his odd doings; but I did not think boldness necessary to his country for [word crossed out] Mr: Livingston is the very modestest man I ever saw & so is Captain Gordon whom perhaps you have seen. - I hope you are now near seeing Mr: Livingston & Mr: Lane who has an excellent dry humour - I expect that all that fleet will be received with great honour in England We drank Commodore Dance & the India fleet every day for three months & so you may tell Mr: Lane - & also being a

<sup>212</sup> Likely in reference to the death of Elizabeth's own child or children in infancy.

<sup>213</sup> An EIC settlement on the west coast of Sumatra.

matter of importance tell him that Saamy Naik<sup>214</sup> sold his Caps for 2 or 5 Pagodas I have forgot which & has the money. -

Sir Henry is in great anxiety for his Pepper & salt - Ladies cloth English - coat - (there now that is just like an Indian word) - he says he wrote to James about it I must beg to have as soon as possible 2 pieces of strong huccabac<sup>215</sup> [sic] Hamburgh Towelling - for ours are in perfect rags & I cannot bear the Callico [sic] -- Our things are just what I cou'd wish only I shou'd like every time to have one half piece narrow one broad of some white Ribbon & perhaps a figured one or two - for it will not keep all mine that came out are spoiled [sic] they looked tolerable last year but now I cannot use them. - (5) Pray tell Mr: Whitley that I have sent him a bag of seeds & thank for the seeds I have had out both of which came safe both Dr's. & the Cooks & came at a lucky time of year as we have had a good deal of rain.-

Pray do you pay for the seeds - for I am ignorant & know not whether to thank or not for them - you see I can say nothing of the preserves but that all is good that is left but that is like Mr: Prossers trees very little indeed - I rejoice that you like your Cockatoo, pray do not fret if he dies, I will try & get you another perhaps not so accomplished this spoke Malabar like fury which is the muttering you hear He cou'd speak no English when I sent him - What will Mr: Prosser say after all his good nature when he hears that my Canary is dead - I thought Mr: Gwillim wou'd have cried about it & I [word crossed out] am so ashamed to say I thought of it more than I ought about a bird. --

I must close here having had three messages in 3 minutes -- I have mentioned Richard in my letter to my mother poor Boy (6) he received his mothers letter first, which was intended to come to him after he was prepared for the loss of his sister you may suppose how much he was shocked as indeed we all were. I do not know anything that ever gave me much greater distress than the loss of that poor infant by carelessness & horrid slovenliness. Those kind of securities from fire are always bad & more accidents have happened by their being broken or children getting over them than ever did by there being none had the fire place been open this poor child wou'd have had sense enough to have kept at a distance. --

You must not call this a letter. It is a hasty acknowledgment -

<sup>214</sup> Perhaps Swami Naik, doctor to the 2nd Madras regiment.

<sup>215</sup> Huckaback cloth is an absorbent cotton or linen material made from a self-patterning weave.



Dr: Sims has paid me great compl[i]ments I blush<sup>216</sup> - Pray what can I send him if anything I can do will be acceptable I shall be very happy in the way of Plants - I hope to know a little more about them as we have some botanists come down now & I am becoming learned - I shall never

(7) have done -

May God bless & preserve you all in health & happiness & pray lose no opportunity of writing to us.

Your's ever most affectionately

EGwillim -

Madras

S. Thome

Aug: 13th: 1804 -

Dear Hetty let me know what my things cost - & how our debts stand

(8) By the H. C's ship

Glory Mrs: James -

No. 39 Bishopsgate Street Within

London

HGwillim

**Letter-046-XX-10-1804 (Mss.Eur.C.240/3, ff. 212r-216v) [Mary Symonds or Elizabeth Gwillim] to unknown recipient [possibly a copy in a good hand], February 1804**

(1) Madras St. Thome Feb. 10, 1804

<sup>216</sup> In reference to Dr John Sims, editor of *Curtis's Botanical Magazine*, who had noted Elizabeth's successful introduction of the snake gourd *Trichosanthes cucumerina* via Whitley and Brames. (John Sims, "*Trichosanthes anguina*." *Curtis's Botanical Magazine* 19 (1804): t. 722.)

I wrote to you by the Glory a Ship that sailed [sic] from this place 7 or 8 weeks ago , & in it I thanked you for the things you so kindly did for me but that ship sailed so soon after I had unpacked them that I cou'd not give you the account I wished. had we opened the things that had not opened themselves on the Voiage [sic] we should have spoiled what was good, and I expected there wou'd be but little. I have now the pleasure to say that all my pickles and Ketchup came in perfect order. The Ketchup is as fresh as a mushroom from the field, and we eat it every day with our fish. The Sea runs close to us & repays us for it's [sic] noisy roaring in the night, by fresh fish every day which we see caught, at least we see the boats that are employed in the business .

I am sorry for the trouble you have had about the Currant Jelly but I find that I need not trouble any of my friend for preserve in future, as I becomes more acquainted with the country I find the less need of them the ladies who come to this country are of necessity often changing their place & those who know are not here to to [sic] tell us what they discover \_

I find now that the Mango fruit, used green makes the finest Jelly I ever eat in (2) my life it will not keep above a month but the trees bear more or less all the year & we of course do not want currant jelly for there is not the least difference between the flavors of this & white currant Jelly we have Colaccas<sup>217</sup> for tarts much superior to Goosberries [sic] & several other fruits of the same nature particularly one called Billimby<sup>218</sup> & another called Aranelly<sup>219</sup> besides which the green Mangoes make us apple puddings & pies every day. In puddings they are very much like & I tell the young men when they first come that they are our Indian apples, they are like a codling when it is very young & the boys do not discover the difference between the Mango & the apple.

<sup>217</sup> *Carissa spinarum*.

<sup>218</sup> Star fruit, *Averrhoa carambola*.

<sup>219</sup> Possibly *Phyllanthus acidus*, or gooseberry tree, *Cicca disticha* L. See "*Cicca disticha*, Aranelly, Harfarooovri, Hind. - A small tree bearing a round acid fruit, the country gooseberry, wood inferior. Hort. Garden 31". ([https://archive.org/stream/b28708891/b28708891\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/b28708891/b28708891_djvu.txt))

The Mushroom catchup & pickles are of great value to us as we have no vinegar that will make them good, if we had the Walnuts & Mushrooms, neither of which we can get, and the Vinegar is excessively bad except what comes from England which is so valuable & the Country Vinegar so cheap, that the people always adulterate it with Toddy Vinegar, a kind of Arrack vinegar which has a tast [sic] perfectly offensive\_

My sister has promised to do me a few Raspberries [sic] & strawberries & damsons which are certainly flavours that we have nothing to compare to but being as wise as I am now, I only wish to trouble my friends for pickles & those three kinds of fruit I am (3) most exceedingly [sic] obliged to you for the trouble you have had which I am now ashamed to think of.\_

I am truly happy to hear that your little ones are so well I do not doubt of their being well educated under your care, for I am sure you will not give them false notions of vanity on one hand nor meanness [sic] on the other, & I think, they are very happily placed in a school of innocent children. I am only grieved to hear you complain so much of your own health, which I had hoped was mending, I trust you are not over anxious about any thing since happiness does not depend in place or riches & an exalted situation is no certain mark of a noble mind-or a clear understanding. I am obliged to you for being pleased with the credit Sir Henry gained in the affair you mention we were utterly astonished at any account in the English papers, who sent it God knows. I received it from three places-it was not quite accurately stated but I assure you not more to his honour than he deserved nor near so much so. He behaved nobly, almost unsupported utterly so till the last. What has been the effect of an attempt to do his duty here, can only be told when we meet, at which time I hope we shall look back upon those trials with satisfaction. But the worst is they have injured his health very much, the Climate is more than he is equal to without persecution. He has had a fever of above three months this year which had at one time reduced him very (4) much. He has lately, thank God been recovering very fast if the business does not over set him, but our seasons have been very severe this year. I have not the pleasure to know the Gentleman you speak of. Mrs. Williams's Nephew. I believe he has not been to this place

since we came here. I have heard my mother speak of him some years ago & Mr. Gwillim Sen<sup>r</sup> mentioned him in a letter

If Captain Pendergrass came here I hope he will call but I assure the favor is all done to us for the Captains are in much request in the different families here & so much engaged in business, disposing [sic] of their investments that we can seldom see them, however desirous we may be-

I am obliged to you for thinking of us when you heard of the fire which was a bad one & consumed a considerable quantity of grain.<sup>220</sup> But it seldom happens that lives are lost in this country by fire for the houses are never more than one floor above another & every window is like a door that it must be an extraordinary case if any one was burnt [sic] & unless by choice as it happens few English families live in the Black town & the families that do are Armenians & wealthy natives & their houses of Stucco & bricks could [sic] not easily be burned-the great destruction in cases of fire is amongst the poor natives; but their houses & all in them are of hardly any value & generally only a ground floor

I said nobody need be burned but by choice-which may seem a strong speech to you but it happens in India that people sometimes choose it there are some marks of the Worship of fire amongst the Hindoos we read in their stories of persons hoping [sic] to save their Children throwing themselves **(5)** into the flames to deprecate the wrath of that angry Element which they look upon as a deity they daily make oblations to fire in every home of pious Hindoos. But this superstition [sic] is to be found in the utmost extent amongst the Perses<sup>8</sup> many of whom inhabit the Islands of Bombay. If the fire was to catch your gown there, not a servant amongst the Perses (who are the attendants there) would put it out nor even if it was his own, He would not offend the God by attempting to snatch the victim he had seized.

<sup>220</sup> A major fire at Madras on February 14, 1803 consumed 1000 houses. (Thomas Tegg, *Chronology, or the Historian's Companion* (London, T. Tegg, 1824), 150.

Perhaps you might have read in the papers of a terrible fire at Bombay since that at Madras, it was of shocking extent & hundreds as I am assured suffered [sic] voluntarily nay rushed into the flames\_

The Admiral who was laying at Anchor near sent the Officers & Sailors to aid in quelling the flames, but could not prevail with the natives to act they threw away the water out of the buckets given them & refused, spite of all threats, to throw it on the flames & their little shops containd [sic] bales of shawls, muslins, silks, spices & chest of gold, these were reserved from the flames & their owners forced out of their houses & their rich merchandise given them, yet so biggotted are they to their superstitions that they carried them back back & sate [sic] on them, patiendly [sic] waiting till the flames surrounded them when they & their godds [sic] were devoured by the fire\_

If you cou'd but be here for about a week how you wou'd be ammused [sic] with your notion of reforming the people.\_the Europeans of every description wou'd hardly make one in a thousand of the natives, when I came here I thought it most awfull, wonderful it is certainly to see that (6) we rule these people absolutely, & not a boat of ours can touch their shores, without being dashed to atoms by the high surf, the planks of the boats with which they land us are sewed, together with threads of the Coacoa nut & are saved by yielding to the pressure but cou'd not be used by us,--yet here we are masters of the Soil-supported by their disunion & distractions. yet in this state ruled as they are by us terrified by our nod, they despise us, as beings little better than brutes they wou'd not taste of any thing we had touched, scarcely that we had looked at, indeed some Casts [sic] will will [sic] not eat what we have looked at, the Brahmins, who think that all learning & wisdom is centered in them may not have their Vests touched by our cloaths, without being obliged to go through a purification. the cloaths in which they enter our rooms are stripped off at the door of their own.\_

The name of Christian they hold in abhorance [sic] beyond even their own outcasts the Pariahs. The manners of the Hindoos are exactly now what they were before Moses wrote and are likely to be the same as much longer\_

The Musleman [sic] are crushed by our power but you know enough of the history of Turks to judge that they are not likely to turn Christians, the Portuguese are a wretched race, a mixture of those & the outcasts, of these people\_ The English are only here for a few years, as it is contrary to the Policy at present to settle a Colony\_ There can be no marriage with a native woman of any sort. We have great numbers of people offsprings of the English by the lowest creatures, some of these (7) are bred up for fine Ladies & Gentlemen & called English- great numbers the children of poor Officers soldiers & are by these wretched drabs are here to be seen, & the Company & Government here have established two large Schools for their reception, one for boys the other for girls there are at least 400 of each, they are well taught & the boys bred to be writers & c the girls are Married to Soldiers & their offspring will in time be called English a shocking thing enough, for they are a wretched race of evil disposition & full of disease\_ The Schools are not of long establishment so what the boys may be is not easy to judge the girls do not do for service as was hoped, those that have gone have been all corrupted and indeed the native mothers & relations will not here [sic] of their being unmarried after twelve years old as husband must be found be he black, white, old, or what not, to save the repro[sic] of passing twelve or fourteen years unmarried is to them an utter disgrace and although they have an excellent Clergyman to attend them, who is indefatigable in his duty such is the influence of the Mothers on these children, that the worst consequence wou'd follow if the desire were not complied with. It often follows their Marriage for chastity is a virtue little known in this Country, except amongst the People of Cast, & their people are altogether carefull of their women tho they never confine them, they are sometimes led away by Europeans; but not often, they are bad enough amongst (8) one another.\_

The greater part of the people who call themselves Portuguese but who are only low Pariahs are of the Roman Church & I perceive no difference between their Idolatry & that of the Heathen, they Heathen indeed have the advantage for tho they have no worship in Spirit, all is mere ceremonies yet their discipline makes theirs clean, sober, & orderly: whereas the Christians of the Catholicks which is quite as much lost in ceremonies has not the advantage of these wholesome [sic] restraints & the people who are of that Church are the vilest miserable wretches drunken & abandoned these half Cast children are all that the English

Government endeavors to reform or inst[ruct?] It is not the approved Policy to attempt changing the Religion of the people It woud [sic] be impracticable to the people of Cast & the others appear so much worse for it that it is not done Protestant Missionaries make converts & have got very decent congregations they Baptize annually great numbers & will if their zeal continues I dare say in some ages work a change to the advantage of those poor people bred in ignorance & vice & thought unworthy by the Heathens of Cast to be inst[ruct?] they look on them as beings without souls & never let them enter their places of Worship. All they know is that the[re] are beings of Superior power to themselves some Benevolent & some diabolical. The Benevolent they suppose sufficiently inclined to relieve & aid them, but the Malignity of the Evil Powers they dread their whole attention is therefore to sacrifice to these Demons to avert, their wrath to, save them from (9) Devils & Giants & Serpents. Their great Goddess is the queen of the Serpents of the infernal regions so they kill sheep &c-and so far fear her that can hardly be prevailed [sic] on to kill a Snake & never do it of their own will. We had an immense Cobra Capella or Hooded Snake<sup>221</sup> killed in one Garden two of the horse keepers aided by Mr. Clark in the slaughter, but they so far feared the vengeance [sic] of the black Goddess, that they burned the snake in all form as it had been a man-and the next evening hearing that they were about to make a ceremony over it I went to the end of the Garden under the Cocoa nut trees, to see it. It was in a dark night but they had abundance of torches the people were assembled round with all the Old kettles & tubs & watering pots by way of drums which they beat incessantly, to charm the demons The wives of the men had previously sate [sic] over the bones & ashes of the snake and cried an hour, these bones were now washed with milk , hid up in a piece of cloth & dressed with bunches & garlands of flours [sic].\_The men danced a kind of frantick dance every woman & man clinging round each others neck & howling as if in an agony of grief they tore their hair & spread it over their shoulders & addressed the snake that is the bones near which they burnd [sic] incense [sic].\_the making of their frequent addresses was to exculpate themselves.--: O why did you come out (9) of your hole. If you had concealed yourself we should not have been compelled by these people to kill you &c\_

<sup>221</sup> Naja naja, the spectacled cobra.

There were half a dozen of these black things dancing & the lights & trees wou'd have been a good scene for a pantomine [sic].\_\_\_\_\_

**Letter-047-EG-10-1804 (Mss.Eur.C.240/3, ff. 217r-228v) Elizabeth Gwillim to Esther Symonds October 12, 1804**

(1) No.

My dear Mother,

I wrote to you the particulars of our health &c by the Glory, a ship which sailed [sic] from hence some weeks ago but which we are told will not leave St. Helena till this fleet joins her.-

As I have nothing particular to say in addition I shall employ my paper in answering some questions about the country which you asked me so long ago that you have probably forgot that you did so, & lost your desire for an account - I apprize [sic] you of the contents of my letter, that if you are not at liesure [sic] you may lay it down till you are. -

You asked me how it happened that [word crossed out] whilst the manners of the people were so pleasing, the servants shou'd be so bad. - The reason is this, The People of this country who are Hindoos are divided into 4 casts or orders - as I mentioned to you before - Now there are besides these 4 Casts a very large tribe of people called Pariahs or Mala (2) people - Whether or not these people existed when the [word crossed out] Hindoos were first divided into 4 Casts is a matter of doubt & will not be soon settled - Some say that they were a part of the original inhabitants of the country & excluded from the 4 Casts; others suppose, at least the Hindoos say so; that there were originally only the 4 Casts but if a man of the first cast did anything contrary to the rules of that order he fell to the next class which is now the case, & in the same manner if he or one of the 2d. Class was guilty of anything contrary to that, he became of the third and this, 'till at the last if a man of the 4th. Class, either so by original destination, or by being degraded, offended against that, he became a Pariah or outcast & man held in the same contempt by the rest of the people as a convict is with us -



This sort of degradation amongst these people answers to our ~~idea of~~ transportation of fellows; but with this cruel difference that, the punishment descended from the father to the son for a thousand generations. All the guilty might be degraded but none cou'd on any pretence be restored to their original order - By these means these Pariah people have become so **(3)** numerous, & are also by the same means multiplying so fast, that were they to contend with the others unaided by anything but bodily strength the Pariahs must of course be victorious. But they are bound by a tenfold chain & unless the operations of Europeans work a change, are likely to be in the same state for ages to come, not only outcasts but in the state of excommunicated persons for they are not allowed to approach the places of worship & are thought unworthy of instruction. If you begin at the 3d: verse of the 30th chapter of Job & read to the end of the eighth you will have a perfect idea of these people - not a word need be changed except the names of the plants - They bray amongst thorns instead of nettles & eat other roots & leaves than mallows & Juniper but their vegetable food is of spontaneous growth, for they cultivate nothing that I have observed for their own use in their nests near these large settlements - They are sometimes employed in labour out of doors by the farmers but they must not approach the house, and are obliged to stand at ten or twenty yards distance from a man of the lowest ~~of the fourth~~ class - They are dirty, lazy, saucy, vicious & extravagant for if they gain ever so much money they live in idleness till it is spent - They sometimes make a formal marriage but ~~the bond~~ the bond is dissolved at the pleasure of either party - Chastity is a virtue they know nothing about. - If they have any **(4)** well looking girls they dispose of them to European gentlemen - that is the mother does, for they are like the beggars children in London according to Hetty's remark all fatherless - There are few [word crossed out] exceptions to this rule. - The money for which the girl is sold is sometimes considerable & it is soon spent in meat & drink - The young women from ten years old to twenty are generally thus in the service of some man or other at somewhat [sic] better [words crossed out] wages than ~~than~~ could be obtained by other means & somtimes [sic] as you may suppose they get a great deal. however they save none, the family dispose of it all. Meanwhile the disengaged parts of the family bring forth abundantly other girls to be disposed of in the same way. As to the boys they become servants and are our attendants from the first as I shall explain to you hereafter. - If a girl has had the good fortune to have been kept by an Englishman [word crossed out] a Sarjeant [sic], Soldier, or young officer she learns a little

English & is then by that these means qualified to attend a Lady, when she is no longer an object much to be desired by the gentlemen. - Such are the maids we have to attend upon our persons, the lower sort are such as have not had these advantages but are by no means more chaste - All we (5) ["no 2" written top right corner] have of them are two called water carriers the one is called the house water woman a filthy creature & quite common, whose business it is to sweep all the rooms, which she does with a whisk stooping down, as indeed they do all their work (they never put a long handle to any broom or spade) - She must also wash the earthen ware bottles that hold the spring water & carry it from the large jars to the doors of the rooms &c The other is called the Cook-room water woman - her office is somewhat [sic] like that of a kitchen girl except that she does no cooking, but the Curries which are her business & the Cook does not interfere - This woman we seldom see as the cooking is performed in a place a hundred yards from the house where we cou'd not go in the heat of the day & at night these two go home to their families The ~~other~~ house water woman we are obliged to see often, as not any man, however low wou'd sweep the floor if a bit of powder or a few crumbs fell down, In these cases half a dozen go in search of this charming damsel who is as hard to be found as a turnspit dog. - As to the Ladies maids few of them can sew [words crossed out] those that can call them- (6) selves Portegueze [sic], tho' they are the same Pariahs & have nothing to do with Portegueze [sic] what they do is not worth having, & they are always the worse for their knowledge & abominable thieves which the others are not none of them are of the least use in more than hemming a towel & cannot stick in a pin - It is astonishing how simple they are in the midst of all this vice. It shows that it is the fault of wicked men for in what they have been taught they are strictly accurate. - I cannot give you a better idea than telling you the history of my damsel which you may read or not as you like - The girl I brought out with me was never sober after she had received her money - I took another peticoat [sic] wearing Portegueze [sic] lady & she was a thief Therefore upon the advice of wiser people I requested to have one brought who was in the country dress when Poppa was brought In reply to my questions she said she had learned a little English by being with her mother who was a water woman & had since improved it in other places - She was about twenty one at which time the downy fineness of their faces is a little worn & this is their chief (7) beauty. Her face was plain, but her teeth & eyes very fine & the most delicate form I ever saw, of the light kind - I asked her if she was married & she said very simply she

had been married twice - that her first husband was a Dutch Captain of a ship who had bought her for two hundred pagodas when she was 10 years old - That her second husband, (the Captain having gone to Europe) was a steward to a gentleman in Madras by whom she had a son whom she had put into a charity school, but that, that man had now taken another woman, the Ladies maid of that family & gave her nothing nor took any notice of the child, wherefore she came to seek my service - after some time I used to question her because she agreed to have leave to see her child once a week - "I suppose" says I "you were very sorry when this man took another", "no - "said she, what shou'd I care for him?, I "care only for my child & I do not wish to "go again to any Gentleman - some servants "have been to me & wanted me to come "& live with their masters; but I like [word crossed out] "Ma'am's money better. It is true they "will give me five pagodas a month **(8)** but if I go to one of them, in a few months he will leave the place & I cannot leave my child for I shall dye [sic] if I do not see my Sild (as they say for child) - she has accordingly lived with me two years & 10 months, I believe in perfect innocence The only trouble she gives me is asking frequently to go to see Sild; but a refusal occasions no resentment - She is honest in the strictest sense of the word, sober, & not guilty of falshood [sic] - ~~She is not guilty~~ [words crossed out] She is extremely useful to me in some respects as all the servants except one or two who are in a distant part of the house go home of a night - & leave us with all the hundred doors of the house wide open with Jackals & Pariah dogs howling round Owls & bats entering at pleasure & the bed curtains bestrewn with grasshoppers that stun one with their cry - to say nothing of the frogs that in a rainy season prevent all sleep by their croaking chorus - Poppa sleeps upon the hard stucco floor in the room next to mine in the same apparel she wears all day her muslin dress & her gold necklaces &c - Mr: Gwillim calls three or four times every night to bring toast & **(9)** ["no. 3"] water &c, & she always jumps up in good humour & appears in full dress, as that requires nothing but shaking herself - she never lays even a mat under her the only indulgence I have seen her use (tho there are carpets at her command) is to bring a couple of bricks which she uses as a pillow for her head; but even this is a luxury she seldom takes the trouble to bring in - at five in the morning she smokes her Saroot<sup>222</sup> of strong tobaco [sic] & when her work is done reheats it & basks under a tree asleep on the ground in the best cloaths [sic] I can give her. - All our servants who have any labour to do are of this

<sup>222</sup> Cheroot, a cigar (*shuruttu* in Tamil - *Hobson Jobson*, 189).

description of people except the Butler & the Dubashes<sup>223</sup> as they are called of which we each keep one to attend us. These are young men of cast very neat & clean who always read & write two languages generally three. - They are frequently the sons of wealthy people who send them to these services from which they seldom depart till the master leaves the Country. In this way they rise to employments with the Collectors [sic] & servant. **(10)** of the company in which they get richer than their masters. - These men being of cast wou'd not do any menial office, but are quite necessary to us as the others are not to be depended upon for anything - I will give you a list of our servants & their offices which will serve for any other family in Madras & tho we have 50 you will see they are not many for domestick [sic] business. - ~~As Sir Henry is here~~ We have in addition to all others except those in such offices - two Chubdars,<sup>224</sup> allowed by Government to attend Sir Henry when he goes out, & wait at the door when we are [sic] at home & carry letters &c - These are always Muslemans [sic], [words crossed out] Saracens one may call them in the Moorish dress with large tall silver sticks in their hands - They never do anything in the house. -

At the head of the family is the butler who does all the work of an old housekeeper & Butler but both very badly and moreover cheats most abominably; to him we give 4 Pagodas p[e]r month besides which he takes a heavy custom on all he buys by practise **(11)** & much more of his own head -- [words crossed out] This man has two Pariahs his Maties<sup>225</sup> who wash the plates & dishes, glasses &c & clean the plate lay the cloth &c & bring the things from the kitchens to the hands of the Dubashes. - Then there are two Massolgies<sup>226</sup> Pariahs who clean lamps rub furniture dust the house clean knives & shoes & carry Lanthorns & run before the Carriage of a night a thing of absolute necessity here. If you dine out which continually happens 7 or 8 or 10 miles off, they run with the lights (for we dine at 7 oClock when it is always dark here) to the house & back as fast as the horses can go - This custom is very distressing to [words crossed out] us when we first come but these people suffer nothing by

<sup>223</sup> An interpreter. From *dubhāshiyā*, *dobāshī* (lit. 'man of two languages'). *Hobson-Jobson*, 328.

<sup>224</sup> Chobdar, from "stick-bearer...A frequent attendant of Indian nobles, and in former days of Anglo-Indian officials of rank." (*Hobson Jobson*, p. 204).

<sup>225</sup> Mate, maty. "An assistant under a head servant... but also sometimes in the sense of a 'head-man,' the word is in use almost all over India." (*Hobson Jobson*), 526.

<sup>226</sup> Masolgies, "torch-bearers", Ralph Wardlaw, *Memoir of the Late Rev. John Reid, M.A., of Bellary, East Indies* (1845) 119.

doing it & are

much less tired than the horses. - to the maties we give each two pagodas a month - to these men 1 ½ - that is three shillings a week out of which they each maintain a woman of some sort children & any old people belonging to them for the money is a common stock ~~for~~ amongst the young & the old - they never save; but they never spend more on themselves than on their relations in youth they work & in old age they are fed **(12)** by the young. & this indeed is the case with the people of all descriptions in India But to proceed we have a Pariah man a Cook & he has a Maty They kill & they skin & feather & do everything in a strange way they cook immense dinners all in earthen Saucepans & earthen frying pans, they have everything to prepare & no one convenience the[y] keep some naked Pariah children who turn the spit & are paid by scraps. The Cook has four & his Maty two pagods [sic] a month, My maid has 3 pagodas a month & the water women one Pagd: each a month - and now I have come to an end of the servants who do anything in the house - Being four of us we have each one Dubash & one old moor man a Taylor [sic] who does all the sewing. His picture you have seen as also my maid's & my man's & I take some credit to myself that they are the best in the family - The gentlemens Dubashes dress them, give their cloaths [sic] to the taylor [sic] and sit to watch him whilst he mends them which is no small work for the washermen beat it on stones & English eming [sic] is of no use my towels were fringed the first washing Hetty sent me out a stock of shirt buttons to last me a year all of which the Taylor [sic] put on the day I had them for he had embroidered **(13)** [no. 4] the old ones over 'till they were as round as balls & worth a shilling piece for mere labour, but Mr: G wou'd not hear of having the country buttons without wires because he fancied the[y] hurt his throat - fancy goes a great way the old ones were as hard as bullets. - In short the cloaths [sic] comes home in such a state from the washerman that it is great economy to make one taylor [sic] mend for two men, with the servants to watch [word crossed out] him As for my Dubash & Polly's they never leave us, & work enough we have for them, to carry orders to the cook-room to translate to working people who speak in three or four languages all of which they know - to receive a thousand idle messages of the Natives, who as they do nothing themselves send continually a flower or a bit of fruit with compliments tedious to hear & laborious to answer. -

By the way I must mention that nobody who has not been in a country like this can

imagine what immense time is spent for want of language - Translations by a translator imperfect in the language are fatiguing always [words crossed out] & how can any man be perfect in them? Instead of one Dubash each we ought to have half a dozen - These men as I have said generally write 3 but **(14)** they speak four languages Four are absolutely necessary in this Country - English, Moors, Malabar & Gentoo to all which the characters & mode of writing are as different as Hebrew, Greek Chaldaick [sic] & English - & how can we expect that boys sent out to service at 12 - or 13 shou'd know these things perfectly? It wou'd require a deal of

Birch at home to do it - I am surprized [sic] at what they learn - yet our lads that come out knock these fellows about if they make the least mistake & call them stupid, ignorant, degenerate savages - and all this to lads of their own age who sit down & correspond in three languages & translate in four whilst they cannot correctly write their own! ---

The rest of our servants ought to be called by some other name, for they are of no use in the house - There are nine Palankeen boys, who according to the custom of this place do nothing but bear the Palankeen. They live in a hut of leaves at the end of the garden - & receive 18 Pag<sup>o</sup> a month between them They live upon a quarter part of it & save the rest They are a fine handsome set of men of the Telingu, or Gentoo Country to the north of **(15)** Madras They come here to carry palankeens as the Irish or Welsh come to harvest with us When they have made thirty or forty Pagodas they go back and with that capital become rich farmers. These are all men of cast that wou'd not eat our food; they are clean in their cooking & eat out of brass bowls as bright as gold - one of them is cook & eight only run with the Palankeen the Cook goes once a week to a neighbouring wood & there cuts down as many firesticks & boughs as will last him a week; he makes them up into two immense faggots; they are very light boughs - & running a stake through them he shoves one to one end & one to the other & puts the stake over his shoulder & looks like a walking wood. - [drawing of wood carrier] They eat ~~no~~ but little meat except we give them a rupee for a sheep Their food is chiefly plain rice the water of which or rice Gruel they drink. It is called Canchi<sup>227</sup> - They season it with Tamarinds Capsicums & onions. - When they have liesure [sic] they fish, & are very expert at fishing. - They make their own nets, & are generally employed in netting. Indeed they are never idle unless you

<sup>227</sup> "Congee," the water in which rice has been boiled. The word comes from kanjī, "boilings" (Hobson-Jobson, 245).

shou'd call their attention to their persons idleness but the Hindoos think no labour vain that improves beauty, or is for cleanliness - to them health. - They go into the tank in a morning to wash & there scrape their teeth for half an hour - If they wait for their masters at a door they take out a bit of looking glass and examine their faces taking out every superfluous hair **(16)** from their eyebrows & shaping them in the neatest manner - they eradicate also the hairs of the ~~nostrils~~ nostrils & any others that grow round their faces with the utmost exactness - such appearances wou'd be as disgusting to them, as it wou'd be to us to see our nails grown to claws - Their nails they also pare very neatly & are indeed very clean in every respect & cultivate a bit of our garden for their own use for Capsicums & sour greens.

We have a head gardener & three or four or five men under him who are all people of cast but very poor & low. they are malabars who are not so neat as the Gentoos - What they are employed about might puzzle you to discover. They bring nothing into the house to eat, but a few vegetables that require hardly any culture. Their work is watering the trees & cleaning the walks of weeds. The heat prevents us from observing them & I believe they lye [sic] down all day; but we must have them to clean the places & they will not do more unless they are watched. When they work for a native master they are made to do a great deal - we pay these men 1 ½ pag<sup>d</sup> each & two to the master, They steal & sell all the garden produces & without constant scolding & threatening we shou'd never have a thing ~~we oranges limes~~ we have sour Oranges, limes Mangoes & Guavaas [sic] in abundance but they think it hard to allow us any. - There is a large fruit as big as a peck measure called a Jack fruit which they sell for three or four fenems [sic] a piece - we had about two hundred on the trees last year & I never got but about eight or ten - between the butler & the gardeners they were all disposed of. - **(17)** We have a Coach man who is always [no 5] a Pariah, ours is tolerably good, but they are in general horrid bad. We pay him 5 pagodas a month & Cloaths [sic] - which is more than twice what a Dubash has, who is neat & clean & to be trusted - The Coach man does nothing but drive. It is the custom of this country to have a horse keeper to each house, & indeed ~~they~~ the horses are so uncertain in their tempers, that it is necessary. These men always run by the side of the horse whether in a carriage or [words crossed out] otherwise - They clean the horses; Their wives bring them their food there to the horse stable & they & the horses all go to bed together for they always sleep by the horse they attend, & this is all their labour & sometimes it is hard enough It is painful to one's feellings [sic] to see them run by the Carriages &

Phaetons the horses full canter, in the heat of the day. - As we have no meadows [word crossed out] nor fields where horses go to graze there is a grass-cutter to each horse, a woman, a horse keepers wife, or some of their set - these bring home every evening a bundle of grass which they dig out from the dry ground wheron [sic] Paddy has been in the wet seasons - from the road sides, from the borders of tanks & waters, from commons & - places that look frequently so arid that you wou'd little expect them to yield what they do - They are covered ~~with~~ however with a most nutritious species of grass called *Agrostis linearis*<sup>228</sup> in the language of botany & by various names amongst the people of India. It never rises far above the ground **(18)** but runs along the ground, to a never ending length as it takes root as it runs. The stems are white round & sweet. The leaves small & fine & abundant in its blossom - The women tear this up by the root, first cutting up the ground with little hoes - each of these women receives a Pagoda & a half monthly as do the horse keepers also - The Palankeen boys may be called horses & these pasture. They are of no use to us in the house. Wretched good for nothing people they are, & filthy beyond measure. - It is wonderful when they see the cast people that they do not become ambitious to be a little cleanly. It makes one half inclined to think with the Hindoos of cast, that they cannot be good. - Sam, my sensible boy who died, told me when I reproached him that they did not instruct the Pariahs - that it wou'd never be of any use that tho' many of them were well featured to our eyes, they had S'ani in their faces, that is the Planet Saturn, who is their Satan the great author of all mischief according to their notion, & they see his mark in all the Pariahs - "How says S'amy shou'd we make them good? If the parents have no sense how shou'd the children? They are fools children & will be wicked - It was this speech of his that put me in mind of the passage in Job, that I mentioned & which is a description of those people more exact than I cou'd give in other words -- **(19)**

I fear I have tired you, but I believe I must finish my account of the family - as we lie exposed all night & the servants leave us, it is customary to have three or four Seapoys [sic] to watch the garden gate - These are Invalids, discharged the service, or any raff Pariahs that can get a Seapoys [sic] dress They receive 1 ½ Pagodas each to take care of the garden & house in the night. They are never in the way except they are asleep, or under pretence of watching at night steal all they can get - They are a sad set. - Besides these we have a carter who takes care

<sup>228</sup> *Cynodon dactylon*, called Bermuda grass, Couch grass, Quick Grass (Kew Science, Plants of the World Online: <http://powo.science.kew.org/taxon/urn:lsid:ipni.org:names:397065-1>).



of a pair of little red Bullocks that draw a cart which holds about two wheel barrows-full - He goes to fetch Black town mud & river sand for the garden & gravel for the walks - he goes to the black town for the gram<sup>229</sup> that is Vetches &c for the Horses, cows, bullocks sheep Deer Poultry &c - He also [word crossed out] goes into the Country to bring straw - that is nice straw which is the food of all the horned cattle here, The people do not strip it so clean as we do our wheat straw, for they never thrash here. The bullocks tread it out & they do not the "Muzzle the Ox" [word crossed out] These animals are half starved before the harvest begins; but grow fat in treading out the grain we give ours gram, as indeed private people always do -- & our Cows have as all Milck [sic] cows have Bran, Bengal Gram Cotton seeds & a sort grain called Natcheny<sup>230</sup> **(20)** I do not know the Botanical name just now - This Carter is a man of cast as is also ~~is~~ the man who takes care of the Cows - he feeds them walks them out washes them, milks them & makes butter every day - These men have each 2 Pagodas a month & now you will ~~perceive~~ see that tho' we have so many servants we have no great numbers to wait upon us, if you consider the heat of the country which disables us. [words crossed out] These sets of People cost us five hundred pounds a year, a hundred Pagodas a month, & one may faint before a glass of water is to be obtained, if the [word crossed out] Dubashes are out of the way.

- you see by this also that we have no boy to do our caps &c, nor to aid in dress -

The Pariahs eat all our food which is a great deal, for we can never keep it above a day; yet these wretches have as much wages as the others who cannot touch a bit.- The People of cast never let their women go to service however poor; tho' they might have immense wages if they wou'd - But they are all married at 9 or 10 years old and are frequently at the mother in law's house till they are thirteen or fourteen ~~when they~~ In all events they go then for the families live united & the widows of all ages continue in the family of the head of the ~~family~~ house -- The people are **(21)** better off here [no 6] than in England for tho the wages appears low to you every mans wages is enough to keep himself a wife & children & no man is unmarried. It is enough also to keep an old relation or two. - they have no notion that a man

<sup>229</sup> This word is properly the Portuguese grao, i.e. 'grain,' but it has been specially appropriated to that kind of vetch (*Cicer arietinum*, L.) which is the most general grain-(rather pulse-) food of horses all over India" (*Hobson Jobson*, 393).

<sup>230</sup> Eleusine coracana, or finger millet (Wikipedia).

shou'd give his labour for his own food, which is certainly ~~very proper~~ very improper tho' we do it in England - If you hire a man here he says I cannot come for so much, I have eight people, I have ten people to keep, seldom much less - And the people of cast never let their women labour for their bread. The domestick [sic] business is all that is asked of them - the old women nurse the children & they never sew, they do not know how, & they never require any sewing their cloaths [sic] are all in one straight piece & it is [words crossed out] never in want of mending as it [word crossed out] lies loose it goes altogether - The husbands cloaths [sic] are the same & the children have none They pay a washerman a mere trifle to wash for them, they never do it themselves even the poorest - [words crossed out] the dirty cloaths [sic] are all sent to the river. --

Their women are much better off than ours. - & in sickness are well attended & so are the men, for these united families have many comforts - as to a state of celibacy the Hindoos know **(22)** not what it is.- Indeed they have all the utmost contempt for unmarried persons - If a man dies before he is married, they think it impossible he shou'd go to Heaven & they carry this notion so far that if a Bachelor dies, they do not trouble themselves to do the usual ceremonies. - but look upon him as little better than the beasts that perish - The ceremonies ordered to be performed for the departed Soul, cannot be done [words crossed out] for a single man. -

Here was a Polygar<sup>231</sup> a man of high cast hanged a sessions or two ago for an attempt to murder several people & for actually shooting one. - not being married, the night before his execution the whole marriage ceremony was performed; the Brahmins attended, he was dressed in flowers & perfumed like a Bridegroom & the family were up with him the whole night His sword adorned as the Bride. All this was done in order that the funeral ceremonies might be performed, which are thought necessary to salvation. - Upon enquiry we found this was a common practise in cases (word crossed out?) where a person is imminent danger, which you must allow [sic] that a man is who is going to be hanged. - I suppose that this is an invention of the Brahmins, to get the profits of these ceremonies For all these things turn to their account -

You asked me besides this, an account of the buildings **(23)** here or if you did not I promised to send you one I shall in another letter, but I fear my long scrawls & three years

<sup>231</sup> Poligar, from Tamil *pālaiyakkāran*, "the holder of a *pālaiyam*," or feudal estate (*Hobson-Jobson*, 719).

stories of these outlandish people will [word crossed out] have tired you of hearing more about them. - I shall not mix other matters in this, only say that I am happy to hear from all quarters, so pleasing an account of poor Tom. I hope Mr: Picart will be attentive to him, I am however sorry that Squires is gone as I have ever understood he was extremely [sic] well qualified for that situation, & without disparagement of another whose talents may be suited to other things, or perhaps to this, one may fear he will not do as well. - If the school shou'd fail or fall off it will be a great loss to the town, for I observe that people always retain an affection for the places where they have been educated. - I beg that Tom may continue to write & do not check him but let him tell me what occurs to his own fancy. -- I intend to write to him by this fleet if possible. ---

Our monsoon has begun these three days at least it has rained incessantly tho the regular day according to the Brahmins is the 15th: - Sir Henry thank God begins to get stout & I fear I shall begin to quake; but I intend to be before hand with the enemy & take some Bark<sup>232</sup> as a preservative. I trust in God that **(24)** I shall hear a better account of you after this than the last winter for I was extremely sorry to hear of your sufferings. I believe it was a severe year all over the World. I pray continually to preserve you & the poor children & of all things I grieve that you have lost that pleasant country house. It may be the better in the end - We expect ships hourly with our new Commander in Chief & new admiral - Our Governor lives very quietly & Lady William his wife is as plain in her dress & as simple in her manners as possible - On state occasions she wears a great number of jewels, & he has a fine service of plate; but in other respects they seem to set an example of ceremony that is followed by all the settlement. - Sir Thomas Strange's brother who lost all his fortune in that house of Walwyns, is come out here & has brought his wife Lord Melville's daughter, she is at least my age & very delicate in her health. she has been ill ever since she came & is now pronounced to have a liver complaint she cannot return now; but is to go back in January if the Doctors do not settle matters otherwise - I shall finish here with the best wishes to Ned & Nancy & the children & duty to you in all which the other branches of the family join with your dutiful daughter

S. Thome Oc: 12th: - 1804. -

EGwillim

<sup>232</sup> Likely cinchona bark, taken for intermittent fever (and, later, malaria).

**Letter\_048\_MS\_10-1804 (Mss.Eur.C.240/3, ff. 229r-233v) Mary Symonds to Hester James, October 14, 1804**

(1) Madras Oct<sup>r</sup> the 14th 1804.

My Dear Hetty

I hope you will receive my two letters by the Glory, the one was a good long story, & to say truth I believe you must think me a sad gossip for I am never so happy as when scribbling to my good dear friends and now I am going to scold like any thing, because you want to put a bridle in my mouth, I love to speak from my heart, & tell you all that passes here, piping hot: surely there should be no reserves amongst us you must have misunderstood what Sir Henry said about the young men, but James & you are so touchey! [sic] I assure you Betsy & I have attacked Sir Henry roundly about what he said of that little fellow Longdill, & he protests he did not say a word that ought to have been taken up in the way you take it, he says he only meant [sic], that you put yourself to more expence and trouble then was necessary in entertaining people of whom we know nothing & perhaps only see for an hour or two before they sail, If he makes a wrong statement I desire you will give him a lecture upon it, Betsy says you have no right to be [pangy?] about any thing he says because you encouraged him in his sauciness to others & helped (2) so much to spoil him. I assure you your letter put me in a grand stew, because I had just sent off my letter with some stuff about the Scotch Dr. which I should sooner have bled than written if I had known how you were fidgeting, but we all laughed so much about him that I could not resist writing, but what then I am very glad you sent him for if he had not been here we should all have been as dull as Posts, with all our correctness, an odd character of that sort thrown in amongst us, is like the lemon juice in a bowl of punch I don't know what Sir Henry has said to you about the young men coming [sic] here but this I do know that he is always glad enough to see them & most unwilling to

part with them, & particularly the Herefordshire he would fain have persuaded Biss to be sick or any thing else to have kept him here, to be sure he is a darling, so mild so modest, a thousand times too good for this country I own I am half in love with him. Sir Henry never allows Barrington to take up his quarters any where but with us when he is at Madras, And I am sure he would have given a good round sum to have kept Lane a little longer. I am very angry with you believ [sic] me, 'tho not in my heart but what stuff do you talk about your own inferiority, many come up who is superior to you, in this place I am sure there are not half a dozen persons whose connexions (3) are half as well off, & those half dozen & fewer here either by wretched poverty or disgraceful conduct, if you would do us honour hold you [sic] head as high as your neighbours; an honestman is the noblest work of God, but if you want instances I will give two or three from the heads of our society The first lady here after the Governors wife & Betsy, is the daughter of a Douglas the taylor who lived near Charing Cross two others who hold their heads next are daughters of a Mrs Goldfinch a Hosier in Lombard Street, here are five sisters all well married in the eye of the world at least, daughters of an inferior custom house officer who lives on Tower hill Two more great ladies are the daughters of an Innkeeper at Hounslow two more daughters of a sloop shop at Portsmouth, & now I have given you all the heads of the place the rest are all Bastards black or white the foremost of whom may generally have the pleasure of seeing their mothers [?] fry pancakes or sell fish in the native markets, now I think I have said enough upon this subject, & too much but I really was worried about it, because I know a months residence here would set you to rights in this matter.

You will acknowledge that I spoil paper enough when I tell you that my Indian correspondets [sic] are as numerous as my English ones, and many of (4) them so kind as to favour me with a letter every week Biss is amongst the number of my correspondents but he certainly does not trouble me too often, poor fellow he has not much time at present, he has been unwell with a bowel complaint since he left us and as soon as we heard of it Sir Henry wrote to desire he would come down here & be nursed, but he soon got better & as he was afraid of losing time in his profession he declined the offer, however we are to have him for a few sic] weeks before he joins his regiment in January. I am nursing up a very pretty little Terrier puppy for him, which I got from Mrs. Trent, it is a beautiful little wretch but so

mischievous [sic] that he is a great plague, it is my constant companion night & day, We sit with all the doors & windows open for air, & the breeze blows everything about, which he scrambles up immediately he has eat me a fine flower out of my cap & several bows of ribbon while I have been writing, and I hope he won't tell his master any of my secrets, but I must trust to his humour, for he has eat two sheets of my letters I am very glad you like your friend the cockatoo, it is a hardy bird, & likely enough to live, I dare say he is entertaining enough in a winter evening, but I am surprised James has so much patience with his impudence & mischeif [sic] in biteing [sic] the chairs & things. We shall be glad enough to see Prosser (5) back again he is a rare man for carrying things home & we have always some trifling or other to send for your information, did the Pickled cocoa nut blossom arrive safe, ? & could you take it out of the jar to see it? Tis a most beautiful thing when fresh, I must tell you again about the things you sent us this time, for fear my former letter should miscarry well then, to give you the worst first, some of the jam pots went off: whether in their zeal for the good cause, they dreamed, as thy [sic] lay in the hold, that the ship was attacked; or fired a royal salute on General Biss's landing I know not but so it was the pots were broke & the jam spilt: but don't be fretting & greiving [sic] after 'spilt milk' a great deal of it came safe & good, we have picked a few excellent strawberries raspberries & white plumbs & all the Pickles Catchup & Raspberry vinegar arrived without a crack, Betsy has never had such pretty caps to her head before particularly the two white sattin [sic] ones, one with a geranium flower & the other a net trimming. "It fits," & she looks quite comfortable in them, but as for fal lals<sup>233</sup> she certainly never will understand how to stick them on. I have resigned every cap to her excep [sic] that with the pink ribbon, & I took that because I know she would make (6) herself like a Cockatoo with that red top knot yet it is a very pretty cap I have worn it with great credid [sic]: & lent it out & out again for a pattern a lady called here yesterday & ran away with it to copy, & the night caps you sent have been in great request, they are the most comfortable things I have seen a long time & they also are lent out, in short I have much ado to keep any of my new things at home the dark gowns have not made their appearance yet but their season is coming in, which will be after the monsoon, I am delighted to hear such an excellent account of your health & nancy greens. But this sweet cup is dashed with bitter when I think of poor dear Neds suffering so much, just as he got

<sup>233</sup> Fal-lals A piece of frippery or finery; a showy article of dress or personal adornment (OED).

into his house I hope to God they will do well notwithstanding little temporary inconveniences; would I had power to make them, & all my friends [sic], as happy as they wish I am sure my inclinations would never prevent me. I am truly sorry for Mr. J-Gwillims<sup>234</sup> disappointments in his profession, his is certainly a hard case, for a man who has ever done his duty might surely expect to be better off at 40 years of age. I think I can acquit myself of a charge of revengefulness for I feel just as much for him as if he had never given harm to those I love, & yet if he had not, it is probably he would have saved himself all he now suffers. I should be very happy to hear from him, we were old friends & I can never forget many little kindnesses I have received from (7) him, but I cannot solicit a correspondence, having been so unfortunate in a former effort. I allude to the letter, I wrote to John Gwillim my foolish warmth of heart must needs set me, to waste time & paper, & obtrude myself upon him, who has never had the manners to to [sic] acknowledge my attention & therefore [sic] I suppose thought it impertinent; what these, my disappointment is not very great, I have lived long enough to know that all flesh is dust, & not to expect perfection in human nature John is one of those lucky pleasant people who will always have friends tho he should never do any thing to deserve them & he is not the only instance of that sort that has come under my observation. Pray God send I may meet those friends I have left in England, still friends & then I won't complain of the world, tho the longer we live & the more we see of it the blunter our feelings get & I think I shall never feel the same sorrow I have felt, but who will turn truant this I am, however sure of, that 'tho I feel pain at having done more than my duty, I should have felt a great deal more pain if I had done less than I ought Well let us leave unpleasant subjects & unkind people to mend themselves, whilst we seek for better.

My friends Gen[era]l & Mrs. Trent go home in the same fleet which takes this, they wish to know some of our friends & therefore [sic] I shall give them a letter to you and Richard Clarke intends to give them an introduction to his father & uncle: Mrs. Trent is a good charming woman & the General is a good natured well disposed (8) man as any alive, they don't wish to mix much with Indians, but to live in a quiet domestick [sic] way their income is about 18 hundred a year as long as he lives, they will not be very shewy but I

<sup>234</sup> John Gwillim, Henry Gwillim's older brother, was an apothecary in Hereford.

suppose they will keep a carriage, & if the money will hold out they will have two houses, he likes a good dinner & is so much an Indian that the dishes must be pretty highly seasoned if they are made ones, you see I am giving you a hint & to make it complete I will tell you that his favourite meat is grass lamb. I think the Bullocks would be very pleasing acquaintances to them if you can bring it about, & if they live in London, it will be somewhere about Fitzroy Square, the General is flattered beyond measure by the attention of Ladies, & if you attend to him & pay him a few compliments he will talk to you a long summers day, & give you a very good account of India & many particulars about our family.

Poor Temple, Richard & I have had excellent [sic] friends in them, I have spent many days & some weeks with them, as happily as days & weeks could pass in India I must beg you will be attentive to them for my sake for like a sorry spendthrift, I have no means of paying one debt but by contracting another. This simily [sic] comes a little too home to me, for I have been a prodigal in my way & am not without pangs of compunction, but now I am growing disagreeable [sic] again. As my mother says an hours conversation would be worth (9) a bag full of letters. I may have mislead you about the palampores, coming in the Castle Eden I sent them off by that ship & have a receipt for them & the snuff from the chief mate, but he took them as a friend of Mr. Toussaints & probably he might leave them for him at St Helena as he Mr Toussaint, was at that time in China & would touch at St Helena on his way home, so I hope you know a great deal more about them than we do just now.

I cannot pretend to contradict your accusation respecting the dates of letters but something may be said in excuse, which is this I frequently begin to write a week or more before the time of the ships sailing which is always uncertain till the last, & I leave my letters without dates till then because I think the latter the intelligence the more satisfactory it is to you, & then in the hurry at the last moment I seal them up & forget it altogether, but I will tell you how to find out without refering [sic] to my dates, you will always see what time the ship leaves this in the papers, & you may rely that my letter is never sent off till then. I have not made this a very entertaining epistle & I fear you will not think yourself rewarded for the trouble of reading it, but it will shew you that (God be praised) we are all well & as happy as --- our neighbours.



I am an ungrateful jade for not writing to Mr Thos. James, & yet I fear it is too late to do it this time, but I (10) will the next, I owe him a letter for the little piece he wrote for you a long, long time ago. You never mention Dance<sup>235</sup> in your letters, do you ever hear any thing of him? I have written a tedious epistle to Mr. Clarkes which I enclose to you that you may read it if you have time & patience so to do, & forward it to him when an opportunity offers by a private hand for I would not wish to put him to the expence of Postage for it I have desired Richard to tell his father that such a letter is lying at your house in order that he may direct any of his Scotch friends [sic] to call upon you for it or direct you where to send it.

I believe I have nothing more to say as you will hear from all hands of the loss of poor Temple & I have given all the particulars of an event which will afford you no satisfaction to hear of, & for that as well as other reasons, will give me much pain to repeat. I beg you will remember me in the kindest manner to all (friends [sic]?), & tell Mrs. Shephard that I wrote her a ~~long~~ letter by the Prince of Wales, & I hope to God she will receive it before you get this, but at present we are under great apprehensions for the safety of that ship; she met with a terrible storm off the Cape, and as she had not arrived at St Helena six weeks after the ships, which sailed in company with her from hence it is feared she is lost, with every soul on board, many of the

[letter stops here]

**Letter\_049\_RC\_10-1804 (Mss.Eur.C.240/3, ff. 234r-235v) Richard Clarke to [Hester James?] October 15 1804**

(1) My dear Madam

[Mary's hand] Poor Master Dicky don't know how to begin to address a lady of your delicacy; in pity to his blushes & as his subject is a tender one I have charitably undertaken to say that his stockings are rather ragged, he hopes you will take compassion on his little toes & send him out some new good large stockings when you next send a case to us the number and quality of articles he will add so I say [word missing; page torn] abl [?], as Mrs: Margin [?], with all

<sup>235</sup> Possibly Perhaps George Dance the Younger (1741-1825) or his brother Nathaniel Dance-Holland (1735-1811), both painters and founding members of the Royal Academy.

convenient expedition. This Dicky of ours is almost as modest as your own Dicky & as sleepy, & I assure you the poor thing has so scratched his head over this, “My dear Madam” that I fear he will want a plaister tomorrow, or at least he will make a sad mangey appearance, perhaps he was studying to make a poem on the subject as Hose & toes chime well enough for a young wordless [?] But it may be a long time before he has completed [word crossed out] a truly poetical address I think to prevent unfavourable appearances, I may as well send this **(2)** which will inform you that he is desirous of having 3 Doz:n of good cotton stockings & six pairs of white or pink silk the choice of colours, depends upon your superior taste, & all powerful fashion. Our Dicky will also be happy to find a piece of cloth for two coats, & two Hats, every year amongst your remembrances. The cloth to be thin & accompanied by buttons, thread, silk, twist, tape, & buckram & etc all in the newest taste thus far: M.S:

[new hand] The Rubicon is passed — You cannot now say that I never wrote to you [word missing; page torn] I sent to request you would supply my necessities— and I am happy that the humble petition of my toes has been drawn by the skilful author of the above lines— It now only remains for me to apologize for the trouble I have given you— & which I hope you will excuse, as my Mother said you would have the kindness to get anything of that sort that I might want, as she is so far out of the way— There is one thing which my **(3)** friend Miss Symonds has forgot which is comb & tooth brushes which I should be very much obliged if you would, as you think fit, put up with the other articles — You will of course have all the news from your sister. I will therefore take no more of your time to request that you will remember me kindly to Mr James & believe me to be

My dear Madam Your very faithful Ser[van]t

RClarke

[Ma]dras — Oct. 15 1804

**(4)** By the H [?] Ship David Scott

Mrs James

39 Bishopsgate within

London

**Letter-050-EG-10-1804 (Mss.Eur.C.240/3, ff. 236r-241v) Elizabeth Gwillim to Hester James, October 16, 1804**

(1) My dear Hetty,

I have written so much to you by the Glory & so much to my you [sic] & my mother for I [word crossed out] think both as one that in conscience I will not trouble you to read more than I can help just now. - I know not a soul belonging to these ships that is officers &c but Captain Rees calling here & seeing two boxes of plants lying ready under a tree said he wou'd get the Captain of the David Scott to put them on the Poop - I am glad to accept the offer because there is in one of the boxes a large tree that is above two foot high of the plant which the German Botanical Doctor<sup>236</sup> has called by name & I thought if it cou'd be preserved you woud [sic] like to see it He has sent some sprigs of it to Germany & I wrote the Particulars to Mr: Whitly in the

~~·Glory~~ Prince of Wales. We have the greatest fears about that ship for we have heard nothing of her & she had not got into St: Helena long after the rest of the ships had left it - I sent a ~~book~~ story or legendary tale which might have amused your good friend Dr: Simms, 'tho' it is for my mother in the end. --

I am learning botany seriously - a gentleman lately come down the Country has lent me a large botanical library & Dr: Rottler the German Missionary [word crossed out] gives me a lesson once or twice a week - I am very proud of my acquirements (2) & hope to be of use in time for I have hitherto sent the things unnamed. - meanwhile Sir Henry who has taken it into his head to be a great admirer of the animals of the Country tries to put upon drawing again & I have done him four drawings of sheep & goats - which they ever get home you will like - I wish I cou'd see Mr Prosser or Mr: Lane or some of our friends out once again I shou'd send a few drawings but I have done very few, except these I mention I have done nothings [sic] else for above a year - The season has been dreadful Thrice months of damp weather for we had no cool weather last year I had the ague or something of that description with such a something [sic] that they called nervous - that almost gives it me again to think of - every morning about 11 oClock lasting two hours - at three oClock in the night the same. I fear it will distress me again this year as I had a smart touch of it a few days ago - when we had some monsoon rains

<sup>236</sup> The missionary and botanist Rev Dr Johann Peter Rottler (1749–1836).

- I firmly believe that I caught it at Landrindod<sup>237</sup> [sic] that cold wet summer I was there last - I had never seen an ague & I cou'd describe it to nobody - but this is the same thing only stronger - as soon as I went to the mount I got better & the Hot dry Season cured me, but Sir Henry who had much perplexity in his business just when it began got a fever - which lasted him till the heats abated & no medicine coud [sic] relieve him **(3)** It proceeds wholly from the pores being checked by the land winds; but that season braces me. It is the damp I suffer from; but I design to take Bark the moment I find it begins this year for last year I neglected to take care in time - I have used my fire irons already & a great comfort they are. - -

Before I go any further - let me put down Mr: Gwillim's message - He begs of you to write two lines to Mrs: Edwards wheresoever she may be & say that Sir H. begs she will call upon Mr: Ware to receive her money at Mr: Wares N - Holbourn Court Grays Inn -- The Bills are Court of Directors Bills<sup>238</sup> & Mr: Ravenhill will know that they cannot be paid for three months & Sir Henry has wrote particulars in another ship this is to save repeating it & so say this for you are to say I believe the money is 170 pounds. - It is a good thing that the judges are here for before this supreme Court was established, there was no means of applying for, or of obtaining these sums. It went to anybody who had a debt, or the person servant or not, near the deceased - Sir Henry has got 60 pounds for Mrs: Hathway - I wish it had been more but the men are very unfeeling to their poor mothers & sisters after the whole interest which is the same as money of the family has been exhausted to send them out they waste their health & their money on filthy black **(4)** things, whom the servants of cast wou'd not touch - one of her sons who was a clever young man & had books to the amount of 5 or I think 700£ but all went to one of these beings & her brats, a disgrace to society. - How they can forget their mothers & sisters living upon bread & salt, who have incurred no expense & sacrificed all to their education, & the fitting of them out to these places, is to me astonishing, yet so it is - This is between ourselves - It wou'd be pity it shou'd reach the mother's ears. ----

I wrote so fully in the glory that I do not wish to repeat it - yet this ship may come & that

fail. - Poor Temple was called away most suddenly in the midst of health. He had never known

<sup>237</sup> Llandrindod Wells, Wales, popular in the 18th-century for its healing waters at the local spring.

<sup>238</sup> The Court of Directors was the governing body of the East India Company in Leadenhall Street.

illness & I believe never thought of danger - He dined with me on ~~Thursday~~ Wednesday & Thursday & was very merry with Biss Mellish<sup>239</sup> & a set from the ships - on Friday he dined out, on Saturday he had a cold & a feverish turn on Sunday he was said to be better, to be quite well only tired & wanted rest, - but he had a complaint very unusual here. He was very fat, very red & full of blood. - he had a [word crossed out] Peripnumony<sup>240</sup> [sic] somthing [sic] of the Pleuretic<sup>241</sup> [sic] kind - & was suffocated with it before the Doctor came who was his intimate friend & (5) and lived at the next door. -- This is a complaint very unusual here, scarcely heard of. - Pleurasy [sic] I am told is unknown. - & our Doctors, 0 they are shocking - sent out raw boys in a ship there they think only of selling their sadles [sic] & shoes & grocery. -- Then they become great Doctors Those who have gained experience by being here many years will not attend. - God Almighty only knows what might have been done, I have heard since it was too late that profuse bleeding wou'd have saved him; but that according to the modern practise particularly in this country [word crossed out] the lancet is not at all used.<sup>242</sup> ---

He was certainly too healthy - too gross & ever had an aversion to any exercise. - He never stirred out but to dine out. His companions laughed at him about it Sir Henry sometimes spoke seriously. - I do not think it ever well that young men shou'd grow so gross. - He was an excellent young man. His principles were honourable in the strictest sense of the word. I had hoped; but I will never again contrive anything & nothing ever passed my thoughts that he might one day have befriended some of Ned's boys, for he was a young man upon whom one cou'd rely. - I feel his loss very much. -- Sir Henry caught his illness in trying to assist him, He got him the place he was just put in which was about full 400£ a year about two months before his (6) death He got it thro' a terrible opposition. -

There are good members of every country & amongst the Scotch, highly commendable & virtuous persons but they hang so together, & have so much the command

<sup>239</sup> Possibly James Mellis, an EIC surgeon in Bengal.

<sup>240</sup> An inflammation of the lung; pneumonia or pneumonitis (OED).

<sup>241</sup> A pain in the chest or the side, esp. when stabbing in nature and exacerbated by inspiration or coughing (OED).

<sup>242</sup> Bloodletting was widely used in early modern European medicine to treat an imbalance of the humours. Its usefulness was coming into question among some European physicians by the nineteenth century and it was never widely used by South Asian physicians.

of this Country, are so numerous here, that an Englishman has no chance. - If a man of virtue & conscience amongst them is inclined to be impartial, it is hardly possible that he can be so, he has such a crowd of friends. - I have sometimes thought that they shou'd either send out no English or more. - I have been in a large assembly ie Ball - where there has not been an English born person, but myself & my sister I dined out twice last week & there were not althou[gh] we were at one place 25 at dinner --- Sir Henry went out in the Land winds about poor Temples' business & I thought had killed himself, little did I think that the poor young man wou'd be called away - I hope God will give his father consolasion [sic]. -

Richard as you will hear, is Sir Henry's Clerk which adds to his income - He is very innocent & good & living with us is a great security, for the young men lead each other into expenses - & vices. -

I trouble you to write to Mrs: Edwards because Sir Henry has not time to write two letters, he as [sic] written one which was necessary - Last week was his sessions - & as the cool weather had revived him a little he has been tearing himself to send a Volume of a 2d: edition to Butterworth who worries him by every Post about it - He has I believe got ready but will not have time to write to you as he says. I believe to nobody except James & his father. - I am of course quite (7) grieved that he has affronted you & James about Longdale. - He certainly meant literally as he has said that you were too kind to them. The reasons you suppose do not exist. - I shou'd grieve if you made light of yourself. I wish quite another thing & so does he. Your situation enables you to do so. - You know what you think of these young men at home & they think properly of themselves when they come out first but when they come to be Doctors here or Captains their heads are turned - I told you so I well remember. - Their heads are as much turned with the finery as the girls' are with the flattery The small society of the place made people associate with all alike, but it grows bigger now & manners will of course change - In Calcutta they are somewhat [sic] different. You knew I thought his way of talking; but that he writes appears different upon paper; but he feels the same when he writes & when he speaks. - however he may make his own excuses when he has time for I never spoke to him on the subject but when he read your letter he was most terribly annoyed, protesting he had said nothing like what you fancied, that he only said you did not make enough of yourself - I am quite disturbed to hear that you will not receive or at least do not want to see the beings I send you, for I wish you to see them; - Certainly I prefer the people

who know ones friends & connections to strangers that one has heard nothing about. -  
 However I hope you will think no more **(8)** of this which I assure was meant quite different -  
 The best people here are in business, but whether they were or not I shou'd not care about that  
 - we are all glad to see those who know us & the sight of a face from you is always occasion of  
 a Holiday in which Sir Henry is chief - He received Longdale three times, we had three  
 dinners almost on purpose for the young men & he & Longdale were the greatest friends. If  
 any body turned his head he did it himself. - He used to come in to breakfast. - He lived at a  
 man's whom I mentioned to you, Davies a lame man whom they here call Devil first because  
 he is lame & next because I hear he was somthing [sic] of Printers devil<sup>243</sup> or news carrier to  
 Tophams paper<sup>244</sup> which Mr: Samuel conducted - He knew nothing of Doctoring but somehow  
 [sic] or other he married & brought out here Mrs: Davies whom I told you of & who went  
 home last year - How such a match cou'd be God knows but they continued to live with  
 Samuel & he made him his devil to manage the Paper S'amuel published here, & has left him  
 the whole profit & management of it & a fine house &c Samuel went home to be divorced.  
 - But the truth is that the people make a sad laugh here about it & Mrs: D. is not in great  
 esteem on that account She certainly was very ill when she went home & had she not been so -  
 her going home just after Samuel looked so bad that nobody woud [sic] have mended their  
 thoughts about the set - What she is doing in London or how going on you may not know tho I  
 own I shou'd. - She is a very fine woman Samuel always kept house here - Longdill lived with  
 Davies & Davies behaved liked what he is in some **(9)** affairs, & being afraid to come to the  
 point himself made Longdile a cat's paw. - Longdil presuming on his intam[a]cy with us,  
 began to deliver the messages with which he had been burdened as his own opinions. - Sir  
 Henry & all of us knew what he was at, that Davies had charged him with his contents & I  
 believe that when he had made his speeches he knew no more what he had been doing than  
 most other fools do who are employed by such knaves. - In short he got the reward such ~~tools~~  
 tools generally do, of losing the respect readily paid to them, & is I believe at this moment  
 insensible of what he had been saying. for Sir Henry made no reply nor any of us, & it so  
 happened than in a day or two after he was ordered to Ceylon where he may stay these ten  
 years & he had only a few hours notice - I thought him very good natured & he was a great

<sup>243</sup> A young assistant (sometimes the youngest apprentice) in a printing office. Apparently with reference to such assistants getting covered in ink in the course of their work.

<sup>244</sup> Edward Topham (1751–1820) published a daily paper called *The World*, beginning in 1787.

favourite with Sir, H. an hour before he made his speeches - He wrote to you a day or two after this affair at most, for the same ships carried him & the letter to you as they called, as this fleet will do at Ceylon - He was in the heat of his fret & begrudged all the kindness you had paid Longdil, forgetting he had asked it & had done, as much. -

What is very odd & will seem so strange to you he says he has told James to send him no more **(10)** Scotch Doctors' & so far from thinking that you or James wou'd be angry he thought James wou'd laugh & be diverted. - I assure you that he knew nothing upon Earth about him except what Biss & them told him - We never dined less than ten & nothing was unpleasan[t] in the least, but the Dr: was dirty & you cannot guess what a dirty griffin<sup>245</sup> looks like, you wou'd laugh - Biss & Tuston came out [word crossed out] clean, they were well provided for but the Dr. poor thing had not - that wou'd have been nothing but he wou'd vapour & three boys to laugh - They lent him shirts - He came back after two days in one of Richards, Richard claimed it that is it came out - what have I of yours &c in the dressing room chat - only one shirt I believe ~~say~~ says Richard - No indeed says the Dr: for this is one of my best pointing to the said shirt. - they said no more; but twas a great joke - however another shirt was necessary - so Biss lent one - These jokes caught our ears - we asked what it was & so we heard it - Well says Mr: G. have you got all you lent, back, to Biss. [word crossed out] Yes says Biss rubbing his nose & more sir then they all laughed - Why what did you lend - a shirt sir - Then another great laugh. -- I believe it was nothing but scarcity of paper & a disorder with which they were all troubled for there were three in the same state only they had their own linen & cou'd do as they wou'd. - This is a fine story to write about. - But I am sure you wou'd have **(11)** laughed & cou'd not have helped it - Mr: Gwillim laughed most & I believe wou'd be very glad to have them all round him again, but where there are several one will be laughed at & there were other jokes - I thought that that [sic] Biss & he had been old friends at your house till just as Biss went away. -- for God's sake dont [sic] be angry when nothing is meant & that I am sure nothing is. --

Pray thank the little Briyers [Briers?] for their present - I shall send them something [sic] in return as soon as I can get it or any body to carry it. I thank you for mentioning them

<sup>245</sup> "One newly arrived in India, and unaccustomed to Indian ways and peculiarities; a Johnny Newcome." The origins of the phrase, apparently first used in Madras, are unknown. Hobson-Jobson, 396.



forgetting to thank them was a sad omission. -

Pray if you see Dance<sup>246</sup> or hear of him by any-body tell him I shall send him a drawing of a Bird or two if I am tolerably well, as I [words crossed out] owe all my drawings to him of these kind of subjects. ----

I hope you had my letter about giving Miss Larcock [?] a present of about two guineas for a gown or som [sic] piece of India Muslin, saying I sent it. - You will easily find where she is -

I do not think I shall have time to write to Mrs: H. Williams this time but I will if I can - I thank you for the trouble you had in packing up the work. I wish I had or cou'd have contrived to have bought it of her, but that may happen hereafter. I told her once that if I came to India I wou'd & send her (12) shawls for it - I have a square shawl that I shall send her as soon as I have an opportunity. - I am disturbed to think of all the trouble you have in packing & doing for us. - I have left out Mrs: Chambers's letters which if you will read you see what to do about the preserves - I only wish the bottled things all those - I want - & Rasberries [sic] & Strawberries & Pickles The latter are essential. - you have sent me more Cetchup [sic] than I shall use whilst it is good - your Walnuts are excellent. - Please to get others as young as you can for Mr: G. has no teeth & when he comes to a hard one he says "Hetty has forgot my teeth." We have not opened this years that is the last but must in a few days ---

Pray send me as soon as possible two pieces of Hamburgh Huccaback<sup>247</sup> for towels - I have not one bit of towel left & cannot use Callico. - I shall break off here; but I fear there will be another packet open tomorrow when I may & fully intend to continue - Mr: G desires his love to you & pray believe what I say I think only of you the children my other & my friends at home - Give our love to James. - I must obey this hasty summons. Believe me your's affectionately

EGwillim -

Madras

Oct. 16th: 1804

<sup>246</sup> Perhaps George Dance the Younger (1741-1825) or his brother Nathaniel Dance-Holland (1735-1811), both painters and founding members of the Royal Academy.

<sup>247</sup> A stout linen fabric, with the weft threads thrown alternately up so as to form a rough surface, used for towelling and the like (OED).

**Letter\_051\_MS\_10-1804 (Mss.Eur.C.240/3, ff. 242r-247v) Mary Symonds to Thomas Clarke,<sup>248</sup> October 14, 1804**

**(1)** My dear Sir,

I am greatly flattered by your kind letter which encourages me to trouble you again with some of my tittle tattle. I believe Sir H. Gwillim has written to you several times since the date of your letter to me; and I suppose he has given you his reasons for not writing before (if he had any) tho' I really believe he had none, indeed great allowances may be made for him, for he has suffered a great deal of pain, and uneasiness in this country, and during the four months of the year in which the land winds prevail, he is incapable of doing any thing from the extreme irritation of his nerves. Unfortunately he has not been able to avoid those unpleasant winds hitherto, owing to the absence of Sir B. Sullivan who has been at Bombay, acting as Recorder, since the death of Sir Wm. Syer.<sup>249</sup> I hope next year we shall go to Bangalore, which is a delightful climate; when the nights are so close at Madras that we are almost suffocating, we should there, be glad to wrap ourselves in shawls and Blankets. Besides the particular effect of this climate on Sir Henry's constitution, the peculiarity of his temper or nerves (or whatever it be) is such that he seems incapable of doing particular things except at particular times, and I have often known him very desirous of writing when some oppression of his spirits, has made him unable to persuade himself to set about it. I was very much diverted with the humourous passage in your letter, upon the difference between acting and thinking, but why cannot it wait [?] **(2)** the account of your own plan? Surely there is nothing unreasonable in a man's promising himself many years of enjoyment after your age (at least I hope there is not) what is forty eight with a good constitution? All your amusements are rational and may be enjoyed at any time of life; besides which you are only returning to your former habits, not beginning a new way of living. I could shew you a score of wise men from fifty to sixty years of age who have

<sup>248</sup> Father of Richard Clarke.

<sup>249</sup> Sir William Syer was the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Bombay.

hitherto known no enjoyment, except what they derived from the hope of spending agreeably [sic] the trust they have been scraping together, and in that hope have just taken to themselves wives of about seventeen, they talk continually of the happiness they shall have in returning to England. Good men! they forget what havock [sic] forty summers have made in their own constitutions, and amongst the friends they are thinking to return to, they flatter themselves with the hope of enjoying the same sports and amusements which delighted their boyish days. Such men, you will say, are far enough out of the right way to perceive their error and I believe it may be so, too soon, for is it not better they should go on blindfold as long as old Mechlin<sup>250</sup> did. What signifies it, how a man is made happy if he be so [?] -

When ignorance is bliss

'Tis folly to be Wise.

I fear you won't like my morality if I talk so lightly of old men marrying girls of 16 or 17: to make themselves happy; however the girls who many think furnish me with an excuse, for I do assure you I have known several instances, in which they were not sacrificed by avaricious parents but their own sordid dispositions have made them prefer age and riches, when they might have married men suitable to themselves in years & with fair prospects, but without much ready money and when this is the case you will allow 'tis no great matter. Don't you think me very impertinent to run on in this manner, to you? I dare say you do. I shall therefore try to give you pleasure by choosing an [sic] subject, and by that means, hope to divert your attention from the faults of the writer. I cannot expect to succeed better in this attempt, than by saying something of our **(3)** good Richard. He has [sic] greatly pleased with your last letter in which you proposed his returning home at the expiration of Sir Henry's term, and was in such excessive spirits about it, and expressed his joy in such a strong manner, that I ( who never heard he had any particular dislike to this country) could not help asking him how it happened, that he was so much charmed with this plan, which did not seem to offer greater advantage, than those he had thought of before and particularly as he

<sup>250</sup> Perhaps Nicaise of Mechlin, mentioned by Diderot in his "Letter on the Blind for the Use of Those Who See". Or perhaps in reference to old Mechlin, a Flemish town famous for its lace. For two stories about the folly of the inhabitants of this town, see *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 1852, pp. 32

was disappointed in his favourite hope of procuring a Writership. He said it was true, he wished for that appointment, because it would be a certain provision, but he had always thought of our leaving this country with ~~resigned~~ great dejection, tho he had not mentioned it, had always imagined, he should be solitary, & uncomfortable when we were gone, & should have no one near him whom he could actually call a friend, I believe this painful reflection had arisen in his mind, or at least had been greatly increased by the loss of poor Mr. Temple, with whom Richard always lived in habits of great friendship; they met every day in their offices, and had I believe a very great regard for each other; the sudden death of Mr. Temple made a very strong impression on poor Richards mind, perhaps it affected him more, owing to the very afflicting news he had just received from you, & Mrs. Clarke. I feel inclined to say something on the subject of your late severe trial, and I heartily wish it was in my power to comfort you in any way, but I am convinced it would be impertinent in me, ignorant as I am, to attempt to console you, who are so well acquainted with the source from whence alone consolation can be drawn on such occasions. It must be evidence to every grateful mind, that our benevolent Creator always accompanies his heaviest visitations with some circumstances to soften and reconcile them to us, & for that purpose (I am persuaded) directed that your letter should arrive at the time it did, to sooth [sic] poor Richard's troubled (4) mind, with the pleasing prospect of seeing England and you so much sooner than he before expected Since that time he has been quite well and happy. I shall not trouble you by relating any particulars of poor Temple's death, because I know you will hear the circumstances of it from Richard, & I have already written it to Mrs. James, but it is a sad task to to [sic] write or to read it. Richard has not yet given up the Tamoul language, & he is also studying the Persian. His knowledge of the native languages, gives him an opportunity of making himself so well acquainted with the customs & manners of these curious people, that I cannot presume to tell you any thing about the men, whilst you have such an excellent correspondent. The women however I may venture to speak of, as they are so much kept up that no man can have an opportunity of describing the higher classes. The Hindoos do not confine their women as the Mussulmans do, but yet as every rich man chooses to appropriate a great many to himself, he is very jealous, and unwilling to have them seen, particularly [sic] by Europeans. he can have no reliance on these womens honour because [sic] he sets them

so bad an example, for by the Shaster<sup>251</sup> he is forbid to have more than one Wife, and yet those who can afford it marry 5 or 6, and keep 20 or 30 women besides.

The moorish Ladies are never seen by any man who is more distantly related than a brother, and as I have had the honour of visiting two or three families moorish Princes, I will endeavour to give you some idea of the comforts of the Haram [sic] or Zenana. The Mussulmans always live together in families, that is, all the brothers in one house, and all their Wives, concubines, and female slaves in ~~another~~ the Zenana belonging to it, which is a detached building, with a small garden belonging to it, with a high wall which encloses the whole space allotted to the women. We entered in through a large strong gate; from which we (5) went into a narrow passage, and were then met by four of the ladies who took our hands & lead us through a square court yard; on the sides of which the apartments are built. The Eldest son's first wife is more honoured than any of the other women, unless his mother be alive who is called the Bugam [sic], & 'tho she be a widow she loses none of her authority she is not however allowed to wear any jewels, all her ornaments go immediately on her husbands death to the Eldest son's wives, but such is the respect paid to her that none of the women, not even her daughters are allowed to speak at the same time sh[e] does, nor to sit when she stands, tho but for a moment, neith[er] have they the same sort of seat in her presence, hers being a little elevated, whilst they must sit on the ground, which has two cloths, spread over the mat, for that purpose, the one thick & striped with red, or blue, the other which lies over that, is white & thin, to shew the stripes of the under one thru The ladies have a great many cushions & pillows to support their bodies and limbs as they throw themselves about in various attitudes forming beautiful groups. They wear a great quantity of thin drapery which does not conceal the person much, this dress consists of a pair of very full trowsers [sic] reaching down to the feet, which are generally made of a very rich, crimson sattin [sic] wove or embroidered over with gold figures, they have also a little sort of waistcoat, made of silk and richly embroidered, but it is so small & short that the whole of the ribs are quite bare, over this they wear a very full gown made of thin transparent gauze or muslin edged all round with gold lace, it is fastened at the throat ~~with~~ by a single button only, some have sleeves to the gowns & others have none in the latter case they half cover the arms with (6) jewels. They have also a piece of thin gauze or

<sup>251</sup> The law books or sacred writings of the Hindus. From Skt. śāstra, 'a rule,' a religious code, a scientific treatise. (Hobson-Jobson, p. 824).

netting richly embroidered at the ends & edged round with a broad border of gold, it is the veil; and is about the length of a shawl, this they twist and throw about their figures in a playful manner as they converse shading a small part of the back of the head. The only unpleasant thing in their dress is a large nose ring, which is worn by the married women by way of distinction. The widows (however young they may be) are obliged amongst other mortifications to give up this graceful ornamen[t] which they think more becoming than any other. One of the ladies we went to visit is sister to the Nabob Wallajah,<sup>252</sup> he is said to have been a man of elegant manners, and a very fine ~~figure~~ person. This sister is about 70 years old; her features seem to have been quite regular and beautiful & if one may judge from her fine hands & what remains of her form, she must have been a most delicate figure, tho' small, she is rather below the middle size Her house contains about 3 hundred women & children; one of whom is her daughter, a widow of about six & twenty, she is tall, and stout beautifully proportioned, and (I think if she had the European red & white complexion she would be the handsomest woman I ever saw, yet it is not the white we want in her skin so much as the red, for she is by no means darker than the Turks, but she is extremely sallow, as all the moor women are owing to their confinement & the heat of the climate. Fifteen or twenty of the other women are the Bugum's, son's, wives, 40 or 50 more are their Concubines, and all the rest are slaves. A concubine amongst the mussulmans is not a contemptible person; tho inferior to the wives, she has many rights & privileges in the house & is entitled to a part of the man's property when he dies. Every lady is attended by about eight women constantly. One holds her beetel<sup>253</sup> [sic] box, which is a little gold square casket; another prepares the beetel leaves & presents them to her, a third holds (7) a little gold vase, which is sometimes set with jewels (but you will say this is too dirty to mention) yet it is not so bad as it seems as first, for their mouths are constantly filled with the red juice of the fresh beetel, which they never swallow; two more servants attend with fans to cool her & keep off flies, a sixth holds her handkerchief & the others give her water, which she is continually wanting to rince [sic] her mouth from the beetel, & which they keep in a silver or gold ewer, & present in a glass, or gold cup. This description will give you an idea of great order delicacy & magnificence; & yet nothing can be more disorderly & offensive than a

<sup>252</sup> Muhammad Ali Khan Wallajah (1717–1795), Nawab of the Carnatic from 1749 until his death.

<sup>253</sup> Betel (*Piper betle*) is a vine used to wrap areca nut (*Areca catechu*), also called betel nut, which is chewed with slaked lime. The mixture is a mild stimulant widely used in social contexts through Southeast and South Asia.

Zenana; the fine gold, and silver vessels, are so dirty that one cannot distinguish the metal from old lead, & 'tho the forms of them were very elegant & the ornaments in a very good taste, they are beat & bruised with such savage carlessness [sic] that one can scarcely trace out what they have been like. All the servants are so dirty, Oh! So filthy! that no description can give a just idea of them; they smell, of the various oils with which they anoint their hair & bodies, in a most odious manner, & they crowd into the rooms in immense numbers, & with a boldness that cannot be repressed; the lowest & meanest of the slaves obtrude themselves into the apartment of the great Princess, without fear, or shame so that the heat is intolerable. But I think the worst of all is that the great & apparently, delicate ladies themselves, are in their hearts as ferocious as tigers, & capable of shocking, deliberate cruelty. They spend great part of their time in quarreling with each other, & a still greater part in idle childish sports, in which the slaves & all join, sometimes dressing themselves with skins, & running about on all fours, like antelopes tigers &c &c. At other times they dress the anima[ls] in their cloaths [sic], a little time ago, a moorish lady dressed her favourite cat with as many of her finest jewels as she could tye [sic] about it; the cat made its escape from her apartment, & got over the Zenana wall when some lady or other saw it & took care she should return without her finery. The first & highest of the ladies occasionally (8) assist in the business of the house, preparing the fodder, they distinguish themselves from their servants, only by the splen[dour] of their dress; & make them feel their inferiority, by very liberally [sic] bestowing blows & other punishments. The other day when we were at the Bugum's, an order was given to a slave by a very elegant looking lady, whose hands, head & neck were covered with jewels, her dress a white gauze ornamented with gold & a crimson veil forming a drapery about her beautiful figure this lovely looking creature observing that the girl did not attend to her order, rose up & passing thro' the dirty crowd, siezed [sic] the girl's ear giving it an unmerciful pinch & at the same time thrust her head against the wall in a way that must have caused most excruciating pain and this she did without speaking, or changing her countena[nance] at all, & then sat down & with the utmost composure went on with the conversation; indeed I believe it was a very trifling punishment in comparison of those generally inflicted when they are offended. I saw a slave girl the other day belonging to one of them, who shewed me several large marks on her bosom, which were made by her mistress who being angry with her; walked into the cooking room, & brought out a fire brand, with which she burnt her, these things are practiced even now, & formerly (they say) the

mistresses often killed their slaves, for very slight provocations. I thank God there are no slaves amongst the English, our servants are as independent as they are in England, there is no saying how people's hearts grow hard, I am told that the Dutch women, in their settlements, exceed even the Moor women in cruelty. If I should relate half the circumstances of this kind that we hear, I should swell my letter to an enormous size, & make it very disgusting, but I thought it right to give you one or two instances, to justify the harsh expressions I used. It is the custom with (9) all the Moors, when a visitor is going away to perfume her handkerchief & cloaths with rose water which is kept in an elegant case of little bottles made entirely of jewels set in gold. Without seeing it one could not form a just notion of the mixture of misery & splendour which in England is called Eastern magnificence, & in which I do assure you no jot of comfort is to be found. The Moor Women have generally speaking, fine regular features & elegant figures but their countenances have an unpleasant expression, an almost horrible fierceness in the look, when they are at all moved. I fear I have taken up too much of your time in trying to describe these women, who are a part of the creation which seems to us to be very useless, to say the best of them; of that however we must not pretend to judge. He knows best who has permitted them to go on in the same way for so many ages, & has heretofore chosen to put so many of creatures in their power. We went to an entertainment at the Nabob's Palace, which was all in the same stile h[e] was dressed very fine with a profusion of jewels & gold & so were the Khans or noblemen who attended him, but the room was dirty & wretched and the walls would have been quite bare but for the industry of the spiders. The servants crouded [sic] in amongst the company in the same ungovernable manner and the men were not more cleanly than the women.

Our friends General & Mrs. Trent leave us by this fleet. I think you & Mrs Clarke will like the lady for her mild, sweet disposition, but as for the General you will think him, rather to be endured than admired, at first, but when you are better acquainted with him, you may see that he has a kind good heart, which he takes some trouble to conceal & like many wiser men despises the virtues he possesses & wishes only to be admired for qualities (10) not half so valuable; He is born a cockney & 'tho he has been 36 years in this country he retains the w and v together with that agreeable [sic] lisp, which is peculiar to natives of London, he has also a little stammer, yet he says he was born to be an orator that his talents



have been misapplied & wishes he had been bred to the bar, he should then have made a distinguished figure in the world. He is kind beyond description to his servants & every creature about him, but when I have sometimes complimented him upon his tenderness towards them, he protests he despises the whole race of Hindoos, thinks them inferior to the brutes & wonders the Judges should befriend such a vile people but a great deal of this arises from the magnificent idea he has of himself & of the English character compared to that of the Hindoo--

My sister joins me in the kindest remembrances to you Mrs Clarke and Charles, & I beg you will forgive the great liberty I have taken with your valuable time and ascribe it to the over zealous esteem & regards of

dear Sir

Your most obliged & obedient

Serv[ant]

M. Symonds

Madras October 14th, 1804

(11) [blank]

(12) Received for Miss

—  
Symonds March 26<sup>th</sup> 1805 to  
a friend \_T.C.\_.

**Letter-052-MS-02-1805 (Mss.Eur.C.240/4, ff. 248r-252v) Mary Symonds to Esther Symonds, 2 February 1805**

(1) 1805

(2) Madras Feb<sup>ry</sup> 2nd 1805

My dear Mother,

I have just heard of an opportunity which now occurs of telling you that we are all in existence [sic] & well; the ship by which I send this is an American, & it is supposed that the Passengers by her may arrive in England two months sooner than those who will go by our regular Fleet, which will sail the end of this month; for that reason Sir Thos Strange has taken his passage in this ship, he having some very urgent business to transact which require his presence in England. What his business is, he & his family keep a profound secret but his sudden departure has put Madras into a general consternation some conjecturing one thing & some another; it must certainly be something [sic] of an extraordinary nature, which could induce a man at near Fifty years of age to risk three Indian voyages particularly as he is within 6 months of having served his seven years, & by going before that term he forfeits (3) his claim to the pension of 16 hundred pounds a year he declares his intention is to return in a year & a half but even that absence is a loss to him of 9 thousand pounds as his houskeeping [sic] goes on here all the same for his brother & sister live with him & one person more or less makes very little difference in a house here.

I shall only write this one letter now as I am obliged to send it by a private hand there being no packet for England by this ship & I shall direct this one immediately to you as I think you are best situated to inform our several friends of the state of our health &c; all my chit chat I shall bestow on Hetty by the regular ships.

Betsy & I are now living at a house called Pommell<sup>254</sup> situated about eleven miles from Madras, it was built by a Gentleman who was in the Company's civil service; he got a grant of lands, which are very extensive, for the purpose of planting cotton & a kind of

<sup>254</sup> Pammal, now a suburb of Chennai.

Alloe<sup>255</sup> [sic] which makes very fine strong ropes, with these he expected to supply the Navy the ropes were tried & found to answer very well, but it is said the agents for supplying the navy being people in power & finding that their incomes would be greatly reduced by the loss of that article, they strongly opposed the use of Mr. Webbe's ropes, & he wanting the encouragement of Government finds his speculation turn out very ill & the demand for the ropes so small that he does not think it necessary to reside on the farm The cotton is taken care of by servants whom he keeps here for that purpose. The house he frequently lends to any family of his acquaintanc [sic] who may wish for a change of air or variety of scene. We were very glad to come here for a little time as it is high ground a very pretty picturesque country & at this season, many degrees cooler than Madras. Betsy has been very busily employed in drawing birds & the village people have been very good in bringing many curious ones to her, I assure you I have lost no time but have also been very busy in making drawings of the country & well done or ill done I take care to make them as much like nature as I can by colouring them on the spot, so that I trust in God we shall one day have the pleasue [sic] of giving you & all our friends some idea of this country & its inhabitants when you have our joint labours to aid our descriptions [sic]. We are here surrounded by hills & lakes; & the neighbouring villages, & choultries are situated in beautiful groves, for wherever the natives of this country build they also plant every man makes a screen for his own house to shelter him from the bad winds & to shade him from the noonday sun. It is pretty to see the numbers of little girls who are employed in this cotton ground they run about all day amongst the bushes with little baskets on their arms (4) gathering in the ripe cotton which they carry to others who are sitting down in rows, & with a simple machine made for the purpose, separating the seeds & cleaning the cotton. Sir Henry comes up to us in the cool of the evening & goes down to St Thome in the morning early, he goes every day when he is busy, & when he has leisure he stays with us two or three days together the exercise seems to be of service to him as his appetite is good & he sleeps soundly all night indeed he generally drops asleep by nine oclock & at h[alf] past ten just hobbles to bed with his eyes half shut, we have had a remarkably pleasant season & the weather much cooler during the last two months than I have ever felt it in India, I hope to God it will brace Sir Henry a little & enable him to bear the land winds, as Sir Thos Stranges's [sic] going home

<sup>255</sup> Probably Agave, then known as "Aloe Americana", the fibre of which is used to make ropes.

will prevent our going away from Madras to avoid the heat; it is indeed very hard upon Sir Henry to be left, I may say, alone, with all the business of the Court upon his hands, for Sir Ben<sup>m</sup> Sullivan is an old man & having been a very free liver he is infirm beyond his years he has had two or three alarming illness's [sic] lately & is besides so unused to business that he is quite alarmed at the idea of acting in any thing. (5) Whilst we are here there are three young men keeping house for themselves at St Thome Mr. Richard as Host & Mr. Biss & a Mr. Tuston his guests. Their business & pleasure prevent their coming to us all the week, but Citizen's like they come up on Saturday night & go down on Sunday evening or Monday morning. Mr. Biss returned from Tripapore<sup>256</sup> last week where he got great credit for his exertions in the study of the Hindostanee & in his military manoeuvres & in consequence of his good conduct Lord Wm Bentink has fixed him at Madras for one year a member of a society, which he has just formed; to be composed of such young gentlemen only as distinguish themselves at Tripapore they are to be instructed in certain things which Lord Wm thinks necessary to their complete accomplishment as officers, they will be immediately under his own eye, as a house is fitting up for them in the Fort till that is ready Mr. Biss will remain with us.

Long e'er this comes to your hands I hope you will have received our letters by the Glory & the other ships which were to arrive in England in March or April, & We all wrote very fully by them to every body I wrote to Hetty by Genl & Mrs. Trent to introduce them (6) to her as I think they are calculated to make very agreeable companions to each other Mrs. Trent is a most amiable sweet tempered woman & I shall be truly happy to hear of their safe return to dear England.

We received a packet of letters from Hetty about 6 weeks ago by one of the ships of that Fleet in which our new Commander in chief, Sir John Craddock, sailed; that Fleet arrived in the Bay during our monsoon & therefore [sic] they were afraid to put in here & all went to Bengall Hetty mentions some packages for us which are in the care of a friend of Mr Prosser's, in the Baring we know that She is safe in Bengall & so we suppose are the Packages, but the Ships have been detained much longer than was expected owing to an

<sup>256</sup> Probably an error for Tripasore, the EIC training station for cadets mentioned in Letter 43.

embargo which Lord Wellesley laid on the Ships in consequence of a report of several Privateers having been seen in the Bay, we now hear that it is now taken off & therefore [sic] are in dayly [sic] expectation of the Fleet, & I hope soon after their arrival here we shall have an opportunity of acknowledging the receipt of the things. The expence of land carriage for letters from Bengall is so great that very few have been forwarded to Madras out of those ships so that when they come round I hope we shall receive some more, as we have only had that one packet from Hetty & Sir Henry had a single letter from the Bishop of Ely. I hope you receive all our letters safe & then I think you will have no cause to complain of any thing but the trouble of reading them, to be sure that may be trouble enough to you for neither Betsy or I can boast much of our penmanship, howevr [sic] you can employ the young eyes & I am sure it will be good practice for Tom to accomplish him in the reading of crabbed hands. I have said very little to Hetty about her little Mary because I cannot depend upon the life of any child of hers & it would be shocking to distress her with reading remembrances of it if she should have lost it, this circumstance makes me feel the great distance betwen [sic] us more than any other. This is a trying season of the year for every one in England & especially for you who I fear are suffering rheumaticks & sad pains, what would I not give at this moment to know how you are perhaps surrounded with snow a yard deep or at best cold & dirt & slip slop, if you could but give us your summers or we could give you our winters what a rare time we would make of it, we have now fine harvest weather the evenings & mornings very cool & pleasant, but from 9 in the morning till 4 in the evening the heat is too great for women to venture out on foot.

I hope Nancy's little Girl thrives as well as her (7) boys. I long to know who she is like & if she bids fair to be as handsome as her cousin Betsy James, the fame of her beauty spreads far & wide, I enquired of Mr. Biss if she had not yet fixed on a mate & he tells me she had some thoughts of a Purchase of that sort. Pray remember us all very kindly to Mr & Mrs Thos James when you have an opportunity & tell him that I begin to look forward in the hope of having a little flirtation with him again one of these days. Sir Henry will write to some of his friends by this ship but I believe Betsy will leave her part to me as she has now 3 curious birds waiting to be drawn & her conscience is concerned in doing them as soon as possible for the poor things will not eat in confinement so they are let to fly away when they have done sitting for thier [sic]

portraits.

She joins me in best love to Ned & Nancy & all the dear little ones, & glad shall we be to hear how you all pass this winter, should this come to your hands sooner than the next Fleet arrives in England you will of course send an account of us to Hetty & with it our kind love to her & James & our thanks for all the trouble she takes in buying & packing &c &c. We both beg you to accept our love & [indistinct?] & pray believe me to be

Your very affectionate daughter Mary Symonds

Madras Febry 2d, 1805

**Letter-053-MS-03-1805 (Mss.Eur.C.240/4, ff. 253r-257v) Mary Symonds to Hester James, 4 March 1805**

(1) Madras March the 4th,  
1805 My dear Hetty,

We have just received your two boxes by the Baring the one containing a box of milinary [sic] a piece of black cloth & a full dress black coat for Sir Henry. The other filled with peas 2 pair of nankeen shoes<sup>257</sup> & local [?] news papers Mr. Grimes [?] parcels & 2 pounds of [pur..\*word cut off\*] the milinary is a very nice little assortment & very useful to us Betsy is quite glad to see the blue caps & hats, & I am equally so to find a neat plain chip hat for I have neither had hat or bonnet that I could stick on my noddle for a whole year You cannot form an Idea of our stupidity in putting on fancy things & I dare say if after spending an hour in adjusting some dashing hat or cap you were to meet me in it you would burst out a laughing to see how completely I had mistaken the matter, besides which I assure you I

<sup>257</sup> Nankeen boots were a fashionable sort of fabric ladies' walking boot in the early nineteenth century. The name is derived from a fabric that was brought from the city of Nankin (Nanjing) in China. (<https://ladysrepositorymuseum.blogspot.com/2013/02/ladys-1810-1820-nankeen-walking-boots.html>)

don't look half so young & blooming as I did ten years ago. The two black Cloaks are very (2) beautiful [sic] we admire both the make & the materials very much. I willingly resign all the caps to Betsy as I shall imitate them, which I can very well do now you have been so good as to send such pretty materials. We have not yet seen the Gentleman who brought the Boxes but he has written once or twice to Sir Henry. I believe he has not been on shore for the Cap,<sup>tns</sup> & officers of the ship are very much hurried, they were detained a long time at Calcutta & have now a very short time allowed them for lading their ships for the Admiral is quite impatient to sail & indeed every day they are detained now may be the cause of their encountering a storm off the Cape

I wrote to my mother the beginning [sic] of February, by an American vessel in which Sir Thos Strange sailed, to the utter amazement of all his friends & acquaintances, he only gave notice of his going a fortnight before he left this & it is said (indeed he told us himself) that his nearest relations here were totally unacquainted with the occasion of his voyage however be it what it may. I am sure it is very hard on poor Sir Henry to be left here to do the whole business, & when he had promised himself the pleasure of going a little up the country, to avoid the land wind, to be forced to stay here well or ill, & get nothing for his trouble.

I believe Sir Henry was a little disappointed on opening the boxes, not to find a coloured coat, which he promised himself you had sent, he says you mentioned a pepper & salt coat which you had chosen for him a long time ago & now he is obliged to go on in his old long backed fashion tho' (for ought I know) he may have intended to eclipse all the Beaux in this place, I am sure he talks as much of it as if he did. I wish you could be in a corner when we are opening a box from you it would entertain you very much to hear the observations, Sir Henry generally makes himself sport by laughing at all the things as they make their appearance on; the comparisons & resemblances are beyond any thing. Betsy has fallen violently in love with a blue quilted bonnet & he declares it is a twin of his Aunt Hollands old petticoat. A little time ago Betsy had been drawing a small kind of tiger & after she had done it she told Sir Henry that she discovered a great resemblance in the tigers countenance to mine, she did not communicate the idea to me; & the next day I made my

appearance in a kind of military waistcoat with loops of bobbin crossing the breast from button to button; as soon as I sat down he began to titter, & then gave Betsy a jog to look at me; Betsy says he, look at old Tiger Pol she has dressed herself in the skeleton of a man she killed yesterday. When Mr. Biss arrived he was quizzed & laughed at by us all he was the first very short (3) waisted gentleman we had seen, Sir Henry used to sit laughing & making fun with him by the hour, his little waistcoat his large sleeves & boots & his high collar & stuffed cavat [sic], but I assure you he has undergone an entire metamorphosis & is now quite reduced to a neat Indian Officer, & in his turn laughs at the Griff<sup>258</sup> that are just arrived. The young men generally begin reducing their neckcloths which they [illegible] & pose [?] daily like skinning an onion & then those fine high collars & long sleeves [sic] are such a charming addition to a good crop of prickly heat, that they gladly exchange them in the house for a [sic] white cotton sleeve waistcoat, & comfort becomes of so much value that even the dashing appearance is forced to yield to it in a very little time.

The paper you sent is very acceptable to Betsy as she has had a drawing fit lately & nearly used up all the old stock: for my own part I am trying to buy a little but it is wretched stuff that is brought out to sell in general & all snatched up immediately. We have been this cool season at a place called Pommel<sup>259</sup> about 12 miles from Madras the country about it is extremely pretty & I have made myself very busy sketching, so you may (4) now tell George Samuel in answer to his enquiries, that I have got Pagodas & Coultrees & Montathums<sup>260</sup> & Mosques & Mousoleums [sic], but alas: no paper for landscape; what we brought out with us has entirely lost the size & sinks worse than blot paper I wished to give you an idea of our house at St. Thome but no paper, however I was so determined to do it that I have taken a bit of the new letter paper by way of an experiment it does not answer well at all; but I enclose it much as it is, & you must take it in lieu of a sheet of writing; for it was a sudden thought & we have very little time allowed for proposing our letters. Betsy thinks it was very stingy to send only 12 sheets of the thick paper, so you can be so good as to double that quantity; & send with it about the same, of such as will suit for slighter

<sup>258</sup> Griff or griffen, as noted above, one newly arrived in India.

<sup>259</sup> Pammal, as above.

<sup>260</sup> Mountains or mounts. From the Latin.



drawings; that thick sort is only proper for very high finishing.

We sent you many trifles [sic] in the Prince of Wales & most of our letters were also put in the packet by her (as she was a favourite ship) in consequence of which I fear you will again think we have (5) not written to you as fully as we might, for now all hope of her ever arriving is given up & it is pretty certain that she must have sunk with every soul on board, you mention, with some regret, that Sir Henry had written to his father & that Betsy and I had omitted to avail ourselves of the same opportunity, but I assure you it was no fault of ours for I have never neglected one chance of sending, since I came into the country, but it has happened that Sir Henry, having particular business to write upon, has once or twice sent a letter to Bengall or Bombay to take the chances of a ship sailing from one of those places to any port of Europe & the letter you allude to, has fortunately been forwarded immediately. That way of sending is so uncertain & attended with so much difficulty & obligation that we would never do it except on a very pressing occasion. Since Mr. Biss's arrival we have twice had the pleasure of hearing from you, but from you alone not a line from either of the Thoburns or any of our particular friends. I think it is just a year sinc [sic] the date of thier [sic] last letters, but perhaps we may have been so unlucky as to lose some for these last ships have arrived so irregularly The Baring and Airly Castle & all the ships of that Fleet which was destined to this place were afraid to put in here on account of the monsoon as they were in the Bay just at the commencement of it & therefore they went to Bengall first; some of the letters were forwarded to us by the Post, & others were kept till they came round here which must have made some confusion you are very good in mentioning every one who is dear to us, as by doing so you prevent our being unhappy in case we are deprived of thier [sic] letters by any accident Our good Old Admiral<sup>261</sup> will convoy this fleet home all the way, so we have a fair prospect of your recieving [sic] our letters in reasonable time, his Successor has not yet been on shore here, so I know nothing of him, but as he is a young & active man I hope we shall be more fortunate in these seas than we have been. Madras has been for those three weeks all shew & finery, quite full of fine folks & gay folks at least as far as outside goes, but I believe with many that is all. The Civilians gave a dinner & the Navy agent a Grand ball & fire

<sup>261</sup> Admiral Peter Rainier, as above.

works, to Admiral Rainier prior to his departure & the Civilians gave a very Grand ball & the Military a very fine dinner (6) to General Wellesley prior to his departure Lady William Bentinck has given evening parties to introduce Sir John & Lady Theodora Craddock.<sup>262</sup> I took the trouble of going to two of the balls in order to oblige Mr. Biss & Mr. Richard Clarke, but I am by no means fond of such hurly burly, for it is all the same thing over & over again, & all the same people for the most part of the year, just now to be sure, we have plenty of new faces to stare at & new fashions to laugh at all the people who are come out by 4 or 5 ships from England, some for this place & some for Bengal & going home, & all those who have been there these two months by the other fleet & are but just brought round.

I am writing a poor stupid kind of a letter but it will serve to shew you what we are about Mr. Biss has been with us this month, since his return from Tripapore,<sup>263</sup> he is this day gone to his new employment under Captn Troyer.<sup>264</sup> God knows what he is to learn there, but a variety of things in which Ld William thinks it necessary to accomplish a chosen few, at present they are only 14 & are selected from all the Cadets (7) of the last year; it will be a great pleasure for Mr. Biss's friends to find him amongst the number as it is so great a proof of his merit in his profession, he is indeed a very fine young man & a great favourite with us all. I believe like every [sic] other young man who comes out, he does not find India all he expected, though he really does not complain as every one else does; In England, they hear a great deal of the fine pay of officers here, but nothing of the sad impositions they are obliged to submit to, the very great expence they are at in fitting themselves out with various necessaries, which are unheard of in England, & the many hardships they are forced to undergo on their first arrival. When once their establishment is fixed the pay is certainly sufficient to maintain them very genteely but it is impossible for any young man to join his Regiment without considerable assistance from his friends. This is a circumstance very little known in England but very severely felt by all the houskeepers [sic] here, who have numbers of poor young men recommended to them & whose friends think they have provided for them by giving them a good stock of Cloaths & paying their passage.

<sup>262</sup> Sir John Craddock (1759-1839), Commander-in-Chief of the Madras Army.

<sup>263</sup> Probably Tripasore, as above.

<sup>264</sup> Captain Troyer was in charge of training the surveying officers at the Madras Military Institution. (Clements R Markham, *A Memoir on the Indian Surveys* (London: Sold by W.H. Allen, 1871), 58.)

Sir Thos Strange told me he had two or three (8) thousand pagodas owing to him not one of which could ever be paid, for the young mens friends would not remit the money & he could not find in his heart to ask them for it, knowing it was not in thier [sic] power to pay it without contracting debts to natives, who would charge them an immoderate interest, & keep them in thralldom for many many years. You write us very surprising news of your being at Clapham. I begin to think you have an eye towards the mansion house, pray have you the Honour & pleasure of Mrs Raven-hills<sup>265</sup> acquaintance or is she quite too sublime?. I suppose you give yourself little care whose acquaintance you have whilst you have your dear little pratler [sic] with you I think she must begin to prattle now. I wish I could hear of her & you once a week for now I don't like to think much about her nor to promise myself pleasure which is at least so very distant.

God bless & keep you all. I shall write to as many friends as I can, but I make up your dispatches first, as We consider yours as head quarters. Give a thousand kisses to my dear little namesake for me & my kind love to James & all my dear friends and believe me

ever most affectionately yours

M. Symonds

Madras March (? ) 4th 1805

**Letter-054-EG-03-1805 (Mss.Eur.C.240/4, ff. 258r-266r) Elizabeth Gwillim to her Hester James, March 6, 1805**

(1)

My dear Hetty,

<sup>265</sup> Perhaps Mrs Jane Ravenhill (d. 1847, Clapham), wife of the banker John Ravenhill.

Mount near Madras March 6th. 1805 -

Upon your nice paper & with one of your nice pens let me thank you for your nice care of all our things & still nicer packing of them. - It wou'd have been as difficult to replace the various articles in the box after we had satisfied our curiosity by looking at them as to fold a rose back into a bud. - Pray accept this fine simile in lieu of long letters which by this Fleet I shall not have time to write. - I wrote immense quantities by the Princess of Wales<sup>266</sup> Captain Price - to Mrs: Shephard to you to my mother to everybody - I liked Captain Price his ship was reckoned the best & he the best officer but we fear that neither will be heard of more. - I wish you may have better intelligence - there were sweet children in her many, & every body here is in great anxiety about her. - I hardly know what I sent in her & in such a case cannot think of calling them losses

- but lest you shou'd think me negligent missing my labour I must inform you of what I recollect [sic] - letters numerous - one of 5 or 6 sheets to Mrs: yorke at Ely<sup>267</sup> & with it a translation of a Hindoo Religious history - a sort of Legendary tale. which might have entertained you - a similar letter & a copy of the translation for my mother - some dried plants for Dr: Smith, a letter to him & a Plant which Dr: Rottler the Botanist chose to give my name to if it might be accepted<sup>268</sup>

- a large box of most curious plants for Mr: Whitley - seeds small boxes with sandal wood trees &c these months of my labour. - The other things Polly tells me she has enumerated. -

We like our cloaks much; but it is Miss Symonds who is to wear the one & I do not find that a person of any other name is likely to wear it, but if she has no other cause of complaint than she has now I think she will not have need to complain as I see the world. - Your letters are all we have worth reading & whatever you may think of it I think & so we all do that one of your letters is worth a hundred of mine I have nothing to tell you but what will do as well one year as another & am perhaps only anticipating fire-side chat; but yours are letters of the day. - I wrote much by the last ships & I hope you will not have reson [sic] to complain in future the complaint you make now we were prepared to find it was a dreadful

<sup>266</sup> *Prince of Wales*, EIC ship launched in 1803, foundered in 1804 on her homeward voyage. The letters that Elizabeth refers to here would have been lost with the ship.

<sup>267</sup> Mrs Mary Yorke, wife of the Bishop of Ely.

<sup>268</sup> John Sims, "MAGNOLIA PUMILA, DWARF MAGNOLIA," *Curtis's Botanical Magazine*, Volume 25 (1807): t. 977, <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/page/471984>.

long time that we had no sort of opportunity of writing. - The letters Sir Henry's father ~~sent~~ had were strange chances one was of necessity sent to Bengal at a great expense & one he sent as a trial by an American ship not having an idea that it wou'd reach England. He thought it wou'd [sic] amuse his father to have a letter that had been in the 4 quarters of the globe - for the American ships touch at the Cape & carry their letters to America from whence as there are little Packets continually sailling [sic] these letters are sent to England & as the Americans are a Neutral Power<sup>269</sup> their ships pass the seas without fear, & of course without any delay that it may occasion - The Americans have used this neutrality to good purpose for they have taken many Passengers from hence & those persons being landed in America easily find a Passage to England & have arrived quicker & infinetly [sic] cheaper than by going in our own East India ships. - just this was the case of the letter you mention It was at that time quite a hazardous thing but the Americans have been so punctual in dismissing to England all letters entrusted on board their ships & they have come so punctual that all people are charmed with the scheme & in future I shall write to you by every American ship that leaves this Port. at least some of us will - An American left this place about three weeks ago by which Sir Henry & Polly, Biss, & Richard wrote. - The Americans **(3)** [4 written in top left corner] not only do themselves a benefit in this but us Indians also, for the East Indian Captains are so enormous in their demand for a Passage home in particular that many people are mere Prisoners in this place & even those who have a little money are glad to get a passage in an American & Embark a second time there rather than pay these enormous demands. - I hope therefor[e] that it may be some check on the Captains The last American carried home many Passengers - amongst them Sir Tho: Strange whose reason for [word crossed out] visiting England has astonished everybody - I shou'd have written to you on the subject before ~~but I had no~~ but there was no Packet opened on board the American & I must have given my letter either to Sir Tho<sup>S</sup>: or another gentleman who sailed [sic] with him & I did not like to send a letter of private conversation in that way. I am however desirous to tell you what I think of this matter just that if anything falls in your way - if you hear any news that relates to the subject or can make any enquiries without seeming to do so you may be on the watch. - When we came here as you know we went to Sir T. S.'s home & Sir Henry had a great **(4)** [5] regard to him from being at College with him & we have always been upon friendly terms. - He is a most pleasing man in

<sup>269</sup> In reference to the Napoleonic Wars.

his manners, attentive & kind; & has a handsome person with the accomplishments of a gentleman & a scholar, but he had [word crossed out] universally a [word crossed out] the character of being intriguing in spirit & utterly deceitful - I have never been inclined to believe this report of him; for why shou'd a man ~~that~~ deceive or flatter, or intrigue who ~~may~~ being placed in an exalted situation may command all the honours of it, do all the duties of it, by the plainest rules of morallity [sic]. - One thing was always apparent, that he was ambitious of grasping all the power & all the Patronage belonging to the three - however Sir H. is not of a disposition meanly to give up his rights & [word crossed out] a little contention excepted things have gone on marvellously well [words crossed out] The match Mr: J: Strange made with Lord Melville's daughter<sup>270</sup> was to Sir T. most flattering - & his ruinous circumstances have been a great affliction. Sir T. father was as you know an Engraver (5) [6] a profession which nobody in high life falls into - however he rose to great honours in it & some wealth. - at the same time there can be no pretence to family - This match which connected him with him the Kings first minister led to every ambitious hope & had Mr Strange been contented to have remained quietly in possession of his own fortune of 70 thousand pounds the second he had gained in this country & as it is said gained in three years - How, is another question - he might with such a match have risen greatly there was everything to hope with her interest - He has now got the leave of the Company to come here to gain a third Portion to the great discontent of the other Civil servants who must of course feel it a little hard to see one of the best situations given to a person who has been twice provided for. - It has occasioned great discontent; but the interest is so great that he will probably be immediately in Council, nevertheless it is all against the grain. - Sir Tho<sup>S</sup>: has always exerted himself with Sir Henry in the suppression of all the violent measures of a set of people who till the establishment of the Courts [7] were unrestrained by laws - such exertions required a great & independant [sic] spirit & now he has a brother in distress, one of those very persons, with the same views, his task becomes doubly hard. - He has told us that it was his wish to prevent his brother from coming out - but be it as it may he is come - & she makes a display of jewels more than all his debts, which is generally thought very indecent - so far from an easy temper as you supposed I believe she is most troublesome, that Sir T. has no love for her I think I can plainly perceive &

<sup>270</sup> James Strange married Ann Drummond, nee Dundas (1768–1852), the daughter of Robert Dundas, Viscount Melville, in 1798 (*The Monthly Magazine*, 6 (July-December 1798), 488).

some say it is to avoid her he goes home. I think there is no doubt but he is gone home to use her interest in some way or other whilst her father is in power as he has taken all means to flatter her - But what his views are ought to be looked after, Sir B. Sullivan is most offended that he has not said they are private or publick - It is generally supposed that he goes home to solicit for himself some higher employment & at the same time to serve some friend & countryman by putting him in his own place over Sir Henry's head, If he shou'd avail himself to do this of his interest it wou'd be a most abominable thing but all people have insisted upon it ever since we came here that he is capable (6) [8] of all sorts of intrigue & his sudden going home just the moment Dundas<sup>271</sup> comes again into power, & in so recent a manner looks most extraordinarily - his affection for me & Polly are so great & so freely expressed & his whole manner so full of apparent kindness that I am unwilling to believe & hardly can believe such hypocrisy in human nature; but I believe we are all that do not believe it - besides ambition there is country - the scotch hang so together that we cannot guess what they will do for one another - & an English governor & an Irish Commander in Chief coming out here has put them all on the alert - I am quite content with my present situation; but why shou'd a younger person be put over his head who has done his duty in a most exemplary manner. - He has written home about it all I want of you is to [words crossed out] tell me any straggly thing you may hear. ---

The reason I have not written so much as I cou'd have wished is that I have been in the Country and I [word crossed out] could [sic] not return to S. Thome because Sir H. thought it did (7) [9] him good to ride backwards & forward morning & evening & certainly it does he has always been in good health whilst he has been able to do it & in the heats he cannot. -

Biss has been very fortunate between your good advice & our good advice & a little sickness just at the first, or his own goodness he is [words crossed out] so gentle & so attentive ~~good~~ that he was quite at the tip top of the list - He went to begin his home keeping, that is house keeping he has none; but walls - put to his house yesterday. tomorrow he comes up to the mount as both he & Richard are asked to dine at gen[era]l: Smiths, who is the Commander of this station - & how do you think they got invited? not that they were the

<sup>271</sup> Robert Dundas, 1st Viscount Melville (1742-1811) who became First Lord of the Admiralty in 1804. He was father-in-law to the brother of Thomas Strange. See Fry, Michael. "Dundas, Henry, first Viscount Melville (1742–1811), politician." Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. 08. Oxford University Press. Date of access 7 Sep. 2022,

Culprits but another who & is here. - Every Saturday-Sunday, all the fraternity come to stay with me till Monday morn<sup>g</sup>: - [words crossed out] when they generally perform like Mr: James does on the same days - go to church in the morn[in]g: & in the Even[in]g: skip about - now Gen[era]l: Smiths daughter who is a sweet neighbour of mine had given me a pot value about a groat but from the interiour [sic] of India, of a curious light black ware.<sup>272</sup> - I had sent for the pot [word crossed out] intending to let them carry it down to go to the ships for you - so knowing it to be thin I put it on the ground but I had not gone ten minutes out of the room before it was broke by throwing a whip out at the window butt end foremost - I had reproached them so much for breaking the oil tumblers the Sunday before &c &c &c &c. that they thought **(8)** [10] if this evil was communicated it wou'd go amiss with them. & hearing from Mary that I had the pot from this Lady - they determined to put a good face upon it & go & ask if she cou'd [sic] give them another - But there was a difficulty I might see them going out in the heat of the day, if they went in front of the house so two of them set out at the back without waiting for the keys - [words crossed out] - unfortunately they had a gate with wooden spikes to mount which gate was about 20 feet high the first misfortune was that Richard was caught by the back part of his small-cloaths [sic] & hung till the [word crossed out] Nankeen<sup>273</sup> gave way - the other determing [sic] to be wiser mounted the hedge which was higher but as he is a Cavalry Officer he hung by his spurs & cou'd not be liberated, without much difficulty - however Richard coverd [sic] his misfortunes with his coat & they set out & enquired for Capt. Stone my friends husband - a black man said "he is in there Sir" - so in they walked Captain Stone was writing at a little table - & poor Mrs: Stone in her - as Richard calls it in her undress for she had little or no drapery - They had no idea that the room they were diverted to was the bedroom & the servants never think of such forms here - Mrs: Stone took such compassion on them that she ransacked the whole home for more Pots & the old Gen[era]l: asked them all to dine with him on Wednesday - I shall send you the Pots by Mrs. Toppington in the Ayrly Castle when she sails -- [11]

I think I must now tell you what I shall want sent out - as for Mr: Gwillim's Pepper & salt colour'd coat I hope it is coming - but if you mis-took pray get one made of some genteel\_ light mixture It must be a little in the fashion but without any wadding as it is too hot for this

<sup>272</sup> Possibly Nizimabad ware from Uttar Pradesh, a black, highly-polished pottery.

<sup>273</sup> Fabric from Nanking (Nanjing), or which resembled it.



country -- Our hats are very acceptable & very comfortable it is long since I have had a hat - for I was obliged to give all to Polly except the hat with the Purple feathers - which you perhaps have forgotten & two Muslin bonnets - all were too small for me in the Crown - I had a pretty bonnet from Mrs: Toussaint with Laylock shaded ribbon at the same time & that also was so tight I had no pleasure in it - My hair is very thick & long & the winds of this country so damp that I am often obliged to wear flannel on my head - At the same time if the hats are too large & without [word crossed out] strings to run them in they wou'd be unwearable Nancy Green's head used to do exactly for me ~~it shou~~ the hats shou'd be easy for her. - My head is unusually long at the back.

The only thing I care for in Mrs: Toussaints caps is that they always make nice [word crossed out] running strings fast sewed to them by which you put the cap easily on & bind it tight by the strings afterwards & in this country it is most essential for here is no maid nor milliner to set a stitch it must all be one's own hands & I begrudge the little time I have in the cool weather & in the heat I cannot do it **(9)** [12] Two years I was, without Bristol paper<sup>274</sup> It came at last in the beginning of the heat as soon as the sun got on the ~~north~~ south of us I began to draw upon what was sent - & have done more ~~than~~ since that, than all I have done since I came to the Country I have drawn 12 drawings of different sorts of sheep & goats & above thirty birds - so that I was in a great a fright that my career wou'd be stopped when the last little tin case arrived Mary is still at fault for Landscape paper Newman's Cartridge paper & some good other drawing paper & above all Brushes, & Sky Brushes & Varnishing Brushes good broad ones to wash over sketches - also Indigo, Lake, Umber & Vandyke brown & Payne's grey - or Smiths grey - we cannot use the China Brushes & send some very large paper both Bristol & common drawing paper to do the points of the Country. if it shall please God that we are able - you do not know & cannot guess what a great Botanist I am become - since I have had one Volume of Dr: Martins new Edition of Miller's Dictionary<sup>275</sup> - I wish I cou'd get it out it is sent for to Ware I hope it will come soon - for it aids me in reading Latin - when I know what it is, I **(10)** [13] I guess with astonishing facility. But that Book is very correct in all I have seen. - Yet even in that I see [word crossed out] some things that an attentive observer might rectify. -- Dr: Rottler praises me too much & makes one lazy & turn my mind to other things - The

<sup>274</sup> Bristol board paper, a type of uncoated board paper often used for watercolour painting.

<sup>275</sup> Thomas Martyn, *The Gardener's and Botanist's Dictionary ... the whole Corrected and Newly Arranged* (London: F.C. and J. Rivington, *et al*, 1795).

truth is that I shou'd not have put myself upon so new & difficult a study but that without some little knowledge of Botany it is impossible to read the Hindoo languages - Their allusions to particular plants which are essential to their different ceremonies are so pointed that unless you know the plants which Botany alone can teach you, the merit of the whole passage is lost; and after learning a little Botany it seems almost impossible to stop --

No letters have I had from Brompton but once for nearly two years - I will not write again

till they write to me for I have written three to one letters. -

I wish to have immediately Bewicks second vol: of British Birds<sup>276</sup> which I see by the papers is come out. - do not forget it by the first opportunity Where did you get those three sheets of Etchings of an old horse grazing that you sent in the box with the dogs - The animals are very incorrect but they wou'd be useful enough a few of **(11)** [14] of such sheets to shew [sic] a light way of relieving an animal. If you cou'd buy a loose n<sup>o</sup> or two I shou'd like them - but the whole work must be an idle affair & I wou'd not wish to have it - Edwards<sup>277</sup> has done the last dogs worse than the first. ---

I hope that my two pieces of Hamburgh huccaback [sic] for the towels is upon the sea for our towels are more ragged than a Dishcloth. - Pray send such a basket of writing paper whenever you can about a Doz<sup>n</sup>: quires but let a little be gilt and ribbed paper. - a pound of Windsor soap is a good thing to have if there is room in a box for it is very dear here - and white ribbon both sarsnet<sup>278</sup> & sattin [sic] always acceptable. I cannot imagine what it is in different ribbons that some turn yellow & others preserve their whiteness - but I think it is the clear blue whites very clear that keep best - you have sent one piece of broad & one piece of narrower - & a 3 penny width - now the broad is as yellow as flax & the other two pieces quite white - The cap I had from Mrs: Toussaint made of sattin [sic] with a geranium flower - of that

<sup>276</sup> Thomas Bewick, Ralph Beilby, and Henry Cotes. *History of British Birds* (version [1st ed.]). (Newcastle: Printed by Sol. Hodgson, for Beilby & Bewick, 1797).

<sup>277</sup> Sydenham Edwards (1768-1819) was a natural history illustrator who drew for the Botanical Register, and illustrated *Cynographica Britannica* 1800 (an encyclopaedic compendium of dog breeds in Britain).

<sup>278</sup> Sarcenet, a fine, soft fabric, often of silk, made in plain or twill weave and used especially for linings.

the satten is the colour of old Mrs: Perrins' hat, if you may remember her, & the ribbons are a very good white - the white cap made of British net of which you said they had made the cap of two sorts of ribbons [15] those ribbons look nearly alike now - but the British lace is a kind of blue black & this is the case of all the British lace some turns black & some yellow. - I shou'd like ½ a Doz[e]n: pair of very handsome silk stockings with large legs & small feet - for they bind them up in washing here, let the clocks be very handsome if they are woven - a few short yellow gloves we shou'd be glad of. and Polly says also a few yellow long gloves she has none left - she says they are called Limmericks [sic] they are best for this country<sup>279</sup> -- If you cou'd get a pair of stays made of simple India dimity & single shoulder straps I shou'd be glad of these but remember I am rather fatter than I was - - I am quite delighted with the flowers you have sent this time particularly the blue roses - I feel myself more comfortable in that kind of flower all in one tint. - Next time you send I cou'd wish to have a cap with a white plume of feathers just by way of a high dress to make a distinction in going to the Government House &c - & at my age I seem to want something [sic] of that kind particularly as I have no Pearls nor jewels like some of our Ladies have & a cap with a flower is not dress enough - My hat with white feathers at least I have siezed [sic] upon it for myself, that pleases me much & will be likely to be most useful to me - I have some feathers but they are not made into plumes & I cannot bear (12) [16] feathers unless they are well put in - & I cannot do it. -- Polly can do a thousand turns & twists --

I was astonished at your being at Clapham but how did you like it? - & where will you go this summer & O I want a conjurer to tell twenty things that I must wait long to know - so I will not talk on that subject - you say I do not talk about the time - It will be 4 years since we set foot in this place before you get this! - I think of it often enough - I was truly sorry for Nancy's misfortunes but losses will happen in all business. - Biss wants 80 to buy him a Horse If he borrows the money he must pay 10. per cent He is going to take it of Sir Henry & he will give a draft on Mr: Biss in favour of Ned which will make the money they asked nearly compleat [sic]. Sir Henry remitted one hundred pounds, - before & Mary wrote to you by the Glory which letter I hope you have had by now, & in that you will see what I wished to be done for them I hope the poor boys are not left to go too shabby - I think much of them, as they now begin to get at an age when cloaths [sic] & education becomes expensive - I wish

<sup>279</sup> See note to letter 10 on limerick gloves.

you would enquire & you can send Tom a piece of cloth for shirts & charge it to me, - & also a few stockings now & then - let me know what you send - I do not mean fine cloth but I should not like to have him ill off & poor Ned seems to have **(13)** [17] got on but indifferently - It was an unkind thing of his brother to dismiss him from that farm. - For if he meant to dispose of it he could not want the place for himself to live in - He is not likely to sell the place & live a tenant. - and a Purchaser of it is not likely to work it & therefore they might have had a chance of it under another Landlord -- I do not understand it but it seems to me a most unbrotherly part. -- and all I see of the World convinces me that goodness & kindness alone can ensure the Blessing of God. - What strange transitions I have seen & heard of in this place where the ruined take refuge - sunk from the height of fortune to dependance & beggary - Like David in the Sanctuary of God - I understand how he sets them in slippery places - I assure you dear Hetty that I have no thought but doing all in my power for those poor children but at this distance I cannot give that attention I wish to them - nor can I form plans nor judge of their tempers & turns of mind. - nor can I guess what it may be in my power to do; but this I always see that Sir Henry has a desire to do his duty to them with as willing a heart as you & Mr: James who have a double bond<sup>280</sup> - all I can do for them is to offer up prayers which I do sincerely [sic] for them you & your's & the best hope that cheers my mind is that of seeing my mother & and [sic] all of you well & happy. - as to what you **(14)** [18] tell me of my mother-~~it~~ it grieves me much that she should subject herself to such a person as that & I saw it did Sir Henry when he read it. - What she can acquire is little & I know nothing would vex him more than that any of my family should be in [word crossed out] a situation of that kind - all people now a days travel about & they enquire - who is such a one & who is her mother & sister &c - & I think whilst Mr. Gwillim does shew [sic] every wish to serve the children my mother should not let herself down by [word crossed out] encreasing [sic] her little store in any way that degrades her - But what to say or whether to say anything I know not - I think she is a little over anxious about the Children - she will do them quite as much good & more good than all she can save by making her house look fit for her age comfortable - for it really reflects upon us that she should be too parsimonious [sic] - & by our Credit I hope we may provide for them - as God has blessed us for our parents - rather I hope he will give a blessing to them for ours - -& I have no distrust in Providence who has provided for me better than all contrivances

<sup>280</sup> In reference to the family connection between Richard and Edward James, as well as between the sisters Hester and Ann James nee Symonds.

[word crossed out] I dare say they will be as good & happy men as their richer uncles children  
& therefore I have no fear - Give my love to James & the dear little one & God bless &  
Preserve you. believe me ever affectionatly [sic] your's E Gwillim

I will write a little letter to my mother you need not send this. -

**Letter\_055\_XX\_07-1805 (Mss.Eur.C.240/4, ff. 267r-270v) [A.W. Stone to Elizabeth  
Gwillim], July 9 1805**

(1)

My Dear Madam,

I had the pleasure to receive yours of the 25th ultimo some days ago, for which and your kindness toward me therein expressed as well as on many former occasions, believe me in truth I feel truly grateful and obliged. I cannot find words to tell you how much we all feel disappointed in our hopes of seeing you at Vizagapatam. It is the place of all others I think in India would have pleased you & Sir Henry the most & the Scenery about would no less have delighted and amused Miss Symonds, whose able Pencil I well know has the power to trace its beauties however we must as in this as in all other disappointments bear up with patience, and I look forward to better success for a future period — next year I hope— My Father is mightily pleased at the idea of Sir Henry wheeling himself about in Tippoo's old Chair.<sup>281</sup> We (2) have a similar scene here very day in the Bath chair about the Varandas [sic] which are very spacious and long. I could almost fancy I could see Sir Henry in one and my father in the other. I assure you in rainy weather it is a no bad conveyance for young or old when you have room enough in a House to go about in. The Ladies and Gentleman are carried about in a conveyance called a Tour-John— it is a kind of an open Chair on Poles like a Pallanquin [sic] & it is a very pleasant mode of taking either Morning or Evening's ride- I am truly concerned to hear you have been again unwell. I hope long e're this, you are quite recovered & that the Land Winds of Madras have in some degree abated of their violence. We often & often talk of you & family I regret that you are not

<sup>281</sup> In reference to Tipu Sultan, whose possessions were distributed among British army officers after his defeat. The chair was seemingly a sort of bath chair, as mentioned in the next sentence.

here to enjoy the pure Air of this place, which is as bracing almost as that of England. The Roses grow here in the most luxuriant state & every rock & Hill is covered with the wild Myrtle & the sweet little Larks are in abundance constantly singing in the Air, so that I assure you I could walk about & almost fancy myself in Some of the Fields in England, &c/y [at this?] time of year now may almost every day allow you to go out after Breakfast & stay till Tiffing<sup>282</sup> without any covering for your Head besides the Hat, so that I take many a pleasant ramble with my little Davy by my side- he is always picking up some curiosity in his imagination for Lady Gwillim and Miss Symonds & some times the Table is covered with Stones & Shells of all Kinds- but I am sorry to say we have discovered none the least worth keeping, which not a little annoys the young Philosopher- We have two beautiful little Deer, one elegantly spotted & both very tame. I wish the distance was not so great from Madras, to have enabled us to have sent them to you in safety. A Wolf came into our Compound some nights ago & (3) eat up completely horns and all a beautiful little Stag which was made a present of to Davy only two days before. These animals are here in droves I am told, as also Hyaenas & Jackals. There have been 25 Cheethes [sic] & a Royal Tyger [sic] or two caught in a Trap upon the Dolphin's Nose<sup>283</sup> with in these five years. The Place belongs to the Estate of the late Captain Blackmore who has bestowed much trouble & pains on it, & is certainly a heaven upon Earth (if I may be allowed to call it). The House or rather Castle is most curiously constructed & all the Grounds are elegantly laid out. No Carriage can get up to it, but when once taken up in a Pallanquin [sic] or Tour-John, you may the Ride about upon the Hills in a Bandy or Curricule<sup>284</sup> on a very fine Road made entirely by himself to the Distance of four or five miles. All who have seen it allow it to be a most wonderful curious Place, & very well worth the trouble of ascending [word crossed out] (4) so tremendous a looking Rock. I confess I did not feel very comfortable when I paid it a visit for my poor head went round & round.

I am really sorry but not astonished that the Death of Mr. Walters, has involved so many folks- altho' not to a great amount Captain Stone is one of the Sufferers, & might have been a

<sup>282</sup> Tiffin, as above.

<sup>283</sup> The Dolphin's Nose was the name of the estate of Captain Thomas Blackmore, who was granted 44 acres in 1801. (<https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Page:Vizagapatam.djvu/351>)

<sup>284</sup> A light two-wheeled carriage drawn by one horse.

much greater, had not good fortune befriended him in taking out his money some time ago which he accomplished with very great difficulty. I assure you this is a long & cruel story to relate; but the Man is dead & gone and we must endeavour to forget & forgive. We are only thankful it was no worse. Mrs Wilson I believe will escape as I think she mentioned once, having drawn all or nearly all her Money in his Hands in order to carry home, however I am not clear about this. I do indeed thank you sincerely for the trouble you have taken in writing me such little Chit Chat as your letter contains & permit me to hope you will continue to favor me in the same style (5) so far from having better correspondants [sic] in Madras (as you hint) I have not had the satisfaction to receive a single line/besides your Letter— from even my professed friends. Alas! I fear it is with them “out of sight out of mind” & fear I am quite forgotten by them.-

I hope long e'er this Sir Henry has got through that unpleasant Trial regarding the Duel— it must be a very distressing thing to him as well as to the unfortunate parties concerned— & now Sir Benjamin's ill state of Health of course must occasion great confinement & bring double Duty on Sir Henry & the hot Season of the Year, we do sincerely feel for his situation. I hope in God he will get through it all without sickness & then we shall have reason to be thankful.

I am glad to hear that Mootiah<sup>285</sup> is attentive in his department. If I can get any Birds worth your having, you may rely I shall not forget you. The little Package I asked the favour of Miss Symonds to take care of for me, our Officious Butler must needs go & pack up without speaking to me about it, & when that was the case, I thought it better to let it remain so, and as the large cage went very easily packed up in the Pallanquin [sic] I thought it might also go, & the little Birds were fine in a small cage together & we carried them on board without any trouble— all which I desired Mootiah would particularly mention. I will not close my letter without telling you we are all Well, my dear old Father quite hearty & [word crossed out] is growing quite young again— goes but to Dinner Parties & pays Morning Visits with the best of them— indeed I must say our little Circle is very pleasant & sociable. Our usual Dinner hour is the same as at Madras and after which we may or may not pick as we all feel inclined, set down to either [word crossed out] a round Game at Cards or Whist & between 10 & 11 we retire for the night. Mind you employ me to get you any Ivory Boxes or Cabinets— I shall feel a great pleasure (6) in executing any Commissions that you will favour me with & believe me shall think it no trouble.

<sup>285</sup> Mutiah.

My Father & Captain Stone beg to join me in best Compliments to you Sir Henry & Miss Symonds not forgetting Mr Clarke. Squire David begs also to add his kind love & I have the pleasure to subscribe myself My dear Madam your very sincerely obliged

A.W. Stone— Waltair July 9th 1805

**Letter-056-EG-XX-1805 (Mss.Eur.C.240/4, ff. 271r-278v), Elizabeth Gwillim to Esther Symonds, [no date; received in England February 28, 1806]**

(1) My dear Mother,

I fear you will have thought it a long time since you heard from us before this can reach you, the ships have been detained some of them at least three months & during all that time we have been in expectation of an opportunity of writing. They are at last about to sail; but I have been so hurried with company & visiting that I shall not I fear have time to write to you so fully as I cou'd wish, having had so much to say to Hetty. ---

We have by the late arrivals seen several persons from Mr: James's, but none who have seen you. The last account I have of you is from Hetty's letters all of which have arrived safe as also did your letter by the ships which came in July; and all my packages of every description arrived in excellent condition I have the happiness to say that we are at present all quite well &

that we have spent this year much more pleasantly than we have done any one since our arrival The season has been so mild that the oldest inhabitant remembers nothing like it, We have had rain every evening & this hot season as we call it has been much cooler than any part of the preceeding [sic] year. Sir Henry has had no indispositions whatever, & he has done an unusual quantity of business being left to the whole care of the Court. Sir Tho[ma]s: Strange is in England - & Sir Benj[ami]n Sullivan to the Eastward on account of his health. Richard & Mary are thank God always well at least they have been hitherto. Mary has wonderful spirits but she likes being here better than the (2) [2] country, but I own I like the country best



We have just received a letter from Mr: Lane,<sup>286</sup> written from Bombay, where he was just arrived: his news is of a late date, & he has given us a great deal of Hereford news, amongst the rest he tells us that you are well, & as busy as ever which I heartily rejoice to hear. - He tells me you asked him if Mary was married, [words crossed out] I hope that you are not over anxious on that subject otherwise you may be sorry to hear that she has refused another offer, which was lately made her. The gentleman was in so good a situation here & had been so long in [word crossed out] good ones where it was certain he must have accumulate [sic] large sums, that tho' he was somewhat [sic] older than what cou'd be called a suitable match, it yet seemed improper that ~~it shou'd~~ the offer shou'd be ~~made~~ hastily declined - but such is the fate of numbers of Indians<sup>287</sup> that they cannot help ~~enter~~ entering into speculations by which they lose all they get. Upon an enquiry it turned out that about forty thousand pounds which he had acquired had been all lent to native Princes & that there was scarce a hope of any of it being recovered & that in order to sue for it he had been obliged to go to England & pursue measures which had embarrassed him so much that, he must have considered himself unable to return to England in any limited [sic] time & if any accident shou'd happen to him he wou'd be likely to leave behind him nothing but distress. - The communication of his circumstances was truly surprizing [sic] for they were unknown, & communicated in confidence only. The Matches made in this place sound very [3] grand & sometimes turn out well; but much more frequently otherwise, therefore it was necessary to dive to the bottom of the affair. He himself is very sanguine in his expectations of recovering his fortune at least that it will be recovered by his descendants; but who cou'd depend upon such a distant hope? & what distress might not happen the while, when people live according to a fortune which may never be restored to them? - Half the inhabitants of this place are in this perdicament [sic], living in splendour, with a sword hanging by a thread over their heads. - Here is a beautiful young woman of 25 going home now with five children from magnificence to Poverty - It is a transition so dreadful that I think no state of moderate happiness shou'd be changed for a chance of it - As to Mary, I believe, indeed I know she thinks so: I wish, certainly, that she were married [words crossed out] if she were well & comfortably settled

<sup>286</sup> Mr Richard Lane, son of James Lane, was an EIC ship's surgeon (*Journal and Logbook of the Honourable East India Company Ship, the Wexford*, <http://www.heicshipslogs.co.uk/logs/h029.htm>).

<sup>287</sup> In reference to Europeans long resident in India.

doubless [sic] there is something desirable in having a house of one's own; but nothing can be happier than she is with a mixture of company & she is now always in health, I believe satisfied with us & most assuredly we are with her so that if nothing comes to induce her to change her state you must be content to have an old maid for a daughter however I hope that will not be the case -

The way a vast number of people here have got rid of their money is just the same as the person I have mentioned. The Native Princes to support their contentions one with another have had recourse to borrowing money at most enormous interest of from 12 to 20 or even 30 (3) [4] per Cent & this has been an inducement to the English who had acquired great sums to lend it to them, by which great fortunes have been gained. But in as much as it strengthened these people, & served to encrease [sic] their contentions, & for other reasons the Company made an act to prevent any persons from lending them money. In the face of this act however they continued to do it - till [word crossed out] after the fall of Seringapatam<sup>288</sup> the smaller places became entirely under the English Government - The Rajas & Governors of these places having lost their Countries have nothing left to pay these debts & it is not to be expected that the Company will pay them tho' they have taken the countries because they had prohibited the loans - besides they say truly enough that the expense of keeping these Countries in a state of submission eat up all their revenues & that they have been as it were compelled to take the Countries, and upon the whole it appears that the money is lost to the persons who have been weak enough to lend it & no I own fit punishment for persons who are not content with moderation & wou'd take from the distress of others such usurious interest. - Of this system there is now an end --

Amongst all the people going home I have nobody by whom I can send much as the ships are so loaded with passengers & officers returning home that I can get nothing carried but I am in hopes that I shall see some of the Bengal ships on (4) [5] their way home. I have given to a young Gentleman who returns to England for his health a pint bottle of Caya Putty

<sup>288</sup> In May 1799, when Tipu Sultan of Mysore was killed in the conflict with the British.

Oil<sup>289</sup> an infallible remedy for spasms & cold pains to be used outwardly or in bad cases a few drops in water inwardly - Tho' I hope you will not often want it yet I trust that you will receive it safe, It was a present to me from a friend who brought it from the Eastward. - I have had some little boots made here by way of play things for the boys but the soles are so thin that they will be mere play things if they get them I wou'd gladly send them more, if I cou'd. I must intreat [sic] you to take care of yourself & keep your self comfortable & I have a full persuasion that all the Children will do very well in time I am sure I fail not to give them much of my thoughts & if I have any view in doing kindness & making friends it is with a hope that these friends may be hereafter kind to them. - We have always had visitors with us lately & as they are good & grateful I doubt not but that they may remember those we love. The only thing I sometimes fear is that visitors may be troublesome to you. Your Picture which hangs up in my dining room attracts more attention than any of the Belles that come out & much lasting admiration for Mr: Bigg's<sup>290</sup> colours do not fade now as the people grow fond of (5) [blank verso of pages] (6) [6] us they also become desirous to see you & I have an expectation that you will have many visitors - Here is the young gentleman who carries this oil is bent upon going to Hereford in order to see you & Biss's friends, for with him he is quite charmed, indeed he is wonderfully beloved

I trust that you allow yourself a comfortable decent servant & want for nothing I promise you faithfully that whatever you lay out upon yourself, I will as far as is in my power restore to the boys; but I have a great desire to send people to you & of course wish they shou'd find you at all times in comfort & neatness. - Our acquaintance in India is more with the rising generation than the old inhabitants, They are generally speaking a much better set. Our great Possessions have induced people of the best families & principles to send their sons to India & the society is very genteel & agreeable amongst the younger people - Last month Richard Clarke became of age & we made a Party or at least directed him to ask all whom he

<sup>289</sup> Whitelaw Ainslie identified the “oil Kyäpootie” as *Melaleuca leucadendron* and writes that it comes from the Moluccas and especially from Banda, where it is used by the Malays internally to treat epilepsy and palsy. He described it as as yet little known to Indian physicians, but in growing use among European medical men for external application to rheumatism (Whitelaw Ainslie, *The Materia Medica of Hindoostan* (Madras: Government Press, 1813), 31. The oil is related to tea tree oil, which is normally derived from an Australian species of *Melaleuca*.

<sup>290</sup> William Redmore Bigg RA (1755 - 1828) was a British painter, who specialized in genre scenes and small portraits in oil and pastel.

liked. I never spent so pleasant a day. He sat at one end of the table & Biss at the other & we had to perform the parts of Visitors There were 6 or 7 of the Institution in which [7] Biss is - They are to be called Guides & the institution is called the Mathematical Institution.<sup>291</sup> - They certainly were picked youths as only those who had been very correct were admitted [word crossed out]. but I really never saw such a beautiful [word crossed out] row of faces as down the table, so that one wou'd think that beauty & goodness were united - They are for the most part sons of People of consequence a very fine young man who is the most eminent for his talents is the son of Walpole the Ambassador<sup>292</sup> & he is extremely beautiful - We had two very young ones not more than 15 years old the one is the son of the Admiral, Sir Ed[war]d: Pellew & the other the grandson of the Duchess of Gloster [sic], he is a Lieutenant in the Admiral's ships, & these two are like twins both very handsome particularly Mr: Seymore,<sup>293</sup> his mother was a great beauty as well as his grandmother Mr: Thos Gwillim if he be with you will know whom I am talking of, for this lad's father was Lord Hugh Seymore & Mr: T.G. was in his ship & this lad was generally on board. We had a great many more in all four or 5 & twenty. Richard & Biss sung like a nightingale & a Thrush - Biss has such a capital Voice that singing is quite the fashion with us; Richards voice is very weak but sweet & he is so correct that not part of a note is [word crossed out] ever out. - However they all sung that day -

I intended this to be a short letter of two (7) [8] sheets that it might be sent you by the Post, but I perceive that in my hurry I have lost two sides by writing wrong & turning over two leaves at once. - I must therefore finish my account of our stay in the old Chapel which I told you in my last letters we had visited.<sup>294</sup> - We spent nearly two months there & I saw more of India than I ever have done before. we had the building shaded on all sides with sloping [word crossed out] roofs of Palm leaves & the thick walls & roof defended us so well from the Land winds that I attribute Sir Henry's good health in a great measure to them. - Covelong or

<sup>291</sup> The Corps of Guides established in the Madras Presidency in 1780 as surveyors; the Guides were predominantly Indian.

<sup>292</sup> Warpole the Ambassador likely refers to Robert Walpole (1736-1810), clerk of the privy council and envoy to Portugal.

<sup>293</sup> Possibly Sir Horace Beauchamp Seymour (1791-1851).

<sup>294</sup> Henrietta Clive also mentions staying in a ruined Catholic chapel in Kovalam, a seaside town around 40 km south of Chennai (Nancy K Shields. *Birds of Passage: Henrietta Clive's Travels in South India 1798-1801*. London: Eland Publishing, 2012, 346).

properly Comalam, was a settlement~~by~~ made by the Emperor of Germany, but the port and all were destroyed as the place was an object of jealousy both to the French & English who have their Presidencies on the Coast.<sup>295</sup> The Rocks & rivers are romantick [sic] as Wales tho the Hills are not lofty, & the place is abundant in rarities - It is particularly curious for fish, there are fish to be found in no other part of the world, and had I not seen them I cou'd not have believed that such or such Varieties existed. There is every colour, red fish of every tint green purple & yellow & striped like the most [word crossed out] shewy [sic] flowers - many as if wholly composed of rows of jewels Rubies & topazas [sic] set in chains. - Mary drew above thirty sorts but that is a mere trifle [9] it wou'd take an age to do them all she intends to have sent home these drawings, but as so many things were lost in the Prince of Wales Dr: Anderson has entreated that she will let a native copy them before they go home that they may not be entirely lost if an accident shou'd happen.<sup>296</sup> When that is done you will see them. I drew many birds so that I have now about a hundred birds altogether & hope to amuse you with them some day. - We were called from this retreat by Sir B. Sullivans illness & since we came home we have nothing but visiting - Here was a round of visiting on the arrival of the Admiral, another on the arrival of Lord Cornwallis & another on the arrival of all this fleet & the second fleet with Sir Thos. Troubridge: next came Mr: North the Governor of Ceylon who goes home with this Fleet. he dined with us the day before yesterday when Biss as usual performed aid. du. Camp Richard sits at the other end in that capacity - I think Biss looks a vast deal better than when he came out, his complexion is clearer & he is altogether better, but such a beau you have hardly seen; such an admirer of the ladies that we call him beauty-hunting Biss - He is terribly fickle, one beauty always puts another out of his head - he cou'd not therefore be in a better place for here is a constant succession What is better he has done his work so well that he has received the greatest praise from his superiours [sic] & he has made a map of **(8)** [10] the greater part of the country on our side of Madras & they say it is so accurate that any person must know it instantly & done with much neatness as to be equal

<sup>295</sup> Kovalam was originally developed as a port by the Nawab of Carnatic, Saadat Ali. It was taken over by the French in 1746, and then by the British in 1752, at which point Clive destroyed the fort with the intention of preventing the French from re-taking it.

<sup>296</sup> Thirty-one watercolours of fish and other aquatic creatures are in the Rare Books and Special Collections department of the McGill Library, under the shelf-mark CA RBD Gwillim-2. There were originally more than fifty images in the series. It is not clear whether these are the original by Mary or the copies referred to here.

to anything that has been seen - He is to survey a large part of the Country very soon. - They are all extremely good in the society & very regular in their conduct. They are sober & go to Church every Sunday. -

I am glad you visit Mr: & Mrs: Biss for I suffered much from apprehensions about you when Nancy left Tupsley<sup>297</sup> - I have receivd [sic] a very kind present from Mrs: Biss whom I do not know, of two fine hams. I never eat any so good in India we had them [word crossed out] for our great dinners two of which came close together -. I drest [sic] the Hams first because I knew that the gammons will keep & they are arrived quite safe & I owe many thanks for them to Ned & Nancy, three of their gammons I have the others were mouse bitten & Hetty sent me something else in lieu of them. - It will be a long time before I shall hear of you again no ship will be here before Feb<sup>F</sup>: at least I fear so - you seem to have been in a great fright about us in England - Admiral Trowbridge might easily have taken Linois,<sup>298</sup> but he was afraid to lose a moment & the Privateering wretch is still doing mischief - I shall inclose [sic] in this a letter from a friend describing a place up the Country --

I have had two very smart presents by these (9) [11] ships the one was a Cap for Mary & another for me from Mr: Prosser, who brought all our things very safe - & a [sic] also three Dozen of Cyder from his uncle Mr: Powell -. The Miss Thoburns sent each of us a white chip hat with a white feather which are pretty head dress & to Mary they also sent a pearl ornament for the head - so you see our friends in England do not forget us. -

I hope you went to London last summer & had a comfortable time we have been in a great surprize [sic] at hearing of Mr: Gwillim's intention of going to visit James & Hetty however I hope he accomplished it & that the journey did him good.

I have to thank you & the young ones for the drawings some of them we thought extremely pretty - I shou'd think that it wou'd be a good thing if Tom had a Master if there be any to teach him to draw. I do not know who you have; but I perceive the boys from our country are rather deficient in the arts. It seems to be quite the fashion for you to send out your lads which I am not sorry for. If they behave well this service is a very good one; but they are generally disappointed at first. They come out with a hope of living a flashy life & lounging about as young officers do in a Country town - Now here they can do no such thing. They are

<sup>297</sup> Tupsley is now part of Hereford but was previously a village to the east of the city.

<sup>298</sup> Charles-Alexandre Leon Durand, Comte de Linois (1761-1848), a French admiral.

almost always on some duty or other & unless they will absolutely apply to some branch of their Profession they will never get into good employments: The artillery officers have a great deal to learn, & the Engineers are called upon to construct all sorts of buildings & must be good architects civil & military - others have the Country to survey - and all have one language to learn perfectly but they ought to know more than one or two **(10)** [12] before they can hope for any employment that will make them respectable. For these reasons the boys who are sent out shou'd have a tolerable education before they come & shou'd be taught that they must not lead a life of idleness - They will have quite as much necessity to employ every hour of their time as if they were in business, - Neither can they indulge, with impunity, in any sort of intemperance or immorality. Every irregularity is followed closely by severe sufferings. - The women here who are very attractive & easy of access, are all afflicted with hereditary diseases which will be communicated & cannot be cured. [word crossed out] inebriation is in this climate certain destruction & therefore we see that all [word crossed out] Eastern Lawgivers strictly forbid every sort of spirituous & fermented liquors rather choosing to let some perish for want of the support they may afford than allow the use of ~~what may~~ such [word crossed out] inticing [sic] mischief.

Even the more pardonable follies lead to serious consequences [sic] here, [word crossed out] for if ever so small a debt be contracted it is hardly ever got rid of. The interest is enormous & before a young man can hope to pay it the debt is doubled - besides that every thing he buys upon credit is charged at double price. - I am happy to say that we have had credit with ours as yet Biss is very regular & Barrington received great praise for his diligence. **(11)** [13] I begin to grieve a little about Tom as he must be growing up fast & the time approaches when he ought to be put to some employment particularly as his brother will soon grow up. [words crossed out] Tom will be nearly 14 by then you receive this & that is an age when he sou'd be sent from home. No boy however good passes his time so ~~innocently~~ innocently but that some idle story or other is raised against him; & it hangs by him for his whole life. I fear it wou'd be matter of difficulty to Ned & Nancy who have just commenced a new undertaking to put him [word crossed out] to any genteel business at present & the time for ~~business~~ putting him to trade is

14. Now if Tom were provided for, the other being three years younger, by the blessing of God, by then he grew up to the same age they might be better able to provide for him & if the

brothers are bred up with true affection for each other the elders can serve the younger: but with this hope the elders shou'd be pushed forward early. - I sometimes sincerely wish that Tom had a Cadet-ship such as Biss has; but I have not the least notion whether or not they are difficult to obtain. - If he cou'd obtain it whilst we are here our situation wou'd make him respectable & there wou'd be no danger in his coming to this Country whilst we are here to take charge of him

**(12)** [14] for the first year, after that the danger is over, [words crossed out] Boys learn how to take care of themselves & see the consequence of an error in the sufferings of others who have no friends to guide them - certainly I wou'd never let a boy come out a cadet to this Country without there was some friend at the Presidency to which he belonged, who cou'd have an absolute authority over him. I shou'd suppose there cou'd be no great difficulty in obtaining-~~it~~ an appointment for Tom if you shou'd like it. But I know not whom to apply to, Mr: Biss or Woodcock or some of those who have sent out sons cou'd tell you. I do not know anybody to apply to. It must be done by City people; but it is possible the application wou'd be forwarded ~~by~~ at least not retarded by his being Sir Henry nephew. I shou'd think it wou'd be facilitated the application for Temple was instantly granted. ---

Since I wrote the above I find a boy must be 16 before he can be appointed to a Cadetship. - As to the expense of fitting him out much is incurred for want of knowing what to do. The Scotch have the advantage of us in this for as 'till lately they have had the whole or nearly the whole to themselves they know everything that is necessary & what they can do without - When young men come out so late as Biss did they certainly require a much greater expense because they have to appear as men [15] but if they come out at 16 much less is requisite & a very little to those who have friends - -

I am almost sorry I have written this much to you; I did not intend to perplex you I hope I have not. You will see that there is plenty of time to deliberate & but I wou'd wish you to be

thinking about it. - I for my part form no plans, as we seem from all I have hitherto observed, to be best directed by Providence who always places in some [word crossed out] such a state as

tho' we seem to have a choice, yet makes that which is most virtuous most fortunate in the end, & therefore perhaps it is better to lay aside all thoughts of a matter of this kind 'till we are



called upon to make an instant determination -

I have this instant received notice that I must instantly close this - therefore give my duty to Mr: & Mrs: Gwillim & love to their family whoever may be with them our joint love to Ned, Nancy, & all the Children & accept our duty -- Believe me -

My dear Mother -

ever you dutiful daughter

EGwillim -

(13) Received Feb 28th 1806 by the L<sup>d</sup>

Hawksbury To Mrs: James -

For Mrs: Symonds -

Captain Lindsay who sailed from this a few days ago passenger in the Wilhelmina Captain Cochrane promised me it was his intention of paying his respects to you on his arrival at Madras & to tell you all about this Place and us—

Lady Gwillim St Thomé Madras

**Letter-057-EG-08-1805 (Mss.Eur.C.240/4, ff. 279r-296v) Elizabeth Gwillim to Hester James, August 24, 1805**

(1) [1]

My dear Hetty,

Madras. S. Thome Aug<sup>st</sup>: 24<sup>th</sup>: 1805

The Fleet convoyed by Sir Tho<sup>s</sup>: Trowbridge arrived yesterday morning - Mr:

Livingstone has already shewn [sic] himself for a few minutes is to dine here tomorrow & Mr: Prosser has written to say that he shall dine with us today - I now therefore begin with pleasure to write to you. A most unusual time has elapsed since I cou'd enjoy that pleasure for the fleet now lying here has been about to sail for three months & is yet are here. - It is said that they will sail on the 1<sup>st</sup> of Sept<sup>r</sup> but I have doubted this information & therefore was unwilling to write. The arrival of this fleet will probably detain them some days but I shall certainly have nothing more to acknowledge this season; & therefore begin to write with a good heart; thanking Almighty God that I hear an account of the restoration of ~~your~~ health - with deep concern I read the account of poor James's illness - It will be many months before I can hope to hear again; but I will trust in Providence for your preservation. - I thank God we are all well & have known no ill health this year. It has (2) been the most extraordinary season ever remembered, we have had showers every evening; & we have had few days that were at all oppressive --

The fleet with the Windham, on board of which was Mr: Nicholls, & Captain Hudson's ship arrived sometime ago all well: By those ships I received all your kind letters my mother's Lizzy Thoburn's Mr: Gwillim's &c & very happy they made us. - Captain Hudson never called upon me during his stay here. He was always considered as a sorry Crab & he made such a favour of carrying my Plants that I almost repented of asking him to do it - I mentioned to Mr: Whitley that I was obliged to say they were for myself for he gave me to understand that he wou'd not carry them for a nurseryman. - A droll man here, who knew him, in order to laugh at me pretended to read a passage from a letter, as 'tho' it were written by one of the Passengers on board his ship from St. Helena the half way place - he stated that the stingy thing had starved all my Plants & would not allow water to keep them alive & that therefore they were all left at S. Helena - this really turned out to be true in the latter case. ---

Mr: Nicholls spent what time he cou'd with us; he was always welcome for he was a great favourite of mine on board ship, & he is one of Richard's best beloved of all the sons of the green waves - I feel great obligations to him for the care he took of the seeds, which came in a lucky time & are now young Cabbage plants & if they are not all stolen out of it may become cabbages in my garden - Mr: Nicholls too made us a valuable present for which I hardly know how to reward him He softened our hearts, with a cask of the nicest English beef

that ever was bit by Indians teeth. Here is nothing but feasting upon it breakfast, tiffin,<sup>299</sup> & supper. In this he added a cask of Pork & 0, most admirable! a bag of split peas! - All superlative delicacies - I beg if you shou'd see Captain Millet<sup>300</sup> that you tell him how much we are obliged to this good youth & that we will not forget his civility --.

I received a message from Captain Millet by Captain Macintosh & he complains of my not writing: as I am generally pretty ready at scribbling I had no intention to ~~avoid~~ omit writing to him but the fact, which I thought he wou'd have understood long before is that I cou'd not write to him at S. Helena as he requested & then greatly regretted it for the ship which at that time sailed [sic] for S. Helena was under weigh at the moment that I received at my garden house the letter from him by the first China ships & the other ship was taken. - As I failled [sic] to write by that opportunity I thought it woud [sic] be vain to write (3) afterwards, from a persuasion that he wou'd be on the sea which his last words led me to imagine he wou'd be. - When this had all been explained I thought it too late to write - Now, as I am in the way of exculpating myself you must tell Mrs: Sheppard that, I have [word crossed out] by no means neglected to write to her; but that all our letters and packages were with poor Captain Price himself. I came down to Madras from the Mount on Purpose to see him. I saw him & had the pleasure to wait on him at dinner once or twice but he had taken up his abode with the brother of the Chief Mate of his ship an old friend I believe, a Mr: Ord<sup>301</sup> a Scotch Dr: here - We all admired Captain Price<sup>302</sup> very much & I never indeed saw a man so generally beloved & respected. He had such a character as a ~~seaman~~ Sea-man that no body chose to credit the loss of his ship 'till almost now. I fear however there are now no hopes, there were a number of lovely children on board, & Mrs: S<sup>t</sup>. John with all hers; & she was the most beautiful woman, (if thence we ought the more to compassionate her fate) that I almost ever saw - I have mentioned all these things in my two last letters; but I did not say so much as I wished being ashamed to mention my trifling losses when so many poor innocents had perished - It is remarkable that such was the opinion entertained of Captain Price & his ship that almost every body sent [word crossed out] the letters on board that Vessel. I sent various little

<sup>299</sup> Tiffin, as above.

<sup>300</sup> Captain of the *Hindoostan*.

<sup>301</sup> William Ord (d. 1817), an EIC surgeon.

<sup>302</sup> John Price, the Captain of the *Prince of Wales*, sunk in June 1804, with the loss of all onboard.

remembrances (4) [2] some of which had cost me much time & some expense - I wrote by that ship volumes & I sent some packets directed to Mrs: Shephard as Sir Henry had desired me to request her to take charge of some Packets to the Bishop of Ely - to Mrs: Shephard then, I wrote fully & I also wrote to her by the last fleet.- I hope none of my friends will think that I neglect them, because they do not receive letters in due time, for I have been a most regular correspondent - But I must have lost many letters - all by the Aplin, & better so, than to have our chit chat published - & what a vile thing that has been, exposing families. - The French Printed copies of the letters in the Isle of France & sent them here, & now you send them back to us in your papers. - The French admit that this is an infamous practice; but excuse themselves by saying that we began first - which is I fear but too true. - It is a sad sad thing that we ever neglected to take those Islands, the Mauritius, which might have been taken. It is astonishing how they annoy us from thence, & there is no hope of catching them - for this place is full of French either hence or from Pondicherry or Tranquebar they know all we do as soon as we know ourselves, The [sic] pop out take the ships & run into their Ports there immediately, & besides it is a (5) distressing employment for an Admiral & a fine Fleet to be watching a Pilfering Enemy whom they have scarcely a Possibility of catching & over whom a victory wou'd yeild [sic] no credit - You will see by the accounts from hence that Linois in one of their Frigates has had the audacity to endeavour to cut off [word crossed out] one of these ships, & that somehow or other Sir Tho<sup>S</sup>: Trowbridge has let [word crossed out] Linois slip through his hands. The Indiamen are blamed - I do not know who is in fault -

Biss is quite well now, he has been occasionally a little bilious & is a weak & nervous young man. but excessively beloved, & very fortunate in being chosen into this society for he will here become gradually immured to the climate & learn how to manage his constitution before he is called into more dangerous climates. He dines with us & spends every Sunday & [word crossed out] generally in the week once & sometimes twice so he considers it as a sort of little home. He comes on Saturday to dinner if he can & sleeps here on Saturday night & Sunday & goes to work on Monday morn<sup>G</sup>: this plan I like best & it is like a Brompton expedition for we are cooler by the sea side than they are - I dare say that Richard & he, having each so many things on board will hunt the people finely to get the cases landed, this will be just the thing for we long for some walnuts. - With the last Fleet came out a Mr:

Roberts a young surgeon for the Bengal establishment. - He is a Herefordshire young man the son of a Clergyman whom I do not know; but who has always lived in the County - His father was once of Pontrilas now somewhere near Ross - He has been apprentice [sic] with the Apothecary of Bartholemew [sic] Hospital & since that house surgeon there, - I think him clever & he is a very agreeable young man, very modest & good humour'd - he staid [sic] with us near a month, all the while the ships were here & as he had no other friends he seldom went out but with us, - He knew nothing of us except that he was acquainted with Mr: Gwillim's family from being at school at Squire's - Sir Henry fancied him like Prosser in the face & never broke himself of calling him Mr: Prosser I dare say 40 times a day he made this mistake even to the last day - I never saw anybody more delighted & surprized [sic] than this young man seemed to be. He seemed to imagine that he was coming to a strange country to be as it were buried & suddenly found himself in a cheerful house without form & all his country people round [sic] him. - he appeared as though he cou'd not believe it for joy & when we rode out the Hedge rows & the trees were so like England & so luxuriant withal!-& His friends had been averse to this travelling scheme or else he might have been here a year sooner the less of which time he regretted terribly. - I was quite sorry to part with him & I believe he was sorry to leave a place he liked so much to proceed to Bengal but he seemed likely to be gratified everywhere (6) & rejoiced to find out at last that coming to India was not so bad as slavery - I desired him when he thanked us for our hospitality to tell his young medical friends what he thought of it, & not let them be afraid to stir from home & sit down starving there whilst the Scotchmen were rolling in wealth. He told me he certainly shou'd have done so of his own mind - now I am on this subject let me tell you that if you hear of any well taught young English surgeons who want to come out that this is an excellent time to apply for-~~they~~ the Government have written from hence to insist on the Directors sending out 80 surgeons to compleat [sic] the establishment or as they say not to compleat [sic] it, but [word crossed out] because with fewer than 80 they can make no arrangement. They are the more peremptory in this respect because some accidents have happened & the Government are blamed for sending the people without medical men & they on the other hand assert that they have not half their numbers of surgeons - The Admiral too has been so distressed for Doctors that he has been obliged to take a step of which there has only been one precedent & that in some desperate time - He sent a Press gang on board all the India Men to Press every

surgeons Mate - I dare say that you know the India men have generally a surgeon & one or two Mates - now all these learned Drs: to many of whom (7) [3] you would not I think like to trust your Cat were all called out & hurried off. Never was there such lamentation - The Captains begging & representing their dreadful state if the surgeons themselves should be taken ill the young Drs: weeping, their investments to be disposed of how they could & their future prospects all destroyed - the Admiral called out to the Captains "Mr: such-a-one - I know what you call on me about but I must & will have the Drs:" - only two got off. I do not know who the one was nor who prayed for him but the other was the poor lame boy Charles Simpson whom Mrs: Morgan bred up & who was come out upon his first voyage Mr: --

Nicholls Sir Henry was petitioned, & he was successful in his application to Sir Ed<sup>d</sup>: Pellew<sup>303</sup> in the poor creatures favour - Nicholls made me laugh too, in describing the scene "only think" says he "when by their profession they ought to be considered as Gentlemen to be called in to a boat & then comes the Admiral & his Captains staring at them", - "Well sir - you have something [sic] in your eye I think that you will be of some use to us - go into the boat Sir - let me see Sir, no, I think we won't take you sir, you may do for the India-men, perhaps I do not believe you can do much you may go back we don't want you" - miserable indignities (8)

Sunday Aug<sup>t</sup>: 25<sup>th</sup>: -

I left off yesterday in order to dress & before that was finished arrived Richard with Biss & Mr: Prosser, I have another young gentleman with [word crossed out] at Present who is here till he sails for England where he is going for the recovery of his health which has been injured I think by application he being naturally weak - He is one you would like - very clever & very good & tender hearted - a learned & genteel young man about 24 -- We were all very merry at dinner. Mr: Prosser brought on shore with him the little chip box with the pearl crescent & the beads - the paints & brushes, & a small box containing two caps present to me & Mary - one is lace & blue crepe & silver with no feather the other is white with a lovely pink feather, so beautifully curled I hardly seen anything before Biss is extremely annoyed [sic] at their sending out red cabbage - "I wonder they could think of such thing, says he - so finding this he is plagued all day Sir Henry reading the letters & protesting he finds such passages as these "poor dear Billy is so fond of Red Cabbage I hope it will be sent to him

<sup>303</sup> Admiral Edward Pellew was appointed Commander in Chief in the East Indies in 1805.

wherever he is." - then Biss, "I don't care I won't a eat [sic] bit of it" - They are all almost mad to see the saddle. - Biss & Rich. are gone to Church, but I fear their thoughts will wander - for as soon as service is over they are going upon enquiries - we are to have Mr: Livingston & five or six more young men today at dinner -

- A serious things was like to happen but it was stopped in time. The ship in which Biss & Richards things are took fire near the Galley just over the powder magazine & Mr: Prosser says burned for twenty minutes and all the other ships at anchor near were going to cut out - but it was fortunately quenched - This happened on Friday night -

You have no idea of Biss's grandeur & delicacy he is such a Beau! & languishes at the ladies & sighs like a Romeo - He is certainly a very pretty young man & the young officers in the society of which he is one are all the sons of people of some consequence or young men of great abilities & they dress in a high stile [sic], but they are very innocent set. - I assure you however below their dignity we are all rejoiced to hear of the Red Cabbage & we tell Biss he shall not have a bit - This is an odd thing of Richard he has this appointment to the Company's service & he cannot decide whether to take it or not - He is dissuaded from it very much but as his father has obtained it, it does seem proper that he shou'd accept of it for [word crossed out] it is a most valuable appointment. But the death of poor Temple made a great change in Richards circumstances. His own Court too remains without change that is 500£ p<sup>r</sup>: An<sup>n</sup> - & his Clerkship has been worth as much more & living with us he lays by the whole for the interest of the money he gained the first two years, which were laid by before he touched it is one hundred a year & that pays for his carriage &c & those things which [words crossed out] we used to pay Sir Henry wou'd not let him break in upon that till it became a compleat [sic] sum - All he has gained since is added to this so that he has already acquired [words crossed out] more than 2000£ - & as by living with us & holding these employments Please God all goes well he wou'd acquire a pretty fortune that wou'd forward him in his study of the Law (9) it does seem [word crossed out] that he might have been better off as he is than by going into the service. - He wou'd in case he staid [sic] as he is, work at the Law & at his Persian & return to be called to the Bar & there can hardly be a doubt but he must rise very high in this Country in the Law, probably be a Judge as early as he cou'd be; for he cou'd have such-a very remarkable advantages in his knowledge of the country languages; & his constant attendance on the Courts will make much of the business quite familiar to him - Now if he enters the

Company's service he will only have 250£ a year for three years & he will be obliged to spend more than that in living as he will be sent up the country & have to keep house - & after that it will be many years before he can make more than his present his income out of which too he will have his establishment - He is just like the horse with the two bags of hay - Here is nothing but calculations all day - one thing is in favour of the company's service, it is for life & he will have his security on his own life not on that of another - & when they rise in they [sic] service they may [words crossed out] grow rich if they are not extravagant - The place he has in the Court for small Debts his Registership is in the gift of the Company (10) [4] & we hear that Lord W<sup>m</sup>: Bentick has already promised it to a young man if Richard accepts the company's service. - He is fully master of the subject himself so we are not called upon to persuade him & I do not know what I shou'd do in such a case - he must give his answer soon.

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I understand that you met with Col<sup>l</sup>: Strange on your way to Vauxhall. - He is arrived here but I have not seen him he broke his arm or did it some injury on board ship & did not go out for some time - Biss & Richard have met him & they confirm all accounts I have heard of him. He is generally considered as half Madman, half idiot [sic] & is constantly drunk He is by no means respectable. And Strange who is now put in Council by Lord Melvill's [sic] interest is said to be quite a useless person in the business of this Country he is a very weak man.<sup>304</sup> The fortune he acquired was gained much faster than might have been expected from his salary; but the Collectors have had vast power. It is not so easy now to acquire great fortunes in so short a time. He was now by the interest of this match put into Council but as Lord Mellville is now out, it is conjectured that the Directors will not confirm him. It really is to be hoped that some check will be put to the Scotch interest for even they themselves are (at least some of them are) ashamed of the gross partiality [sic]. In this (11) fleet we have a whole family of Dundases & relations<sup>305</sup> - They are come out to form a settlement on Prince of Wales's Island<sup>306</sup> to the Eastward & the whole is to be composed of Scotch. I really do wonder how such a thing cou'd be borne by the English. It is a compleat [sic] scotch job, as I hear it

<sup>304</sup> In reference to James Strange, brother of Sir Thomas Strange. The Colonel Strange mentioned above may be a third brother, Robert, who was an officer in the Indian army.

<sup>305</sup> Lord Melville's family name was Dundas.

<sup>306</sup> An early name for Penang Island, Malaysia.



was called - All these people are in the ship Mr: Livingstone came out in. The Country they are going to is a fine one & I believe we might have what we please to the Eastward for the Dutch settlers are such a depraved, cruel set, that the Natives wou'd everywhere receive us with joy - We know nothing of these Countries in England and but little here: occasionally however, we now meet with people who have visited the Eastern Islands, & I am particularly acquainted with a man of Learning who resided long there & who knows the language; & with a lady also who has been in various parts. - It is there that you see Nature in the highest perfection The Palm trees & forest trees of this part of India are said to look like trees of a shrubbery to those who have seen those lofty woods there the trees grow [words crossed out] close to the sea [word crossed out] the branches bend down into the water & the oysters are found in Clusters fastend [sic] to the roots & branches - The interior is rich beyond description & every garden is equal to the support of the family - supplying it with food, rayment [sic] & firewood - If you woud [sic] read Marsden's Sumatra<sup>307</sup> you will get an idea of the people. - Besides what may be gained from that work there is little to be know; because the Dutch have been careful to suppress all relative to these places from whence they have derived so much wealth - The present race of Dutch on the Eastern Islands [word crossed out] happily join the rude manners of two or three centuries back, the licentiousness of the East & the cruelty of slave drivers - They are a disgrace to humanity, & the women are neither more chaste nor less cruel than the men. -- But be this as it may the Country is delightful & people who are ill, go from this place to recover there, the air being always temperate by the constant rains - Sir Benjamin Sullivan is there now, He was in a very ill state of health when he left this place & despaired of his own life, but has somewhat recovered & therefore intends to stay there if he can, but he expects to be turned out when all those good people arrive as there are few European homes & he will be obliged to give up that he inhabits unless they have the civility to [word crossed out] permit him to inhabit it - Sir Benjamin was in the same ill state of health, very nearly when Sir Thos: left this place & he left us about 6 weeks afterwards. He proceeds to Bengal if he shou'd be disturbed where he is, & will not reach this place for a long time - you will understand therefore that Sir Henry is doing the whole business & has been this hot

<sup>307</sup> William Marsden, *The history of Sumatra: containing an account of the government, laws, customs, and manners of the native inhabitants, with a description of the natural production, and a relation of the ancient political state of that island.*(London, 1783).

season I think you will say he is pretty ill used, for Sir Benjamin Sullivan apprized Sir Tho<sup>S</sup>: Strange (12) of the state of his health before he set out for England. - at no time is Sir B. fond of business. he has not been accustomed to the sort of thing - The whole burthen is thus for a year & half thrown upon Sir Henry - while a man [word crossed out] privately conniving with the Governor goes to do a job - to make perhaps arrangements to suit their convenience never did so much falshood [sic] appear - Those who affected most surprize [sic] at Sir Tho<sup>S</sup>. going found out after a month or two this & that which he was about to do. I hope that Providence will defeat all such dark intrigues - indeed, I shou'd suppose that if Lord Mellville is not restored the whole will fall to the ground, ~~but~~ for all was set on foot as soon as he came into power - never was there seen such indecent exultation as at his coming into power nor such wretched despondency as at the account of his fall - you know that I have never told you much about the white people here, having nothing that pleased me to communicate. - The English encreased [sic] here much whilst Lord Mellville was out, but as if it were the last hope, every thing possible has been done in favour of the Scotch since he came in. - Mr: Strange's being by his losses thrown back upon the company's service has induced Sir Thos. as I suppose to take the step he has - The arbitrary proceedings here were always extraordinary but at present I can give you an instance - you know perhaps that we have three newspapers in Madras (13) [5] one is called the Government paper that being immediately under the direction of government & receiving all their advertisements - Dr: Davis prints<sup>308</sup> [word crossed out] another which is Mr: Samuels paper<sup>309</sup> & there is a third: these are supposed to be more independant [sic] papers; but they are all subject to the control of the Chief Secretary who is Mr: Buchan,<sup>310</sup> (a great ass if that be no treason) a nephew of Lord Mellville - Now it is customary to copy in the Madras papers all proceedings of the House of Commons &c just as the Gloster [sic] or Worcester paper copies the London & these papers are the only means of circulating such intelligence to the numerous English who are scattered over this extensive country - but because Lord Mellville is a relation every mention of the late transaction is struck out of the papers & the printers ar [sic] ordered to refrain from inserting a word about it the reason he states is, that Mrs: strange is in a family way & in delicacy to her it must be suppressed -

<sup>308</sup> Thomas Hart Davis or Davies, a surgeon, was the printer of the *Madras Gazette*.

<sup>309</sup> Emanuel Samuel, surgeon, advocate and proprietor of the *Madras Courier*.

<sup>310</sup> George Buchan, Chief Secretary to the Government.

meanwhile the said Mrs: Strange receives visitors whilst all the English papers relative to the affair lie before her & she converses very coolly on the business - The people have growled but all in vain - I shou'd have seen no account of it yet but Sir Ed<sup>d</sup>: Pellew lent me his papers brought out by Lord Cornwallis & there I saw the whole; but had it not been so I shou'd (14) have seen nothing all this long time til we got papers out of these ships. There were not above 3 sets of papers before in the settlement - & as the governor's Strange's &c were not lent, I have much to thank the admiral who certainly had no desire to conceal his; for he hates the Scotch - Now do you not think [word crossed out] that it is carrying things pretty far to ~~conceal~~ forbid the publication of an affair, interesting [word crossed out] to the whole kingdom & this whilst you in England durst print accounts of your own Sovereign & every Sovereign in the world? -

Monday Aug<sup>t</sup>: 26th: - All my Party assembled yesterday after three o'Clock - the greater part after Church but Mr: Livingston sent an excuse - He was sent for on board his ship. but he tells us that it has been discovered that his ship received so much damage from Linois raking fire that they are obliged to stay here several days to put all to right before they can sail - I do not know how Sir Tho<sup>s</sup>: Trowbridge is to excuse himself for not taking Linois I am afraid he will have the laugh against him. We plagued Biss about the pickled Cabbage till we have made him laugh along with us Nothing is Landed yet - Mr: Prosser went to breakfast at Dr: Anderson's today with Richard, to see his Garden & some young Ladies - he was to go from thence on board to return here on Wednesday to stay on shore - Yesterday he borrowed Sir Henrys Palankeen to pursue the body of a woman which was being carried to the Beach to be burned he witnessed all the ceremony there & told us of it at tiffing very amusing you will say but I don't much mind it. - Richard & Temple used to go often to see the piles & throw Cocoa leaves on the top to make a blaze - In the even<sup>g</sup>: they all set out to see the people walk through the fire which a sight I think enough to scare one, but they liked it & tastes differ.<sup>311</sup> The Hindoos delight in such sights.

Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup>: I saw sevrall [sic] papers yesterday - [words crossed out] Citizen

<sup>311</sup> Fire-walking, or Thimithi, is practiced by Hindus in Tamil Nadu in honour of Draupadi, from the Mahabharata, who is said to have walked over hot coals.

Waithman<sup>312</sup> & the Lord Mayor meeting - This affair of Lord Mellville is enough to raise a civil war in the country. The scum of the earth rise in triumph all the profligates who have been so long kept back are glorying in his fall - He ought to be had [?] for giving them such an advantage & distressing his party as he must do. - Sir Henry says he does not like the proceedings, & that however guilty Lord Mellville is that they have been too hasty & that he does not think there was a sufficient proof at the time of the vote of the house.<sup>313</sup> --

Mr: Livingston sent me a box of seeds with the Catalogues I requested, which I am glad of as they give me much information. - I have been dividing the seeds amongst my friends - The colours & brushes I rece'd before from Mr: Prosser & beg you will thank Mr: Samuel. I hope you have sent me plenty of Paper - I drew a great deal last year. I am sorry that I cannot send home the drawings of birds but as I have now good bad & **(15)** & indifferent I want them to consult occasionally [sic] & to arrange; but I wish they were in your care I think there are some non descripts - for I have two species which I think are Jacanas [words crossed out] not described in Gmelin<sup>314</sup> - - I have drawn the plant which Dr: Rottler has done me the honour to call after me I hope it may be new - if so you will like to have it hung up Gwillimia Indica This drawing I have given to Dr: Rotller. I have taken great pains to send it home the plant General Trent was so kind as to carry was ~~the~~ I hear alive when he left it in the ship & I hope it got safe but it was a cold time for a plant that requires sun. This was the 4th time I have sent trees of it to England - It is a very sweet flower at least here it has a delicate odour but not strong. It came from Batavia & is there called Sampa Salaca. - which means milk flower - It is very much like a Magnolia Glauca - but seldom opens wide till it is near fading -- I rather think that Dr: Rottler wants this drawing which I have made to be sent to Dr: Smith with the dried specimen<sup>315</sup> - but perhaps he will return it to Mr: Whitley & if he does the drawing is for you. If not I will draw you another the flowers are always larger in the early part of the year but it flowers all the year, - the leaves almost always appear scorched or broken [words

<sup>312</sup> Robert Waithman (1764 -1833) was a master draper and political reformer who became a politician and Lord Mayor of London.

<sup>313</sup> In January 1806, Lord Melville was impeached for corruption, based on a report of March 1805. However, he was acquitted of almost all charges in June 1806.

<sup>314</sup> In reference to the edition of Linnaeus' *Systema naturæ* edited by Johann Friedrich Gmelin and published in 1788-9.

<sup>315</sup> Elizabeth's painting of the "Gwillimia indica" (*Magnolia coco*) remains in J.E. Smith's collection in the archives of the Linnean Society (LINN-HS 981.10).

crossed out] at the ends unless at the ~~Beginning~~ of top of the branches **(16)** [6] But this I attribute to the strong winds we have at Madras - the air of Batavia & the Eastern Islands is all softness. - The place is not the more wholesome for that on the contrary Batavia is a Grave to Europeans - An expedition went from this place sometime, just before we came here & every person who slept a night on shore died - This however is only the case at Batavia & the unhealthyness [sic] is in a great measure [word crossed out] by the dirt of the people -

-- I am sowing my sunflowers in my walks today - we had a tremendous thunder storm last night - the thunder & lightning is not as with you at intervals - there are several flashes at once & a continual rolling of the thunder It is a concert of thundering some piano & some forte - accordingly the natives speak of the thunder in the plural the Gentoos say, (that is my language)<sup>316</sup> [word crossed out] Wooramooloo - Wooratoonavi - the thunders thunder. - Almost all their words have a sound expressive of the sense. --

It is terribly hot today September approaches & it is a close month. --

I am glad that you like Gen: & Mrs: Trent they are good people - I have a petition from a young man who is with me & who is going to England for his health to give him a letter **(17)** to you & I shou'd like to do it if I thought it wou'd put you to no trouble - He is one of a few whom I can call gentleman that have had an opportunity of sending to you he certainly is one in every good sense of the word - He is a nephew of Gen<sup>l</sup>. Harris & is in the Civil service here but I fear he will be obliged to give it up his health is so dreadfully bad. His constitution appears quite broken - but not by his own fault. He is a young man of exemplary morals & very great abilities - He is first rate in Persian & Arabic learning & if you wish to ask anything about the Mahomedans, the masters of this country before we came, he will tell you everything. - I have seldom given you any account of them, first because I do not like them so well as the Hindoos about whom I was more interested & secondly because the language I have learned is a Hindoo language & enables me to make enquiries relative to them but not to the [word crossed out] Mahomadans - I am now beginning to acquaint myself with their manners & may tell you more about them in future. They differ however little from the Turks of Constantinople except that they are I think [word crossed out] inferiour [sic] in general. - They are however a magnificent people though their morals are bad & they have had fine

<sup>316</sup> i.e. Telugu.

Poets & great Philosophers amongst them. - I think you will like Mr: Keene.<sup>317</sup> - He is very mild & gentle & has no extravagant or flashy notions he is extremely neat in his dress - well shaped but plain in his person - his face is I think expressive of a good understanding. - He is the son of Lady left in unhappy circumstances but she is now married to a Mr: Mawley a Proctor in the Commons - he had been three years an officer like Biss in the Company's service when [words crossed out] Gen<sup>l</sup>. Harris who is his mothers brother procured him this place which he is now about, I fear, to leave - Sir Henry & he [word crossed out] take a composing draught every night lately from your stone bottle. The poppy syrup<sup>318</sup> is as good as ever & on the strength of your having sent out two more bottles the old stock is going off very fast. Mr: Keene is to ask you for a glass in return for drinking his health -

Friday 30th: - wrote the Date, was interrupted & cou'd not do a bit more -

Saturday 31st: - Since I wrote last the things are all arrived safe & well and are admired exceedingly particulars I shall mention presently -

Mr: Livingston called on ~~Thursday~~ Wednesday Morn<sup>g</sup>: to inform us that he had been on board the Preston to inquire of his brother for the Package with Richard Clarke's coats &c & Biss's saddle. His brother had informed him that he sent every day to the carriers at Portsmouth for the case but that it was not **(18)** come wherefore he supposes that Mr: James cou'd not get [word crossed out] Biss's [?] ready & & [sic] that Biss's things were not arrived in [words crossed out] from the Country - but that the said case wou'd be taken in by the Chief officer of the Skelton or Sutton & be brought hither by that ship, which will arrive here about next Jan: or Feb.

- At dinner the party assembled & this news was communicated to Biss who heard it with great emotion - and the disappointed Beaux joined in lamentation & reproaches in which the [words crossed out] young friends joined & did not fail to remember that Mr: L. was a Scotchman - Richard & Biss however aided the unpacking of all the other cases & were made very happy by finding all their smaller goods in those. -- Sir Henry is ravished with his shoes

<sup>317</sup> George Henry Keene, EIC registrar of the district court at Rajamundri, nephew of Lord George Harris.

<sup>318</sup> Poppy syrup was prepared from the petals of the field poppy and used as a painkiller, digestive, sedative or relaxant.

& boots - I never saw him better pleased & his coat he likes the colour extremely & so do I but it has not been put on yet to try but I will let you know how it fits - How shall I answer to all the things? - you ask me if you have sent too much of anything, & I can say not a bit too much except rather too much Ribbon but I occasionally want to make a little present & ribbond [sic] is as good as anything for the purpose - I have already sent one piece to Mr: Heyne<sup>319</sup> with a couple of flowers of those which came last & a silver sprig. He is very good natured & sends me baskets of little apples from Bangalore [sic], & lately a large Basket of Potatoes, which they are trying to cultivate in the Mysore, those from Bangalore are small but at Nunda Droog<sup>320</sup> they are as large as the English I hope in time we shall get a supply - at present we have only such as the particular season come from (19) [7] Bengal. -- I gave away a piece of white Ribbon to a neighbour - & I shall send some to Mrs: Stone Gen<sup>l</sup>: Smith's daughter a most charming woman who was my neighbour at the Mount - but are now removed to Vizagapatnam.<sup>321</sup> I will enclose one of her letters giving an account of that place<sup>322</sup> - it is on this coast but Northward in the Country of the Telinga people which lies between Bengal & this Country - The Telingas are the people vulgarly & erroneously called Gentoos they have the Country about Golconda which you must have heard of. It is where [words crossed out] "Diamonds grow" - I long to visit it particularly as it is the language of that Country which I learn they are the finest people in India. --

I fear I shall not have time to write to my Mother so much as I wished, & this to you is all matter of business -- Today we have our usual Saturday folks - Mr: Keen is with us - his cousin John one of the guides (that is Biss's Society) - We have a Mr: Button a modest young Cadet sent to us by Dr: Parry - I do not know whether Prosser will be on shore; but there will be a large Party - Tomorrow the same with additions - On Wednesday is the Anniversary of the Establishment of the Supreme Court so we have all the Lawyers & all that appertains to the Court and on Thursday the only day that cou'd be fixed on, we are to have Lord William B.,

<sup>319</sup> Benjamin Heyne (1770–1819) was the official Madras Naturalist during the Gwillim's stay in Madras and was based at the botanical gardens in Bangalore.

<sup>320</sup> Nundy Droog or Nundy Durg near Mysore (Alexander Keith Johnston, *Index Geographicus: Being a List Alphabetically Arranged of the Principal Places on the Globe and Their Latitudes and Longitudes*. Edinburgh: W. Blackwood and Sons, 1864).

<sup>321</sup> Visakhapatnam, formerly known as Vizagapatam, in Andhra Pradesh.

<sup>322</sup> See Letter 55.

The Governor, & Mr: North who is at the Government house - just arrived from Ceylon<sup>323</sup> - the Admiral, that is Sir E<sup>d</sup>: Pellew, & if he does not sail before the other Ad<sup>l</sup>: Sir Tho<sup>s</sup>: Trowbridge but it is expected that he will sail before that day on that day it is said that the ships will (20) sail at present I have only written this to you Mary is very glad of the pearl crescent &c slides & such like - I like the large full feathers which make me look very respectable, my two blue bonnets - that is the blue sattin [sic] & the sapphire [sic] coloured velvet I like much So I do a white sattin [sic] one of the same sort in which I shall put feathers these & many caps fit me & the little caps particularly one with white velvet bands [sketch] are most useful & elegant - Indeed I have never had so charming an assortment - I shall take all the care of them possible & they will save me making up things - I do it awkwardly [sic] & in the same time that I am making a cap I cou'd draw a flower or a bird & I am not half so tired in the end. - I wonder if you call that Velvet sapphire colour, it is exactly the colour of them clear. I admire it extremely All these fit me very well - but the Chip hat is a great deal too small in the crown my head is very large - I shall take out the wire & I hope to be able to stretch it - do not tell Lizzy that is too small for it will vex [word crossed out] her & I think I shall make it do with a little coaxing & bundling up my hair, a clean white chip hat is much a rarity & these are as white as snow - I delight in blue & white but blue will never keep long & am obliged to put it all up in the dark - I wish I had another blue feather but I shall try to get them dyed here - & I have some white ones very long - this is a handsome fashion -

I wore the cap Mr: Prosser brought me because he was present - it is the very same as one you have sent out it has a white sattin [sic] edged with beads turning up & another the same turning down the rest is muslin It has a bunch of downy plumes dyed pink & a most elegant feather broad & flat down to my shoulder & beautifully cropped [sic] of a fine Pink it looked very handsome - the Cap you sent is the same only no feather. - It will give you a notion of the size of my head the cap you sent wou'd not come on my head; but upon looking at it I perceived that there had been a fold of two inches nearly laid over at the back & carefully sewed down - I unpricked this & restored the cap to its proper state & it fitted exactly -- However do not buy me anything too big - Nancy Green used to be just the thing & the Hoby [?] hat which you sent out the time before fit me well & that I still have as I had no

<sup>323</sup> Frederick North, 5th Earl of Guilford (1766 - 1827) was the first Governor of Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), 1798-1805.



feather to put in it; but now I have & shall use it - I wish you had sent me out a piece of yard wide English Jaconet muslin at 3/- or 3/6 yd: - I cut the piece you sent into pocket Hand<sup>S</sup>: for Sir H. & he liked them so well that he can bear no other - whilst I think of it be sure send out 2 pair of dress & 2 p<sup>r</sup>. undress fine large black silk stockings - by the first opportunity - I do not want any more pairs - the people do not **(21)** use them so they are not much stolen & consequently last very long. - I thank you for the brown velvet bands for the hair for all the velvet we had is disposed of & this came in time - the shoes & gloves are most acceptable & fit exactly. - Next time you send out pray send me two or three petticoats [sic] with little bodies or shoulder straps to wear under my gowns - they will serve as paterns [sic] for the taylor [sic] to make more - the old Peticoats [sic] I brought out begin to get thin & like nothing so well as cambrick [sic] muslin - these bodies do not fit the gowns they are longer & higher & I am not ingenious in altering - therefore a patern [sic] one or two & a little

Cambrick muslin to make more wou'd be useful I wrote to you in my last for 12 Doz<sup>n</sup>: Pair of white silk stockings very smart ones - as the open clocks stretch better & it is such a fatigue to drag on one's stockings in this country after pulling on a tight pair one is in a perfect bath. - The weather is very close & hot now. --

I do not know whether Mary mentioned to you Mrs: Young.<sup>324</sup> She is a natural daughter of Dr. Anderson very dark but extremely pretty - she was educated by Lady Dalling<sup>325</sup> & bred up in her family - she is extremely clever & very good indeed she is a very sweet creature whom you must love - her voice & manner are just like Nancy Green, she is precisely such a Brillortan [?] **(22)** [8] as Lizzy Thoburn & just as innocent & pleasant I have no friend with whom I am a hundredth part so intimate. - She has given me some curious things from Malacca, amongst the rest a Pint of Caya Putty Oil<sup>326</sup> which is a most extraordinarily efficacious remedy for spasms & therefore I send it for my mother - It must be rubbed on the part as others liniments or a few drops may be taken in water. - I trust it will get safe to her. - I have two jars of ginger from China which I want to send to you because the

<sup>324</sup> Ann Anderson (d. 23 April 1810) married Charles Wallace Young on 17 July 1801 (Register Book, St Mary's Church, Chennai).

<sup>325</sup> Louise, Lady Dalling.

<sup>326</sup> See note above.

jars look to be pretty & as the pair shou'd be kept together I will send them to you & you can get a common jar & fill it & send it to Mr: Gwillim, keeping one jar for yourself or if you like giving my mother a little pot [word crossed out] a bit out of Each. ---

Mrs: Young has given me two bark vests such as the peasants in Malacca wear, they are made of the bark of a tree beat flat & they are fastened on to look like a peticoat [sic], these are very coarse & bad for they are somtimes [sic] beat so fine as to have all the delicacy of Kid Leather & such I have seen; but she sent for them to Mr. youngs agent & he sent these coarse ones. - I will trouble you to keep them as they are curious, for this is the sort of drapery mentioned by all the Hindoos, as worn by their Rishis that is their [word crossed out] saints & Prophets - who with their families (for the pious Rishis made no vows of celibacy) lived in groves sacred to Religion **(23)** They are called in some translations woven vests of bark; but as you will see that is a great mistake for they are only beat out - I have given to Mr: Prosser one of the two I have to give. - It is in imitation of these that the Pandanrums dye their cloaths [sic] with a salmon colour for the finer vest of this kind are also brighter & clearer in their colour. The Pandanrums are a sort of Religious Mendicants whom I have described to you before. It is they who wear the Rudrakshen beads<sup>327</sup> which you call Faquiar beads - however they are not properly called so - The Faquiars are Religious belonging to the Mahommadans & have nothing to do with these beads. --- I have sent also by Mr: Prosser the Piece of cloth wove round without any ends to it. It is made of the young leaves of Plantains split into little threads - and a Palanpo that is neither wove nor spun but beat out this I thing [sic] you will like this. - The Shoemakers here make little boots for children very cheap and as I thought they might amuse Nancy's young ones I have had them a few pair made & three pair I have given to Mr: Prosser to carry. If he comes here again I shall give him more.

Sep<sup>r</sup>. 3<sup>d</sup>: Mr: Prosser called here yesterday middle day & brought all the things we had bought of him which was a great deal of Wine & a barrel of Vinegar &c - The ships were to Sail to Bengal in the Evening & I believe went off sometime last night. - I sincerly [sic] hope that he will return here & if he does I shall send more by him I have seen no more of Mr: Livingston & I fear that I shall not. - Captain Mackintosh of the Ayrly Castle is so ill as to be thought in danger for his ship there is a Mr: Toppington he is the second mate, of the

<sup>327</sup> Rudraksha beads, these are the warty seeds of *Elaeocarpus angustifolius* (formerly *E. sphaericus* and *E. ganitrus*).

ship as he was also of our ship when we came & was in the Hindostan when she was wrecked  
- He has promised to take anything for me I shall therefore send him to you. His father is a  
wealthy attorney & a sort of Court Pusny [sic]<sup>328</sup> in Kent - but he has a large family by  
~~another~~ a second wife & I believe does no great good to this one. - He is very good & very  
honest & his acquaintance is with Mr: Clarke who was sometime when young curate of  
Feversham [sic]. I shall give you a list here after of what I send by him -

I must now tell you about the eatables the sweetmeats or rather preserves of your's &  
Mrs: Whitleys are all come quite safe & well not the least accident & they are super excellent  
all.

- The Pickles are all right but woe & alas there is no Pickled Cabbage - Biss has been laughed  
at so much & at last not a bit of Pickled cabbage for poor Billy. - The confectionary in the  
Tumblers is all come dry & good but several of the tumblers fell to pieces which is no great  
loss

- the lozenges & almonds in papers are not safe they are many of them melted & the Candy is  
gone from the Orange chips - They will not come out safe in papers. -- The three gammons of  
Bacon are quite firm & good & so is one ham, the middle of one is decayed by some accident  
but the sides are tolerable - Tongues will not keep that way & is a pity to send them. They are  
one of the best things we are furnished with from the shops. They are brought out in little  
casks

(24) and are sold one by one if you like so to buy them. A whole cask is rather too much to be  
eaten whilst they are good. -

I will again repeat that you have sent me nothing too much - & that I shou'd think it  
woud [sic] be well for Sir Henry to have such a coat once a year. - A light coloured coat of  
that sort looks very pretty in the Monsoon time - The Morning caps you have occasionally [sic]  
sent me I wear till they are quite thread bare. I have just two left, wash & wear, you have only  
sent one this time. - I had a very pretty one lined with Laylock once you sent it from Mrs:  
Toussaint's I put Poppa to wash it & she starched it finely & hung it on a towel to dry - down  
came a Crow & liking the taste of the Rice starch carried off my lace cap to the top of a Cocoa  
palm tree whence it was with difficulty restored to me --

<sup>328</sup> Perhaps "puisne".

Friday - Aug<sup>t</sup>: 6<sup>th</sup>.<sup>329</sup> My bustle is thank God over, yesterday & the day before we had our

two great companies we dressed one of the Hams as the gammons will keep best - It was cut neatly so we made it do for the next day this was very saving you may think to give the two governors the Lawyer's leavings - but it was the most delicate Ham that ever was eaten in India Those we buy are kept till they are so hard & are cured so hard that they have no flavour the reason for this is that when delicately cured they will decay if put together - the middle of one of them as I said was decayed - from damp or bruise **(25)** [9] The Gammons of bacon are quite good. -

Biss is our Aid du Camp upon all grand occasions - He sits at one end of the table Richard at the other - Sir Henry & I face to face in the middle of the table - this is the Indian fashion when we have such officers of state - Biss is so solemn we [word crossed out] laugh afterwards in proportion to the solemnity of the day - such singing on Wednesday [word crossed

out] those were the Lowers - such state on Thursday - I have put the large cropped [sic] white feather into the white sattin [sic] hat & worn it I assure I looked ten years younger I was almost afraid that I shou'd be obliged to give up & turn old woman with what grace I cou'd muster but I congratulated myself in that hat that I shoud [sic] be sufferable a little longer. - You see what I owe to your taste & the Milliner & I beg therfore [sic] that wherever you bought that & the blue hat you will buy me some more - they are so soft and easy to my head, & such nice rich sattin [sic], & as handsome a fashion that I quite admire them indeed I never have had such an elegant assortment we hardly know what to admire most. - The Hussar cap with the swan down becomes her & just fits her little head I give her all the jewels & most of the flowers & she gives me greater part of the Caps as women who have no grey hairs mixing as I so spitefully have - do not wear caps much in this country - You are very saving in shoes but they are enough if you have a regular opportunity of sending - but I take cold in the country shoes -

Dr: Rottler has asked me for the drawing of the Plant **(26)** mentioned in the last page of sheet N<sup>o</sup>: 5 - but if it shall please God still to bless me with health as this year I will draw you

<sup>329</sup> An error for Friday September 6, 1805.

another. -

I write to Miss Lacock. I was very happy to hear from her - she always bestowed on me great affection - I often thought of her; but I cou'd not relieve her & keeping up my acquaintance with her wou'd have been mere idleness - Mr: Keene who by Mr: Gwillim's desire is to call upon you carries with him a Packet of dried plants - the drawing I have spoken of & a letter all for Dr: Smith of Norwich<sup>330</sup> - If he brings them to you please to pack it nicely for me & send the whole to Norwich by the coach paying the Carriage. that is if Dr: Smith be there but he is frequently in London & Mr: Whitley cou'd tell you if he is or Mrs: James Clarke can tell you. for Dr: Smith's Brother Married one of Mrs: Howarths daughters Miss Emma, a sweet creature who died. [words crossed out] pray be careful as this is the second time of sending the plants

Sir Henry has had a letter from his father which makes him very happy he writes so strong & in such good spirits & talks seriously of his intention of going to London to spend a fortnight with you & speaks in such very high terms of "Mr: & Mrs: James' kindness to "him & his family for which he shall feel grateful as long as he lives"". - We are very much obliged to you & James. -

Perhaps Mr: Keene will send the plants &c to Norwich himself. - I believe Dr: J. E. Smith.

M.D. Norwich will be sufficient direction --

Mary (at least in her name) sends a string or Opals to Mr: Wilby for his wife & a pair of cornelian buttons for himself. - also you will find a pair of oval flat opals & a pair of drops you may send those with the string or not as you please upon enquiry but I wish you to inquire if Opals are held in any esteem in England for at this present I can buy them very cheap here - & according to the account in Chambers' Dictionary<sup>331</sup> they have been held in great esteem - Opals are the stones which are imitated by the fire stones probably not well imitated as it is said that opals are of all other stones the most difficult to be imitated - these are not so clear as the false but if you lay them on your arm by candlelight you will perceive the colours very bright as indeed you do in some measure by looking through the light - Let me know of what value they are esteemed I gave about 14 shillings for the row I send - [word crossed out] I send

<sup>330</sup> The botanist James Edward Smith (1759-1828).

<sup>331</sup> Ephraim Chambers, *Cyclopaedia*, first printed in 1728 and in several editions thereafter.

you also some stones called Cat's Eyes of which I have seen rings & good ones are held in great esteem, they are a harder stone than the Opal & dearer they are however bought cheap sometimes. I gave a

Pagoda a Dozen for these, which was I believe too much but I want you to tell me if they are of use or cou'd be made into any thing handsome - you will see in an instant (27) why they are called Cat's Eyes, which is on account of a bright light which runs about them, & the brighter this light is the better the stones - I send a pair of agates & [words crossed out] the largest Vellum stone I ever say [sic] to G. Samuel & pray give them to him with my best remembrances & tell him he is very ill natured not to have written to me. I shou'd have heard from him with great pleasure, but he has rejected my correspondence - Tell him however that I thank him for all he has done for me & that his drawings are more than ever the admiration of all beholders, & the best & most valuable & most valued furniture my home. ---

Mr: Keene has given me such an exquisite elegant book - It is a manuscript - the length of the leaves is two inches &  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an inch & the breadth 2 inches &  $\frac{3}{4}$  - It is  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an inch thick & contains above 700 pages beautifully written on polished paper with broad margins, & nine lines, & borders of scarlet blue & gold intermixed round every page, besides various paintings of Hindoo stories. - I cannot part with it, I wish I cou'd read it that I might hope to explain it all to you. - I am almost sorry to take it from him & not be able to shew [sic] it to you -

When will you be able to read such an enormous letter as this. I never wrote so idle before for here is nothing to entertain you but all plain matter of fact - I must begin to my mother as the time draws near. - I shall here close this & will commence another letter tomorrow - believe me ever most affectionately yours EGwillim -

**Letter-058-MS-09-1805 (Mss.Eur.C.240/4, ff. 297r-298v) Mary Symonds to Hester James,  
9 September 1805**

(1) Madras Sepr  
9th,1805 My dear  
Hetty

Sir Henry intended writing to you by Mr. Keene but I believe he has not time, he is so much hurried Just at the last; he has desired me to write a few lines by way of introduction, which is all that is necessary as we have all mentioned him in our letters repeatedly. I need not make a parade of asking you to pay him attention because from what has been said of him in our letters by the packet I know you will not be wanting in that way, but least he should be so zealous as to deliver this before you recieve [sic] the letters by the packets, I shall just say he is a friend & great favourite of Sir Henrys he admires him as much for his great good service as we do & as we hope you will do, for his good nature.

I have just recollected one thing we are in great want of, which is some more of the Wedgwood breakfast Cups, both Tea & Coffee cups; pray have the goodness to send them by the first opportunity 2 dozen Teacups **(2)** & one dozen Coffee cups with Saucers & two Teapots to match I will sketch the pattern.

Yours ever  
affectionately  
M Symonds

[Drawing of a branch with leaves and berries/flowers, most likely the pattern design for the cup sets mentioned above]

**(3)** M<sup>rs</sup>. James

No 39 Bishopsgate Street  
Within London

Forward by M<sup>r</sup>. Keene

**Letter-059-EG-XX-1805 (Mss.Eur.C.240/4, ff. 299r-300v) Elizabeth Gwillim to her Sister, Hester James [no date, this seems to be a postscript to the letter of August 24, 1805 to Hester]**

(1) My dear Hetty,

One more hasty sheet I write to you to inclose letters which were too late for the Packet & to introduce Mr: Keene to you a worthy & amiable young man who has nothing haughty in his manners or coxcomical, when I tell you he is a favorite of Sir Henry's & fond of him I need say no more. ----

I hope you & Gen<sup>l</sup>: Trent continue on visiting terms as they are good people - I fully expect Prosser down here from Bengal & hope he will convey things [words crossed out] for I am miserably disappointed having no creature that will take anything for me spite of their promises & my civilities - I am unwilling to send them round by China, & Mr: Toppingdon found it so difficult to convey the ginger that we have thought it better to keep it for some other opportunity however I shall not open it but send it you by the first chance - In addition to the stones I mentioned to you I send you by Mr: Keene a little paper of amethysts they are generally very pale some of them almost white but with a purple foil they may look better - The deeper coloured are generally cracked & cloudy but are tolerably cheap here - Let me know if they can be made (2) into anything pretty as I want rings sadly & have none to wear - My hoop ring was quite worn out I have had it new set the price of doing which was 13 Pagodas almost half it's

value. - You will see with the [word crossed out] amethysts [sic] (that is purple stones) - two or three small yellow ~~eat~~Eyes cat-eyes they are perforated to use as beads - I have by me two long strings of large ones of this colour they are fine & bright & about that [sketch] size - I think them handsome but they want setting therefore I will thank you to inquire their value I gave for the two strings only 30 shillings English which was very cheap - Of the stones you send me out as a necklace we get plenty here but they are real, I have one on my neck now mixed with a little gold bead - but tho real & fine stones it looks not half so handsome as the false one you send nor is it quarter so much esteemed here, because it wants those little ornaments - to have those made here wou'd be very expensive as the Native jewellers work only in real gold & do their work without polish so that it looks not so well as the false --



I shall not be quite happy till I hear again of Mr: James. I am sorry to hear that he has had or is liable to such sad attacks, I pray for his preservation & that of your dear little one & more I will not say. - May God bless & preserve you & may you always be inclined to write me long & pleasant letters for they are our best comfort. -

Poppa my maid is come just now to tell me that she has but one lace left I brought them out with me so I cannot complain; but really I hardly know if I can buy such a thing here - She desires me to write by the Post & then Mrs: James can send the laces in 2 months - tho' this is not possible pray let me have some by the next opportunity - Never were such nice things as you have sent out this time & my ~~Ribbons~~ Ribbons are going off very fast. I have such beggars - I must stop my hand or I shall have none to spare --- I have put two Jasmine flowers & three of the tree of imortality [sic] - These last are sweeter then any odours you can know - wou'd [word crossed out] sweetness cou'd remain - Heaven bless you adieu & believe me Yours ever

Affectionately

EGwillim Love to James - Ned Nancy the Children of all sorts & my letter to my mother  
Adieu, Adieu, Adieu. -

(3)

Mrs: James

No. 39 Bishopsgate street within

London

. (By favour of Mr:

Keene)

**Letter-060-EG-XX-1805 (Mss.Eur.C.240/4, ff. 300v-302v) Elizabeth Gwillim Esther Symonds [no date, likely late 1805]**

(1) My dear Mother,

I write this merely to satisfy you that we are all well - & if I have time before the ships sail I will write further It is a most enormous time since we have heard from you & I was in hopes that these ships now about to sail wou'd have been detained here 'till the ships from

England which have been delayed, cou'd arrive here for it is most uncomfortable to write without having heard from any of you so very long -- I and all of the family wrote fully to you by the last fleet & I reckon that about this time you are reading our letters - we besides sent to Hetty Mr. Keene who had made us happy with his company for some time, & cou'd inform her more of us than many letters cou'd contain - By Mr: Prosser I sent some things which I hope will come safe, by him I ~~also~~ intended to send some ginger & other things but unfortunately he did not call in his way from Bengall [sic] & the things must wait for another chance which I hope will soon occur. - It is a little unlucky that I shou'd be so often from home at the time of the (2) sailling [sic] of the ships

our house is painting & it has been newly stuccoed or Chunamed as we call it & is of course damp & bad so that I cannot return to it, nor do I know anybody by whom I cou'd send anything of consequence so I must hope for better times - Sir Henry has so much business on his hands that I have scarcely any servants to my share - he comes up here one night in the middle of the week & on Saturday night he comes & stays all day on Sunday when we have a party. This exercise does him much good & this place is a fine dry air - but I am at a loss for news about the sailling [sic] of the ships & am so circumstanced that I cannot well write I came here 5 weeks ago & obtained by a favour the loan of a couple of shooting men who go upon the hills & collect me curious birds when they bring them in I am obliged to sit down & draw them for here if dead they will only keep one day & if alive they cannot long be kept so - & are suffering much - I hope therefore you will accept of Mary's letters in lieu of mine she has written much to Hetty - & if the ships stay till Sunday I will write further -

Thank God we have all had our health this last year & half & have had for that period nothing but pleasant weather the oldest Indians do not remember so mild a season - This blessing & Sir Henry's little exercise has kept him free from complaints - It is very happy as he has had for a year the whole business of the three judges - Sir Ben Sullivan who is old shattered has been absent ever since Sir Tho<sup>S</sup>. Strange went - He left Sir Henry very ungenerously but thank God he has done all the business & no suit has been delayed - He has however not had a moment free but I assure you I think his health is all the better for he has no contradiction from party or national prejudice & his profession is his delight he never has been so well so long since I knew him - All the while we were at S. Thome we had much to do with visitors & I added but little to my collection of Birds but I have twenty at least since I came

here - I shall send them home as soon as I get a good friend upon whom I can depend at [lea  
.?] a<sup>c</sup> past but I am obliged to keep them to arrange them - I hope to get a good collection but  
my time is sadly  
taken up with exhibiting them to company who pay me with praises for the loss of my time - I  
trust in God that you & all the rest of your daughters are as well as I am - and all their children  
& that the latter go on learning give my love to all and every one. - To Hetty I will write at night  
- I send this down by a purpose messenger - who is to bring me back news - May God Almighty  
bless & preserve you all & may I hear soon of your health - meanwhile believe me your most  
dutiful daughter EGwillim

(3) I want of colours Indigo - Prussian blue - Lake Indian Yellow & all sorts of dark  
browns - pencils - paper brushes -- Huccabac [sic] for towels, morning gowns -- Bacon, Ham -  
bacon in red & white stripes &c - walnuts - when we had eat the bacon we boiled up the bones  
- this is true --

~~Mrs: Symonds~~

at Mrs: James -

No 39 Bishopsgate Street

within London

writing paper & all paper by all opportunities - very very little left - The last things were the  
most delightful assortment & Mr. Prosser brought it up so well -

**Letter-061-MS-01-1806 (Mss.Eur.C.240/4, ff. 304r-309r), Mary Symonds to Hester James,  
28 January 1806**

(1) 1806

(2) [Family tree of descendants from Hester James (Hetty leading to Richard Blunt (born in  
1903)]

(3) Madras January the 28th,

1806 My Dear Hetty,

I think I never began to write to you so unwillingly as at this time for the Ships from England have been hourly expected for this month & we now expect fully that the Fleet from this place will sail before thier [sic] arrival, The letters we wrote to you in Sept<sup>r</sup> I trust you have receivd [sic] about this time whilst there you must have written to us as early as May, are not yet come to hand. As our land dispatch arrived yesterdey [sic] giving an account of the sailing of the fleet accompanied by several men of war & a great many troops, &c, for taking the Cape it is therfore probable they will not be here for some weeks. The same despatch [sic] brings an account of the death of the Duke of Glouster [sic]. I suppose it must be much felt by the good old king as he now stands quite alone the last tho' the eldest of his brothers, he is an example of the benefi<sup>t</sup>s arising from temperance & by his private vitue [sic], he becomes a publick blessing.

I have the happiness to tell you that we are all in good health Betsy never was better in her life. & Sir Henry as if it were to make amends for the fatigue & trouble he has had, being abandoned by his colleagues, has enjoyed (4) a year & upwards of uninterrupted health which prove that anxiety & the fatigue of business do not affect his constitution. Sir Benjamin Sullivan is not yet returned he writes to Sir Henry that if his presence be absolutely necessary he will come at any rate but that his health is still very bad, he is now in Calcutta, he has been absent from Madras eight months, poor man he has probably prolonged his life by going away as it was generally believed he would not have lived here, but surely there is nothing to be said for Sir Thos Strange who has left his duty to serve his interest only. We are now at Pommel<sup>332</sup> the Cotton farm which we wrote from this time last year the weather is very cool & pleasant, & Sir Henry goes down to St Thome every morning to his business & returns to sleep at night he thinks the exercise does him good & the distance is not more than ten miles; the house at St Thome is being repaired & beautified in our absence & we are very glad to be out of the smell of paint. Mr. Biss is now stationed about 4 miles distant from this

<sup>332</sup> Pammal.

place & (I suppose) for the first time in his life living in his Tent he seems much pleased with it & is in remarkably good health. he has a companion at present a Mr. Walpole who is a very elegant young man, sweet tempered & remarkably handsome he is of Lord Orford's family & son to the publick minister at Lisbon.<sup>333</sup> They both spent [sic] their Sunday with us & have no doubt but Mr. Biss will give you a [particular?] account of himself & his employment, as you seem to be a prodigious favourite of his. The twelve young men who form the Institution of which Mr. Biss is a member are stationed at certain distances to make an accurate survey of this part of the county & I believe they are to survey the whole of the [Carnatic?] & when the plans are completed the Governor says he intends to send them home to the Court of Directors as a proof of the utility of his Institution & of the particular merit of its present members Biss does himself credit wherever he is, by his industry & the gentleness of his disposition, his friends have nothing to apprehend for him but the delicacy [sic] of his constitution, which however I hope will become stronger as he grows older. I do not think the climate disagrees with him at all, but on the contrary that he is rather better since he came to this country than at his arrival, but he is of an extremely nervous habit. I write pretty particularly about him because I know, besides having a good deal to do, young men in general are not very fond of writing particulars about themselves which such good mothers, as his appears to be would be much gratified by hearing. I hope when these ships do come they will bring the long looked for, & longed for, Saddle &c, and also the remaining part of (5) Richard Clarke's things. I wish much to know how Mr. Livingstone happened to leave them behind as he said they were not come to Portsmouth when he sailed & yet he mentioned the name of the ship by which they were to be forwarded, but I have told you all this before & I hope you have read it & seen our good kind hearted friend Mr. Keene I shall be truly glad to hear of his safe arrival & of the restoration of his health. I have not received a line from my kind friend Mrs. Trent. I long to know how you go on together how you like them & how they like you I am sure they must be much altered if you are not good friends. I have written a budget [sic] of tittle tattle to Mrs. Trent which she will read if she has leisure & a good stock of patience. We have continued to get through the greatest part of your excellent eatables they were all extremely fine except the tongues which you know you only sent as an experiment, I am housewifing the pickles to make them last out the

<sup>333</sup> George Walpole, d. 1807.

year but they are in great request, the sweetmeats are nearly disposed of poor Biss I am happy to say has shared all happening fortunately to be near us & Sir Henry never omits asking him when we have a party, he calls him (6) his Aid du Camp [sic], & makes him sit at one end of the table when we have huge parties & Richard at the other, they are Sir Henry's staff, as he calls them. They are great friends & both very much liked. Richard, is indeed more generally beloved than any man in the country I believe; the sweetness of his temper & extreme modesty of his manners prevent his offending any one, & the fineness of his principles [sic] & elegance of those accomplishments which his fathers excellent education has bestowed upon him are qualifications so rarely met with here that they cannot fail to distinguish this possessor, so much for my favourites, but they have led me astray from the subject I was upon, which is giving you some account of your good things & the manner in which we have disposed of them, the hams were all eaten up to the bone & were all excellent. The sweet meats both yours & Maam's [?] were far the best that have ever arrived; tomorrow is Sunday & I intend to treat my friends with some raspberry tarts, but as the stock is getting low I am rather stingy, however I am proud to (7) say that my minced pies have been prodigously admired this year real orthodox minced pies, I now & then send half a dozn to the Tents & am sure to be told they came very opportunely or were truly acceptable or some such answer as proves my labour is not thrown away. Monday. We had the party as I expected yesterday. & all vastly gay with the jam & some fine fat Ducks & two hadsome [sic] dishes of green peas, there we beat you I think on the second day of February. We take care to keep the English season too for as it was Candlemass day which Sir Henry calls the last day of Christmass, we had a large Norfolk Turkey & some mince pies.--I think I am writing you a pretty nonsensicall [sic] letter but it is necessary you should have a familiar peek at us now & then & I know no one else will spend ink & paper on such subjects. Our party consisted of our own family, only with the addition of Mr. Biss Mr. Walpole & a Mr. Dalgaines [?] of thier [sic] society- whose Tent is pitched about 4 miles to the Westward of us.

Having thanked you in the name of the whole family for your kind attention to our internals & externals, I shall proced [sic] to make some further trial of our friendship by requesting you to execute more commissions for us, one of which of a new & rather

extraordinary nature you will find enclosed on a separate piece of paper. By some opportunity or other I requested [sic] you to send two plates of looking glass to repair the accidents which had befallen two dressing tables but as you have never noticed the request I suspect the letter must have miscarried. I have not the proper dimensions [sic] here but will endeavour to get them before I send that off. You will be so good as to omit no opportunity [sic] of sending drawing paper of all sorts, for Betsy has acquired such a facility in drawing the birds, & is so anxious to go on with her collection that I can scarcely be allowed a bit of good paper to practice on least the stock should be exhausted before a fresh supply comes to hand. We are also in want of the following colours & c. Viz Lake, Prussian [sic] Blue, Indigo, Light red, Burnt Umber & Gaul stone, 2 Cakes each, 4 or 5 doz of black lead pencils & as many Brushes of all sizes. Pens & writing paper with sand, coloured wafers & c, as you kindly sent them before will always be truly acceptable, two good pen knives & 2 or 3 pair of scizors [sic], a few needles some tape bobbin & balls [?] both silk & cotton, there is a soft sort (8) of cotton lace platted, which is better here than the silk which turns very yellow & grows rotten. Pray send a few pairs of gloves for Sir Henry & a few bits of Watch ribbons of cheerful patterns but not over gay. If you are a little more liberal to us in shoes it will be no harm, & be so good as to send mine a very little smaller than the last if you send Betsy & me half a doz pairs of good silk stockings each, I think they will be very acceptable by the time you can answer this. The thick green shoes you sent are very useful & comfortable during the cool weather they are on our feet at this moment mine are almost past service. Do not trouble yourself to send many varieties of confectionary articles, as the Scotch Caraways, the Toloo Lozenges,<sup>334</sup> the Candied Almonds & Orange chips were the only things much esteemed I am sorry to say the Almonds have hitherto been rather unfortunate for being packed in paper only, they have never been dry enough to bring to table. Store jars well corked & rezined [sic] are I think the best things to put them in. Betsy has some trifles which she would be very glad to send home to you but I fear we shall get no one to carry them by this opportunity, Mr. Prossers ship has not returned here it was reported she had sailed from Bengal directly to England, but I have no certain information about her. I do not think I shall write to the Thoburns this time If I do not pray assure them that is not for want of good will

<sup>334</sup> Tolu lozenges were made from tolu balsam, which is tapped from the living trunks of *Myroxylon balsamum*, a tree native to South America.

& real affection for them but because I have written to **(9)** them since I heard from them & have really nothing to say that I think would in the least degree amuse them, I have to apologize to them however for a great rudeness I was guilty of in thanking them for a hat which they did not send me I made a confusion in reading the letters as we were very much hurrid [sic] by the sudden departure of one fleet immediately on the arrival of another, I afterwards saw it was the feathers they had sent, for which they were however equally entitled to my thanks. I hope we shall be able to send some seeds but are by no means certain as I do not know any of the passengers by these ships & hear there are very few persons going home from this Presidency.

I suppose my continuing to subscribe myself by the same name, will make you think your kind admonitions (if I may so call them) thrown away, that I assure you is not the case, neither am I by any means indifferent about the subject of them, but I cannot help thinking it better to abide by an evil I do know, then by attempting to avoid it to throw myself into one I do not know the worst of, it is nothing new to say that a dependent state is not a very happy one, but I could never think myself independent in being the wife of a man whose conduct my heart could not approve. It has pleased God to give me health & such other requisites as in my present state, will enable me to make myself **(10)** independent at any time I shall find it necessary to exert them. God forbid them that from petulence [sic] or intemperance I should put it out of my power to use those good gifts. No, I shall wait patiently & remain ever as I am, unless that happens, which however may happen, that I meet with a man in whom I find those qualities which I think necessary to my happiness, & though amongst my numerous admirers in this country I have not yet met with such an one, I think I cannot be accused of making any unreasonable demands. If I were some ten or twelve years younger it is probable I should have married long ago for I know several young men who would be most happy to take me such as I am, to whom no reasonable woman of eighteen or twenty could object, but as they are men twenty two, to twenty five or six years old, I should think myself guilty of an unpardonable rashness in doing them the injury to accept them & should deserve all the ill consequences which might naturally follow such a step, perhaps you will think I make too much of this subject & tire you, but yet I could say more if you & I were together in a corner but the distance, & the uncertainty of the fate of letters must withhold



[sic] my confidence till we meet when, if it ever shall please God to grant me that happiness, there shall be no secret between us at least there shall be no reserve on my part, you will observe by the different [dates?] that I have written this is a strange tedious way, which has been occasioned by the different accounts I hear of the time the ships are intended to sail & by the hope of hearing from you before I finish it, I shall however close it now & if the time admits I will write again to you. The supply of wearables you send us out every years [sic] is really very handsome & must give you a great deal of trouble to collect, but my dear Hetty I should like very much to know what the expense of them is, you have never sent any amount yet; besides the pleasure of knowing how much I cost my friends, I should like to know the price of articles as I am often asked for the sake of comparing mine with those bought here, you could perhaps send me the sum total of each year, & if it is not too much trouble, when you are packing will you be so good as to pin a bit of paper on each with the price of it.

I believe I told you Mr. Prosser had brought Betsy & me each a very Pretty cap, & Sir Henry a hamper of most excellent Cider, I scarcely ever saw him enjoy any thing equal to it he has had his glass out of every bottle that has been opened; it is the only thing I ever knew him keep for himself or use so economically Mr Biss desires me to say all manner of kind things to you from him, he has been here in his way to Combatores,<sup>335</sup> Where **(11)** Captain Troyer has appointed him to meet on business. Mr. B-- desires me to tell you that he is vexed & disappointed at being prevented from writing to you, which he fully intended doing, but as Captain Troyer wishes to take him with him on a survey he fears he must be at a considerable distance from Madras & his time will be fully occupied till the Ships sail he sends home a thick packet of newspapers for his father & begs you will have the goodness to forward them I am in great hope that we shall have another opportunity of writing in April. Mr. Waite's brother is with us he is going home as he says for his health but I suppose he is persuaded to go, as I do not see any difference in his appearance now & when he came out or at least if any it is for the better, but as the poor creature has no marked fault to lay hold on, for which they could get him out of the army I suppose a Commander in chief must be very glad to find he can make him think himself ill enough to go home, for what could they do with such a poor Gent? it would be impossible to give him a command or indeed any

<sup>335</sup> Coimbatore.

employment, I have given him two small packets of pretty red seeds, one for you & one for [Mr. Keene?]. We think you can get them drilled by Miss Fraser & they will make pretty necklaces. Sir Henry & Mr. Oliver have recived [sic] letters from Mr. Keene which give us great pleasure, as they tell us he is greatly recoverd [sic] pray remember me kindly to him & tell him I have not forgot my promise of the Brahminny women & c but must keep them till the next opportunity. If you see or hear any thing of Captain Templer I beg you to say every thing **(12)** that is handsome to him from me, & tell him I shall trouble him with a few lines, whenever I hear from him that he is in some settled place where my letters may be more fortunate in reaching him, as I have written round, but conclude he has not recived [sic] them -----You will no doubt think it strange that I should write this long letter without once mentioning my dear little niece, believe me it is not because she is out of my thoughts but because she is too much in them may God bless & preserve her prays her most affectionate aunt Mary. This season of the year reminds me always of our little excursion [sic] to Brompton when we used to open our eyes after a gloomy Winter to look for some kind bud or blossom to cheer us with the promise of fairer days. When will such happy tranquil days return to us all? They are at least far off, but the hopes that such may again be enjoyed, & that we shall find no diminution in that warm affection which was the real cause of their happiness, is the prospect which enlivens all my present hours, shortens the time of our separation & smoothes all the rugged roads of this [\_\_?] life. May God bless you & may evry [sic]? happiness attend you, & all those dear friends whose sincerity & virtue having been tried & proved, thier [sic] value rises dayly [sic] & hourly in our estimation, I beg you to give my kind love to Ned, Nancy & all thier [sic] dear little ones, & with my duty to my dear Mother & remembrances to all who are so good as to enquire for us, I request that you & James will believe me your very truly affectionate Sister

M. Symonds

Madras Febry 11, 1806

**Letter-062-EG-02-1806 (Mss.Eur.C.240/4, ff. 310r-313v), Elizabeth Gwillim to Hester James, February 11, 1806**

(1)

My dear Hetty,

Pamala near Madras Feb. 11<sup>th</sup>: 1806

I suppose you are about reading all the letters we sent by the fleet which sailed [sic] hence the tenth of Sep<sup>r</sup>: - and yet the fleet which prepared to sail from England in May ten months ago, is not yet arrived at Madras - I own I so much disliked the thought of writing before that fleet arrived, that I have omitted it till it is too late to write at all. I really long to hear from you & this delay of the fleet mortifies me extremely, I rail at Buonaparte<sup>336</sup> & all the causes of the war which has so much interrupted our intercourse ever since we have been here.

-

I hope you have seen Mr: Keene by him I thanked you for all the last packets which were so well chosen & brought so carefully by Mr. Prosser, they have been useful creditable & comfortable to us. - Sir Henry's coat is very handsome but he wears it only as a dress he is very fond of it & so am I but he wants another - without lining of some neat brown or fashionable colour; but it must (2) be a kind of frock wholly unlined, except the sleeves - which shou'd be lined with sarsnet or silk serge - A Ladies cloth if it be of a fine close texture is the best as the pepper & salt coat was so long a coming he took a blue one of Richard Clarke ~~light cloth~~ thin blue cloth & that has been his undress - country-gentleman's coat ever since. It is now worn out, & we can buy none but heavy coarse clothes. -

I trust in God that you are all well - wou'd that I cou'd hear. - Mr: Prosser ship we hear will not call here which is a sad disappointment to me. - I have some things to send home, some indeed of my own but I hope to see some of our acquaintance to send them by. --

I have very little news to tell you thank God we have had no sickness in the home this year & half except that Richard Clarke had a cold with some fever for a few days - I believe

<sup>336</sup> Napoleon Bonaparte.

he wou'd have been well the day after he was taken ill but finding himself relieved by the perspiration in the night, produced by some hot wine & water he jumped out of bed in the morning & washed himself with cold water & by breakfast time became worse - He was then obliged to send for a Dr: & put himself under our care - the Dr: sent him a sweating draught which threw him into one of those kind of sweats which Sir Henry calls a brewing - The first breaking out of it was so new to him that he really became quite terrified; howe[ver] in the morn<sup>g</sup>: he was relieved. He stayed at home a week to take care of himself It was his first absense [sic] from his office - He was nothing worse a few days after but the medical man ordered him to wear flannel waistcoats next his skin, as conceiving that he had caught cold, not so much by any accident as by the unusual coolness of the weather. - We have had 18 months of mild weather & some months indeed when the Even<sup>g</sup>: & morn<sup>g</sup>: have been very piercing to our tender bodies, so long stewed in the heats - I made him up that flannel you last sent me therefore if you send him any packet it wou'd be as well to send him a few yards of flannel, as I suppose he must continue the use of the waistcoat - Here I am again in the cotton farm and I have been so well supplied with birds that I have not had a moments liesure [sic] to ~~draw~~ write indeed it was not my design to write more than to my mother & you and as the English fleet is hourly expected I have waited in hopes of being able to answer some letters which I trust are in some one of the ships - late news it cannot be, but such as it is I shou'd be glad of it **(3)** I think the riding up here does Sir Henry good - but he comes ~~only~~ up only on Wednesday night 9 oClock & goes down at 6 in the morn<sup>g</sup>: of course there is more sleeping than talking - He rides up again on Saturday night & down on Monday morn<sup>g</sup> a true Cits<sup>337</sup> fashion - the young men, of whom we have generally a good party make out the day, by shooting in the morn<sup>g</sup> & billiards in the heat of the day - Richard is a famous shot & a great lover of Horses in neither of which he takes after his father or uncle - You might see how busy I am by the bird skins which I get skinned & he sends to his uncle - the skins are not well cured for I have only the Cook to do them - & as they are frequently done too late, for I am obliged to draw them first that is delineate them, - & the skins become tender. - Not being at my own house I can send no drawings by these ships - but Sir Henry says he will have the

<sup>337</sup> "Cit" is Regency slang for a citizen of London (<https://www.regrom.com/regency-lingo/>)

[word crossed out] drawings manifested. -

I wonder how you liked Mr: Keene & if he came often to see you - I have some interested views in being friends with him for he has a great interest in India amongst his friends & might hereafter serve the poor boys. - Biss is much with us being stationed near, but of (4) him I shall say nothing as Mary tells me she has given you a full account of him Sir Henry is very fond of him -

We have many amusements in walking or climbing about the rocks - Sir Henry went upon a pinnacle the other Even<sup>g</sup>: to pluck a Baya's nest that was hanging to a branch of a tree & he desired one to send it to you & tell you that he had plucked it at the risk of his life - I have a male & female baya<sup>338</sup> in a cage & I will send down them & the nest. If Richard can make interest to get them sent by some one of the ships - There is a Mr: Kennet who has offered to take some things Mr: Kennet was sent to us by a very respectable young man who is Purser of a ship & who sold Sir Henry a Pipe of Port wine & offered to take anything to you - I think his name was Lonsdill<sup>339</sup> - I suppose you know that the Baya is the famous Hanging bird which makes it's pendant nest at the end of the branches of trees which overhang any precipice or Lake - the nest has two chambers & the Hindoos assert that the birds put fire flies in the nest to be a light<sup>340</sup> - It is certain that fire flies are found in the nests but it is probable only put there as food for the (5) birds eat insects & grain - Rice is their chief fare - rice in the husk & their dexterity in catching the grains thrown up into the air is wonderful they crack the husk & take it out the grain with surprizing [sic] quickness - I wish I cou'd send you one or two trained but that wou'd be impossible unless I sent it by somebody who wou'd exercise them all the way - The bird is about the size of a sparrow but ~~with~~ the male has a yellow head - the female is the [word crossed out] more docile but both are easily taught they learn every trick in a week but the mischief is that the boy who takes care of my birds & teaches them sells them off as soon as trained & tells me they are dead, or replaces the trained one by a new one - & indeed they very soon forget their tricks & do not perform them but when hungry - they will catch a bit of silver when thrown up over water before it has sunk in the stream & are made to catch all their

<sup>338</sup> The baya weaver (*Ploceus philippinus*) is a weaverbird found across the Indian Subcontinent and Southeast Asia

<sup>339</sup> Probably Benjamin Prowde Longdill (d. 1829).

<sup>340</sup> This story about the bird using glow-worms to light the nest is also related by Athar Ali Khan "Account of the Baya or Indian Gross-Beak", *Asiatic Researches*, Vol II (1799).

food grain by grain thrown up in the air - I have seen [word crossed out] one who would fetch a flower out of my hand & put it to his master's nose, beetle leaf & put it in his mouth & money & put it in his hand - & this repeatedly without any mistake; but after every service [words crossed out] it was rewarded with a grain of Rice -- I have had two living Porcupines brought me they, however eat through their cages & ran away in the night - The Polygars<sup>341</sup> who catch them brought me one dead for the purpose of roasting, as they said it was the most delicate meat they had I have heard many people praise it & accordingly I had it roasted - It was a young one & fat & looked & smelt like very delicate pork - or wild Hog. The Natives like it better than the common wild Hog & call the animal the thorny hog. - A Roasted porcupine is I believe a joke but all agreed in liking it-

I have a notable farm yard here Turkeys [sic] - Geese ducks & fowls, they make such an abominable noise at day break that I cannot bear it Sir Henry says it is delightful musick [sic] - Mr: Webb in whose house we are has another farm about six miles further on where he tells there has lately been a Royal Tiger & killed him nine sheep of a night - I have been drawing a beautiful Tiger cat which a Captain Cleveland is taking home with him to England, if it (6) should ever live to get there it will be a great curiosity - I intend to send you the picture by the first opportunity -

I have not collected many seeds but I send some which are fine & I send the *Barrilienis longiflora*<sup>342</sup> - very fine seed - I wrote to Mrs: Whitley; but I suppose the letter never reached her for she has not answered nor did Lizzy or Nancy mention it - I am tired of sending plants because they are so unlucky & give more trouble to Mr: Whitley to fetch them than they are worth - I wish I could know if that poor man of the name of Shepheard took home his Bread fruit tree for he had a terribly illnatured [sic] Captain - Give my love to Lizzy & Mary & remember me to Mr: Samuel - Pray tell Nancy Green that I am sorry I cannot write to her this time, but that is if I cannot - for if the ships stay till Sunday I hope to do it - also give my remembrances to Mrs: Shepheard & tell her that if I can I will write; but I suppose she has seen by this time Captain & Mrs: Rees who will tell her all manner of Madras news - Poor Captain Price I much regret - by him I sent every thing I could think of but I wrote to Mrs: Shepheard by Mr: Keene & begged him to call on [words crossed out] her -

<sup>341</sup> Poligars, see note above.

<sup>342</sup> Perhaps a garbled version of *Barleria longiflora* (thanks to Henry Noltie).

Sir Henry has just sent for what I have ready so I send this & the birds therefore with love to you & yours believe me yours most affectionately EGwillim.

**Letter-063-EG-02-1806 (Mss.Eur.C.240/4, ff. 314r-318v), Elizabeth Gwillim to Hester James, February 12, 1806**

(1) [note added at top of page]

Feb. 12<sup>th</sup>. 1806 - Pamalla near Madras - 10 miles from my house at S. Thome - 12 from Fort St George - the road not being direct - you might have caught me if I had not thought of those 3 miles - S. Thome to Fort

My dear Hetty -

Wonders will never cease. - The ships were unmoored, the Passengers on board - an absolute order to be under weigh at 4 o'Clock PM: Feb. 12<sup>th</sup>: - I sent my letters from Pammala at 5 oClock in the morn<sup>g</sup>: - wrote little because I hate to write when it is to answer nothing. Dull & downhearted I spent the day in sullenness - when lo! Just when I was going to Eat my roast fowle & Bengall potatoes - very watery [word crossed out] & not much bigger than [word crossed out] peach-stones up comes the Chubdar<sup>343</sup> Boh! "a "large Packet of letters from England "the ships are to stay till tomorrow "I am in Court cannot come out no gown on - obliged to read an hour naked - the fowl cold & all uncomfortable but to the end I was obliged to go - Thank God they are all well - I will answer (2) the letters the instant I have read them but who can make out these letters? I cannot read half of them! - my Eyes are dazzled - Get out boy I dont [sic] care whether the dinner is cold or not - "The Chubdar must go back to master this minute" - I cant [sic] send him till I have read them & who can read this - Let Mr: Milbune sell swan quills or goose quills surely he might sell something that can be written with - The pen I have wou'd be a disgrace to him - dear Hetty where did you procure it? - There were a few good ones but Mary keeps them all to herself - It is hard; for what is so

<sup>343</sup> "Chobdar, a stick-bearer. A frequent attendant of Indian nobles, and in former days of Anglo-Indian officials of rank" (*Hobson Jobson*).

teazing [sic] as a puzzling hand when one is in a hurry? - Now I take pains & write fair - yet you never praise me. - I have not yet looked at the secret correspondence but I will bye & bye - No letters however are come but your's [sic] - No Brompton Letters - none from my mother - this a little damps us but you say she & Tom wrote in London. I shall hope for the letters tomorrow or by Sir Henry tonight he is to come up if he can - This is Wednesday night - he arrives or so has done at 9 oClock tired down - goes fast asleep with difficulty is awakened to go to bed wakes at 5 oClock in the morn<sup>g</sup>: - & mounts his horse - comes up on Saturday night [word crossed out] the same hour in the same state on Sundays sets about reading Cobbet<sup>344</sup> - scarcely is he set down to read but in come all sorts of visitors friends who have a mind to be kind - for this is his only liesure [sic] day come to tiffing, merchants who can go out on no other days & come to conciliate his favour & explain their grievances - Polygars & all sorts of hunters & shooters, "Master has liesure [sic] today & we come to make [word crossed out] vizit [sic]." Poor man it is worse than all the days of the week - Here are Mr: James kind present of Books lying before me at this instant I do not believe he has made up his mind about them or even got through them yet - It is not for want of taking them in hand. In due time (3) you will hear all about them. But I assure you I do not think I have exchanged more private words with Mr: Gwillim this year than I have written to you. - He is so anxious about his business & he has such a set watching him who hate Laws & Law makers & love nothing but cash, that he has no moment but what has it's employment -

I give you credit for perceiving Sir Thomas's flummery - It is sickening he is a perfect joke here on that account - He has canted over Mary and me - in the most tender manner, just when he was about to do the most ungenerous act towards my husband, & what for? because he tried to do right - & his duty. -- You know not how he fought it out about Temple that very thing was the cause of his fever - & yet when [word crossed out] he & Anstruther who are always pretending to quarrel with each other & are abusing one another to every body - were proposing one Scotchman or relation of their's after another wholly unfit for the place they were canting Temple, & saying (4) what fine things they had written home about him. Nay just before only a few days before the thing was to be settled They neck & shoulders brought in a story as if by chance of the fine opinion they had of poor Temple - Sir Henry was delighted

<sup>344</sup> In reference to the works of William Cobbett, perhaps the *Weekly Political Register*.



that the person he brought out shou'd be so satisfactory - concluded the thing done - & on the moment lo! Sir Thomas said no - He wou'd not do it he must have these scotchmen or he must have Mr: Anstruthers<sup>345</sup> brother in Law. - It was base & bad - It opened my Eyes - I am ashamed to say they were a little blinded by flattery. - But this is diverting that you tell me, Sir Thomas gave Linley his place! O good God - a Civilian of as long standing as Linley can get more than Sir Thomas - If he had anything to do in giving him the place he now holds, it was only a part of the job with Lord William to secure Lord Melville's interest. - but he cared not for Linley - I know that he despised his talents which are indeed only those of a fidler [sic] - but he was gay & acted upon the stage & played when Sir Thomas had friends (5) & he praised it but never listened to it for he has no more Ear to musick [sic] than a Beetle - and Linly [sic] scolded his servant abused his wine & made a joke of him - Let me tell you however he made a joke of him for his best qualities his knowledge of, & love of, his profession neither however equal our friend's I may say without partiality [sic] - I think I may - & I believe it causes no small degree of envy -- Linley is or has been a pretty Lady faced man who had learned musick [sic] because he never heard of anything else in his family.<sup>346</sup> He came here a writer but with such a hankering for the orchestra that he left the fine employment in order to seek his fortune as a musician - He left the country as they have permission on pretence of health &c - without giving up the Service. He wasted five years in England - tried as I have heard to be the leader of a band - but the talents so flattered here met with no success in publick [sic] - he tried a play or farce it met with the worst fate from the the audience - He wrote a Novel - who buys it, or who read it, you can best learn at the Minerva press<sup>347</sup> - that is if the shopman will tell you the truth -

Old Mrs: Sheridan who was I believe the mother of Sheridan the Orator &c was a writer of novels wrote Miss Sydney Biddulph & some Oriental pieces which met with applause - one of the latter is called [word crossed out] Nouredin,<sup>348</sup> it is the story of a worthless fellow being

<sup>345</sup> Perhaps Sir John Anstruther, Chief Justice of Bengal.

<sup>346</sup> William Linley (1771-1835) joined the British East India Company and was in India 1790-5 and 1800-5, holding a writership at the College in Madras. He was a member of the musical Linley family (ODNB).

<sup>347</sup> The Minerva Press, in Leadenhall Street, was run by the bookseller and publisher William Lane, whose circulating library Elizabeth mentions below.

<sup>348</sup> Frances Sheridan, *The History of Nourjahad* (J. Dodsley, London, 1767). Frances Sheridan (*née* Chamberlaine) (1724-1766) was the mother of Richard Brinsley Butler Sheridan

by his Patron indulged with luxuries suffered to preserve his vices 'till he grew sick of them & then rewarded for so doing - It has much the air of the oriental stories as we call them, but more properly to speak of the Muslemans [sic] stories - perhaps it was borrowed from some prints I know nothing of it's history - its merit is the imitation - a man so vicious any christian wou'd think deserved to be hanged - but where Christianity is lacking morality is also as I have ever found - This story of all others Mr: Linley chose to change to an English History - & thus happily got rid of all that had merit in it - it's manner & retained all that was immoral to this he added a plentiful quantity of dullness - & now if you shou'd **(6)** criticise my criticism, please to send to Mr. Lane for the book called forbidden apartments,<sup>349</sup> & Mrs: Sheridan's [word crossed out] Nourredin from which it was taken. -

The truth is Linley is a pleasant but a [words crossed out] a weak young man who fancies himself a scholar. [words crossed out] Upon his failure in the publick [sic] world - he returned to his situation in India, - he waited some time - he had been in India about 4 or 5 months before we came 3 or 4 after he was appointed by Lord Clive Paymaster at Vellore. - but this was all in the regular course, so far from any favour of Sir Thomas --~~that wou'd~~ his recommendation [sic] wou'd have been a hindrance at that time - Linley then lived stingily saving every sixpence - & acquired enough to keep it home, quite disliking this Country he left the place & came down to Madras with an intention to sail to England - He sung & played & amused the Publick here & it is probable Sir Thomas might mention him for the place he now holds which is no better than what he left; but more agreeable to him than a solitary residence in the country but still he hates India, & as to the place it cou'd be given to none but a writer that is a company's Civil servant much as he is, It is all routine & that place was offered to five different people **(7)** who all refused it - had he refused that he wou'd have had another - It is his own pleasure to leave the country - This is no favour -- The only favour Sir Thomas did was giving him a couch in his house as we & he do to many -

Sir Henry is arrived & stops my writing he says he things [sic] the ships will sail Early tomorrow morn<sup>g</sup>: that government will dispatch their papers to Ceylon where all the ships are to rendezvous

Richard has searched the packets over at the Post Office no letter for him not one, only

(1751-1816).

<sup>349</sup> William Linley, *Forbidden Apartments* (London: Minerva Press, 1800).

one for Sir Henry - no Brompton letter - I once before heard that Mr: Whitly had written but did not receive it - I wish I had heard better accounts of your health James's & my mother's - I thank God it is no worse However bless, this I close to go down at five oClock to such a chance of being sent on board - I dont [sic] care who has the Palenpores [sic] I would send a dozen if any body woud [sic] take them

Love - to all - your's most affectionately

EGwilli

m No letter from Mrs: Trent come to  
Mary

(8) [inscription on envelope above address]

Double 24s

For shop 2s

26s

Mrs: James

No. 39 Bishopsgate Street within

London

**Letter-064-MS-02-1806 (Mss.Eur.C.240/4, ff. 319r-321v) Mary Symonds to Hester James,  
12 February 1806**

(1) Madras Feby 12:

1806 Dear Hetty,

When I arose this morning I heard a salute fired, which (being 12 miles off) I concluded was from the Ships that were getting under weigh to sail for England, but to our great delight & surprise about two hours ago Sir Henry sent up a messenger with a packet of letters from you. I know not what good ship has brought them, so he knowing our anxiety did not stay to

write very particulars My comfort be the same we have so long expected but must have come by some ship which has been despatched since as they are dated Sepr 1805. I now regret having written such dull stuff as I fear will tire you more to read than it did me to write. Thank God to hear you are all well. I seem another creature, & I am sure my eyes are an inch wider open than they have been this month. You mention a great many letters which have been written to us not one of which we have yet recieved [sic] but I trust all will come in time. (2) we expect Sir Henry every minute & he will perhaps bring in some news. What is now come to our hands is a letter [opium?] for Betsy & me from your dear self with a packet containing two wigs & severall [sic] loose letters from Mr. Biss's friends Mr. Whitley & c. I begin to write all this uncertain about [?] because I do not know that I may have time after Sir Henry comes up as he sent us word that the ships which were to sail today, would be delayed till 12 oclock tomorrow only, & it is now nine at night. I am very glad you recieved [sic] my letters with the drawing of the House & that my dear James liked it pray tell him I will not let another opportunity pass without sending him views of all the houses we have inhabitted [sic] in India, & such other things as I think will amuse him, but I am so anxious to work for improvement only that I take no care of the things I do. I have sent George Samuel two or three little scraps with a request that he will give me a little instruction. You complain that I have not given a view of the Sea with the house now my dear Hetty, if you just recollect, I have told you that we see the Sea from the House & therefore [sic] to draw the house I must necessarily turn that end towards the Sea which could not conveniently describe it, but you shall have it in all directions fore & aft. Poor Sir Henry too he has not acknowledged the books I wonder of that too but to say the truth he has little time for reading them. Mr. Cobbet<sup>350</sup> lies on the table by me now. Sir H-- carries them about with him but poor soul he has so little leisure, he reads when he can, but it is not often, this is a wretched country in many respects here are no comfortable places to go to. Nothing like Poplar Walk in the whole country, & then yet 15 thousand miles & 5 months voyage, blunt the edge of a mans political appetite considerably, particularly with such a charming government & such curious politicks as he has to consider & contemplate here, he has not been able to come up to us every night lately as he used to do but stays down at St. Thome for 3 or 4 nights at a time during the Sessions & [Trials?] time which latter is now, & he has

<sup>350</sup> In reference to the works of William Cobbett, perhaps the *Weekly Political Register*.

not been with us these three nights, when he does come it is about nine or ten o'clock quite tired & he generally takes up a book after telling us the news, sits down on a couch & falls asleep in half an hour, with some difficulty we make him sensible to go to bed, & he awakes at five in the morning & sets off again to business (3) I guess this will plead his excuse to James but I have no doubt but he will give an account of himself, it is not want of inclination to read but want of leisure, & as I told you want of those conveniences which in a country of luxuries you enjoy it is impossible for me to give you an account of the poverty of the land in these respects or rather the riches of the land speaking as a native Hindoo--but if you ask my good friend Mrs. Trent she will tell you all the particulars of the Inconveniences of this uncivilized place. I am glad you see a good deal of my friend the General I thought it would be strange if you were not friends. I have not written to him because I was so sadly in the dumps but I shall by the next opportunity [sic] you delight me by telling me that John Gwillim says he has written to me for though I have never seen a line of him it is a sufficient satisfaction to me if he thinks he ought to have written to me & sometimes remembers me, my heart is many a pound the lighter for hearing it, & it would have saved me many a tear to have heard it before which I could not help dropping to the memory of an old & dear (& as I thought) lost friendship. I shall write to him (4) again in consequence of the information. The account you give of Ned & Nancy is very grateful to me I hope with my whole heart that they will do well the [mischief?] of a low & evil spirit, especially a sordid one will I think never be permitted to do them harm, let them but do right & remember the words of the Psalmist. "I have been young & am old yet I hath ["not" missing] seen the righteous man forsaken or his seed begging their bread." The truth of which I am fully convinced of. The fault you find in Tom James education is a very general [sic] one. I know not how it is whether the masters really pay too much attention to the dead languages & too little to our own, or that they think only of receiving [sic] their money & neglecting their duty altogether but certainly the young men of whom I see great numbers are extremely deficient in the English language I have known but few who were otherwise & those were young men of high families & educated of Publick Schools. Sir Henry is come up he says the packet has closed, however I shall close this & let him take it down in the morning, for the chance of a private hand, So God bless (5) you all once more. I have received [sic] nothing more Sir H-- says he had a great many letters for Biss but only one & on business to himself. The Ships

which brought them are the Albion & Diana. The fleet which, I suppose, brings all the letters you mention, will not be here yet, but I hope we shall have another chance of writing soon & then you shall all hear of us again & in good spirits now I know you are all well & happy

Yours most affectionately

M Symonds

do not send this to Mr. Gwillim [&?] James

**Letter-065-EG-05-1806 (Mss.Eur.C.240/4, ff. 322r-324r), Elizabeth Gwillim to Esther Symonds, May 29, 1806**

(1) My dear Mother, S. Thome May 29<sup>th</sup>: 1806. 2 o'Clock aft.noon

We have this instant received a note from R<sup>d</sup>: Clarke who is in the Fort that a ship has put in from Bengall & that if we write & send a letter before 4 oClock it will find a passage for England I therefore instantly take up pen to have the satisfaction of assuring we are all well. - Sir Henry, Mary, Richard &c - I am indeed not quite well but this I confess for truths sake & perhaps when I tell you what is the matter with me you will laugh at my childish complaints for

such they are - I have had the Shingles again (for I once had it at Pimlico) The complaint seems to be almost gone; but I have not yet been out - & tho' trifling it is most painful --

I am happy to acknowledge the receipt of all the letters I expected from you & and [sic] our friends; but as one hour will be requisite to send this to the appointed place & only one more hour can be allotted to writing. you must not expect any regular answer - The Government are not so civil as they ought to be in giving notice of opportunities to send to England the several members being not very accordant -- I was extremely sorry to hear of your having been so much indisposed by spasms (2) it seems that I am your true daughter for in

describing your complaints you always tell me my own - The heat of this climate bringing them a little more hastily on - I was much grieved to to [sic] hear of Ned & Richard James's illness both seem much alike & probably constitutional to both I wish recovery & permanent health & pray that I may see you all again in in [sic] health & happiness. - I fear Sir Henry will not be able to write to his father & if not pray let him know he is well May has this year passed without a disagreeable day - we have had a sea breeze early every morn<sup>g</sup>: & a sweet shower has this instant fallen - The trees are green & the flowers blooming & every blade of grass looks fresh - The Guns for the Holiday have been firing & the thunder continues the same kind of museck [sic]. - you wou'd not like it but as lightning is rarely dangerous here we listen to the thunder with pleasure God knows what next month may produce but we have had wonderful weather for nearly two years & one of the worst months of this year is ~~past~~ nearly past - May. - I never Saw Sir Henry better he looks as well as when he left you, I hope you all do the same. - A ship arrived [words crossed out] (a man of war) the other day from the Fleet in which Mr: Tho<sup>s</sup>: Gwillim<sup>351</sup> is & in it a young Lieu<sup>t</sup>: a Mr:

Pearse who had been on board with Mr: T. for some time He set out to this country so suddenly that Mr: T.G. had no time to write but he introduced himself to us & has been much with us at S. Thome with which & with the society of Mr: Biss & Mr: Clarke he seems much delighted he is a fine young man & we like him very much. - Mr: Biss will not I guess have time to write if he does not you can tell his friends that he is remarkably well - he left us three weeks ago to enter upon

the new house appointed for the institution - but spends two days a week with us - He & Richard read me a play last night to amuse me they always read plays together one taking up one part & one the other which is well enough in this hot country where reading is a fatigue Mr. Biss looks much better than he did when he came here indeed he is a most beautiful young man & as

good & agreeable as he is handsome I do not know any one more [word crossed out] beloved -- We have at present with us a Mr: Foley a young man of whom I never heard in England. He was introduced here by a letter from his uncle Mr: John Foley of Newent in Glostershire [sic] & by Mr: Gwillim - He is **(3)** really a very artless innocent kind of lad tho' his connection on

<sup>351</sup> Thomas Gwillim (b. 1766) was Henry's younger brother, and he served in the Royal Navy.

the mother's side wou'd have made me doubtful - his mother is Mrs. Parry of the Ware's sister & he is half brother to Mrs: Coates - If you shou'd know any of his friends you will by his desire please to say that is quite recovered under our roof - Indeed this is the truth the sweet air of the Sea has made a great change in him - he looked ill indeed when he came & nobody can look better now

- This of seeing my sick [word crossed out] visitors recover is a satisfaction I have often experienced in this house, & gives it great value to me

I have drawn a great great many birds at Pamal but have been now confined almost a month with this disorder it is not round the lower part of my loins as it was when I had it before but across the pit of my stomach & sloping across my right shoulder the stitches & shooting pains have been very disagreeable. - I long to hear of you all & am much vexed we coud [sic] so seldom write to you we hope soon for a full opportunity - this is to Hetty & you jointly I pray for the preservation of all & think seriously of little else - May God bless & keep you. & pray believe me ever your most dutiful daughter E Gwillim

Henry & Polly send love to you Ned Nancy the children -

**Letter-066-MS-07-1806 (Mss.Eur.C.240/4, ff. 324r-325v) Mary Symonds to her Hester James, 28 July 1806**

(1) Madras July 28th

1806 My dear Hetty

As you will see by the publick papers an account of the shocking mutiny which has taken place at Vellore,<sup>352</sup> I write a few lines by this uncertain opportunity just to satisfy your mind as to our safety; I thank God we are all well, & we have every reason to think ourselves safe, the disturbance was occasioned by an order being issued which directed an alteration in the dress of the Indian army & interfered with some of the harmless prejudices of these poor people. I cannot write you any particulars having only half an hour allowed me

<sup>352</sup> The Vellore Mutiny or Uprising of 10 July 1806.



to prepare & read this, the ship which carries it is an American going to New York.

On the 27th of June we received your letters by the fleet which left England the first week in March they brought us the sad unwelcome news of our dear dear Mothers death You have indeed a loss in her, her sweet consoling tenderness her sensible good advice & her innocent & vituous [sic] example you will miss, I pray to God to protect you I have wished to be with you that I might endeavour to supply her loss to you in some degree by comforting & assisting you as **(2)** as well as I could, poor Nancy too & her dear children have lost a friend, & adviser for ourselves she has been sadly [?] lost to us when I took me leave of her before I came to this country. I considered it as a last separation, & have scarcely suffered myself to hope for the happiness of seeing her again ever since I have been here or if such a wish has for a moment entered my mind it has been immediately checked by the recollection that I could only at the utmost hope to see her in a declining state & to perform the last sad duties. We will write fully to you on this & every other subject soon. We have not recived [sic] any packages by those ships except a box containing some sweetmeats from Mrs. Whitley & a basket of seeds they were under the care of a Mrs Lee & came very safe & good, ships from England are hourly expected here & in them I suppose we shall find packages from you they will also bring us a new Governor & Governor General & we expect an entire change of men & measures which is much to be desired, for weaker or worse than the present can hardly be. god almighty bless you & send us a happy meeting at the expiration of our time of penance in this place; I think you need not fear its being prolonged. I have so many things to say to you that I know not how to quit my pen, but it must be. Remember to present our most affectionate regards to all our dear kind friends & my best love to you dear lovely girl.

Your ever affectionate sister

M. Symonds

The order which occasioned the disturbance has been withdrawn & a contrary one published we will send you copies of both with all particulars by the regular ships

(3) Received April 7<sup>th</sup> -

1807 M<sup>rs</sup>. James

No 39. Bishopsgate  
Street London

[?] Sarah

Christiana 1<sup>st</sup>

Oct<sup>r</sup>. 1806

**Letter-068-EG-09-1806 (Mss.Eur.C.240/4, ff. 329r-343v) Elizabeth Gwillim to Hester James [September/October 1806]**

(1) [1]

My dear Hetty,

I have just heard from a Gentleman high in office that an Extra ship is hourly expected at this place from Bengal; & that after being here at most 48 hours it will sail for England. - In consequence of this information I sit down to write, & happy shall I be if I succeed in sending to you after so long a delay in answering your letters, which I received on the ~~27~~ 28<sup>th</sup>: of ~~July~~ last June, by the fleet which sailed [sic] from England on the 4<sup>th</sup>: of March - Those ships had a remarkably quick passage. I went on the top of the house to see them come in about sunset little did I think of the melancholy tidings they were bearing to me. - I have told you before that our house [word crossed out] affords us this early opportunity of seeing the ships: by many we are envied; but we have ever felt the interval between the arrival of the ships & the delivery of letters as the (2) as the most painful period of life without fears I was not on this Even<sup>g</sup>: but my poor mother did not immediately occur to me. - Sir Henry's & Richards

countenances too surely indicated to me the next morn<sup>g</sup>: when the letters arrived, the news I had to hear; as I had had a long indisposition they were a little unwilling to communicate the intelligence; but I guessed it & begged to know the truth. - The illness I had laboured under for some time by enfeebling my body a little was but a preparation for this severe trial had it come upon me in the height of health & spirits I might & probably shou'd have borne it worse than I did. It may seem to strangers a great folly in me to call it a severe trial to lose a mother ~~at the~~ who had attained to the age of 74, or nearly; but having no children of my own my pleasure [words crossed out] consisted more in the hopes of delighting the aged than in the prospect of pleasing an unborn, or at least an unknown set of little friends. - that I shall love those who are the offspring of others whom I so sincerely & affectionately love I am sure & certain; but I feel less satisfied in the hopes of gaining their affection even if I shou'd live to claim it. - I had besides, to own my weakness flattered myself that I shou'd have the happiness to cheer my dear mother's age. Her pure [?] constitution free from all disease induced me to form this hope, Her family too have been for the most part long lived & the account of her vigour & sprightliness almost obliterated all my fears upon her account. The delicacy of her constitution occasioned me frequent matter of apprehension & it is that which has at last been fatal to her. - I am not, I hope, impious in my grief; but I mourn the event & feel it through all my frame - nor (3) is the event forgotten by me morning or even<sup>g</sup>: or middle day. - My chief grief is that I was not near her in the last hour, on this account I consider the distance that separated us as a dreadful calamity, formerly I thought I fancied, that it was productive of some little pleasure to her & I had therefore infinite pleasure in collecting all sorts of information that I conceived wou'd please her. I trust in God that our absense [sic] has neither shortened her existence by depriving us of the power of aiding to watch over her, nor by giving her extraordinary anxiety upon account of us. -

But, my dear Hetty I also grieve extremely for you who have had not only this great affliction which you bear in common with us; but the additional pain of communicating to us intelligence so painful for you to write & for us to receive. I was sorry to hear from (4) [2] general Trent that your health had apparently suffered severely. - He is an honest good man tho' perhaps he may appear odd to you, I like him the better for his kind way of speaking of you - He says to Richard, in his letter 'Of all the Ladies I have yet seen in London I like Mrs:

James the best." - in all his letters you are extolled beyond measure, you Mr: James & all you have: this to me is truly gratifying. -

I have heard it remarked by some people that the climate of Madras, that is of this part of the Coast, is generally very much the same as that of England, allowing for the different degrees of cold & heat - what is asserted is that we have, proportionally a cold or a hot, a wet or a dry season, as you have & they are at the same times of the year I have taken great pains to observe whether or not this observations be just, & generally I have found, by comparing your accounts with what we have felt, that this is a correct notion - Last year that is the summer of 1805 - was one of the most extraordinary seasons remembered here by the (5) oldest Indians - We had continual rains & the air was so temperate all the summer months that we had as it were, three winters in succession. Now as the winter is delightful to us, of course we all rejoiced & I wrote to you upon this head frequently with exultation but it [word crossed out] sometimes, occurred to me in the Autumn~~that~~ whilst we were unexpectedly enjoying this unusual temperament that if such a proportionable change shou'd happen in your climate, always too cold & damp, - the consequences must be fatal to many & as even here I suffered from cold & spasms I apprehended my dear mother wou'd with difficulty bear [words crossed out] the fogs & dews that must surround you. -

I fear you will suspect that we have been most negligent in writing to you; but we have indeed lost no opportunity that we have been apprized [sic] of. Some it is possible may have occurred [sic] of which we were not aware but we have had no regular means of communication since last Feb<sup>r</sup>: (-it is now the 10<sup>th</sup> of Sep<sup>r</sup>) in Feb we wrote by Mr: Waites brother who is gone to England again for his health, the truth is that he is not a degree above poor Ben Bibbs & he is like many others sent home for health with an incurable disease in the brain or rather I shou'd say defect - This poor creature has the artful cunning of people who are born [word crossed out] with such deficiencies [sic] &, as is generally the case with them does [?] most frequently to the prejudice of others. Fresh from his brothers tuition, which seems to have been very good & strongly given, he behaved very well on his way to Bengal; but not so on his return here [word crossed out] His faults were not of a very bad nature but such as shewed [sic] a want of principles but this is a digression such as are usual in my letters - We have had no opportunity of writing since that fleet sailed [sic] except that about eight weeks ago we heard, by means of the admiral that we might send some letters if they cou'd be

written in the course of a few hours

- Sir H. did not approve of the risk, & I was unwell Polly therefore undertook to write in answer to your melancholy letters which had not then been long arrived - she sent the letter in due time but as we heard afterwards that they [word crossed out] were not sent we applied for our's but were informed that it had been sent to Bengall to go from thence. I was angry enough about it, not liking to have a private letter fall into the hands of strangers & indeed not (6) having the greatest confidence in all the various people into whose hands it might fall; particularly, as at that time an affair had just occurred [sic] likely to make all the people about the Government extremely jealous of what letters shou'd be sent to England. The letter was never returned to us & I beg of you to notice particularly if you do or do not receive it - our principal reason for wishing to write to you one letter at least, at that time was, not merely to acknowledge the receipt of yours of March 1806 - but to ease your minds relative to us if any exaggerated accounts shou'd have come to England by way of France of the late unhappy massacre [sic] at Vellore a station near this place. It was doubtless the intention of the devisers of it that the inhabitants of Madras shou'd share the fate of those at Vellore; but Providence in his infinite mercy to us of which I fear, we may not be worthy preserved us. Mary's letter, I believe, detailed this affair as well as it was then known; but as the insurrection of the Sepoys had been provoked by sad misconduct, it may be that no letter of that time will reach you or others. - (7) [3] I presume that you will have had in the newspapers, before you receive this some account of the insurrection at Vellore; but as our Government here were in no hurry to communicate an affair likely to do them so little credit, I expect that you will have had accounts by the way of France, either from the Isle of France or from Tranquebar,<sup>353</sup> long before any account reaches you regularly; & as those accounts will doubtless be exaggerated by the French I shou'd not be surprised if you were told that we were all murdered as I believe indeed it was intended we shou'd be - This unhappy affair seems to have arisen entirely from the obstinacy & arrogance of the Commander in Chief & the people belonging to him; but as his doings were not controlled by the Government, who had the power to control him & ought to have exercised [sic] it, they seem altogether equally blameable. - The old Officers of the Company by long residence in this country became well acquainted with the habits & customs of the Natives, they kept them in a state of strict discipline but they never ventured to thwart

<sup>353</sup> I.e., from the French regime in Mauritius or the Danish mission at Tranquebar.

their prejudices of any kind, above all they regarded those of a Religious nature amongst which must be classed their **(8)** dress, in some part, their marks & the cutting of their hair & whiskers, with many other particulars which may appear matters of mere indifference to an enlightened European Their customs differ in every caste & distinguish them from each other These trifling forms, which they daily observe constitute the religion of the Hindoos. A few of the Brahmins excepted, they know no other. When they go to the temples it is only to look at the image or to celebrate some festival & all they have to do is to follow the Procession when the image is carried out - But the marks on their foreheads are considered by them as most sacred - & their whiskers are only cut as a mark of mourning for the death of a parent. - The Muslemans [sic] have not these marks on the foreheads; but their whiskers are equally sacred & to say to any one I will cut your whiskers - or to offer to touch them is an affront of the most unpardonable kind Now the Regiments of Sepoys are composed of a mixture of Hindoos & Muslemans [sic]; and hitherto they had been most faithful to their leaders they never have shewn [sic] any inclination to rebel upon account of severities excersised [sic] on their persons; nor have they turned their backs on the battle. A few Europeans led them on & they have ever shewn [sic] great bravery in following them. - But some of the Gentlemen who have lately come out have been quite above regarding their religious prejudices & the present Commander in Chief issued orders that the Sepoys shou'd wear no mark on their foreheads & shou'd appear closely shaven The Sepoys were terrified at these orders, & the Muslemans [sic] in the palace with Tippoos<sup>354</sup> sons & doubtless many others, who must bear our yoke with great impatience, took advantage of this alarm & persuaded the Sepoys that we were going to make them lose their casts & having thus made them Pariahs to force them all to become Christians. But this was not all they have a violent dislike to anything made of leather (I mean the Hindoos have) & meat's leather is absolute pollution - The Brahmins when they wear anything on the feet have a wooden sole, or patten fastened on by means of a stud which passes between the great toe & the next to it. How they contrive to walk with them I know not; but they wou'd not endure a strap of leather - a Bramin's shoe [sketch] & the people of the other casts or some Brahmins engaged in business with Europeans who have got rid of **(9)** their prejudices so far as to wear the ornamented shoes made [words crossed out] in the fashion of the shoes of the Muslemans [sic] leave them on the outside of their houses & wash

<sup>354</sup> The sons of Tipu Sultan, who had been confined in Vellore by the EIC.

their feet before they enter any part of it. ~~and~~ Any person who uses leather in his trade is infamous - the Shoemakers are the lowest outcasts below the Pariahs far: they make harness for horses &c & they burn the dead & are the Executioners they live nowhere near the other people, they Eat ~~dead~~ cattle & horses which have died & frequently die themselves in great numbers by so doing The Sepoys have from time to time been brought, without orders strictly for the purpose to wear leather belts & various straps &c necessary to their uniform This has been brought about by the native officers who have great power with the Sepoys & act under the English officers They love finery & are certainly more fond of imitating us than is generally believed they now copy us in all they can consistently as they heretofore copied the muslemans [sic] their former masters - but all this has been done without threat or force - They have even gone so far in their civilities & their desire to look regular, & like the British troops as to come to the parades without the (10) [4] marks on their foreheads - but then as soon as they go home they make their supplication that is repeat certain collects which they are taught; & in order to which, they must first wash & put on their marks - thus at home for the sake of religion they appeared in their proper dress, & were well satisfied to forbear their customs when on duty - But these late unnecessary orders led them to fear that they were to be wholly prevented from putting on their marks, & thus be mingled together with sects, bearing like other religious sects [word crossed out], mutual hatred to Each other; nay that worse than that, ~~that~~ they shou'd appear like Pariahs the utmost evil they know to dread I am told by those whom I can trust that no order was ever before issued for this compliance nor was it thought heretofore prudent to venture upon giving one - sometime ago a native Sepoy wou'd sooner have been cut down, than wear his drawers more, or so far as half way down the thigh for drawers & breeches or any cloaths [sic] made up by tailors are what they dislike - their cloaths [sic] are worn as they come from the loom - & what we use as a pocket handkerchief either checked or blue, the Pullicat handkerchiefs generally fastened by a string round the waist is all (11) the dress of the ordinary natives (even tho' of good Cast) when they are at work. By degrees they have made their drawers to approach near to the knee & some of the Regiments have got them below, like Pantaloons; but this has all been done by hairbreadth advances you perhaps do not know that they wear no shoes or stockings. I have now been so long in the country that I have forgot what struck me at first, but you wou'd I dare say think it odd enough to see a field full of fine troops elegantly dressed in all other respects but bare footed - I used

to think as I saw them in the ranks that they had black shoes & garters -- Formerly the Colonel of every Regiment dressed his own Corps & as he knew from what districts they were raised he understood the humour that prevailed amongst them & acted accordingly But Sir John Craddock who last came out Commander in Chief & who is the weakest Man, I think, that ever I spoke to, & as arrogant as weak, [words crossed out] took it into his head to dress all the Regiments himself & to dress them all alike - Col; Agnew the Adj<sup>n</sup> Gen<sup>n</sup>: is next to the Gen<sup>l</sup>: & next below him Dep. Adju<sup>n</sup>: a Captain Pearce<sup>355</sup>: who he is I do not know ~~but~~ for I never saw him; but, for these last two years have heard much of him & from all I can find he is a young man whose ~~friends~~ friends have mistaken his talents & made him an officer instead of a Taylor [sic] in which latter department he might have made a great fortune for he invents all sorts of new lapels & ornaments caps &c; As those above him adopted his fancies - the Sapoys [sic] have had innumerable [sic] changes in their dresses & caps, unfortunately the sepoys pay for these new whims [word crossed out] out of their own pay, & they have been so expensive that some of the Reg<sup>t</sup>: have been reduced to half their allowance by means of these abatements, & have been a good deal chagrined by it. - The last & unfortunate invention was a new cap of leather raised very high - The troops - upon first sight of these caps objected to wearing them first as being of leather, which they liked not to wear on their heads, but chiefly on account of the shape, which they said was exactly like that of a Drummer's & as the Drummers are Pariahs they were induced to believe that the putting on these caps was the first step towards overturning all their ancient religious practices **(12)** the imprisoned sons of Tippoo & their adherents who are allowed a great sum annually - availed themselves of this ferment to bribe & to persuade the sepoys to Rebellion but it was naturally to be expected that such persons wou'd exert all their power to regain their former power & such an opportunity ought not to have been given them - The officers of the Regiments who delivered out these caps were in some cases hissed at & hooted by the troops an expression of resentment which was quite new & unexpected but if the caps had been wisely suppressed & a few of the worst of the men punished the affair might have ended - the commanders however did no such thing - they incisted [sic] upon it that the caps shou'd be sent to all the Reg<sup>m</sup>: they were accordingly taken to another set who one & all took them off their heads & trampled on them - Nine of the

<sup>355</sup> Captain Frederick Pearce.



Ring leaders as they were called were brought down to Madras & here passed publickly [sic] through the streets in Irons, destined to receive the most dreadful military punishments but as the Commanders began to perceive that they were [words crossed out] somewhat [sic] **(13)** [5] unlucky in their designs & being unwilling at the same time ~~that~~ to avow their mistake they did, I think the worst thing they cou'd do - they ordered the offending regiment to march down & put them on duty in the Fort (to keep guard as they do about the Tower or St: James's Park) - there they appeared all day in every part without their Caps & with red handkerchiefs round their heads - this was designed as a means of mortifying them; but I fear that on the contrary it was the means of creating in their minds a horrible disgust to us & to lay them open to the suggestions of those who are our enemies - A thousand Hindoos passed every gateway of the Fort for one European all these men are bound by the same prejudices - as as [sic] the Sepoys are, indeed they are the same people, brothers, fathers, it may be - & their firmness in rejecting these badges wou'd be to them matter of triumph rather than regret - Here however they remained for a long time - but meanwhile their accumulated grievances some real some fancied, by stirring them [word crossed out] up to fury produced the horrible affair at Vellore of which you will have doubtless heard **(14)** too much before you read this account of its rise -

The fate of the Reg<sup>m</sup>: doing duty in this disgraceful manner at madras & the nine men in irons awaiting a most severe punishment - was made use of by the Sons of Tippoo, who have been kept prisoners in the Palace at Vellore since the taking of Saringapatam [sic], & served to ripen a design that had been long formed - a conspiracy was [word crossed out] formed by the Sepoys to murder all the Europeans & take the possession of that Fort. - One of the Sepoys gave information of this conspiracy to some of the Officers but they were so over confident as to distrust the information. They called a few of the Native Officers up & inquired of them ~~but~~ into the truth of the affair but they as was natural denied it, the informer told the Officers that it was denied by the Native Offices [sic] because they were themselves concerned in it - & they in return said that the poor man was mad - their words by some infatuation were trusted - and no precautions were taken - On the night of July the 9<sup>th</sup>: after [word crossed out] the Officers and every body had retired to rest - a dreadful howling was heard & this was followed by firing in all directions. ~~The Officers~~ Some of the Officers rose & went out others in despair hid themselves & the women & children ran across the places whilst the shots were

flying in all directions - Colonel Fancourt a mild religious & worthy man who commanded was covered with wounds & died; two other officers merely by accident passing through the town were shot through twenty times over in their Palanquene [sic] the Paymaster & in short all the English men that cou'd be found were killed two young officers were shot in a bath where they had concealed themselves They fired into the barracks where the English soldiers (the 69<sup>th</sup>) were asleep & in short spent the whole night in murder & plunder they took down the British [word crossed out] & hoisted the Muslemans flag which was flying till nine in the morn<sup>g</sup>. but meanwhile the English Officers had contrived to send a Messenger to Colonel Gelaspi<sup>356</sup> [sic] who fortunately came with extraordinary speed to the assistance of those who remained alive, the chief of whom were a company of the 69<sup>th</sup>: who had taken possession of a place over one of the gateways & kept possession of it by extraordinary exertions they were firing their last charges when Col. Gelaspi [sic] appeared [sic] - They drew him up the gates were open [sic] & all the insurgents **(15)** put to the sword at least 600 Sepoys were instantly killed - some officers are said to have cut down twenty or thirty with their own hands - It was a dreadful slaughter & none were spared - In such a desperate case perhaps nothing else cou'd be done the British flag was replaced & a stop put to the proceedings but the plan was formed with a design to murder the Europeans here & in every ~~settlement~~ station hereabout -

Two days after an attempt of the same kind was made at Hydrabad [sic] a place many days journey distant & in several places the symptoms of Rebellion appeared [sic] at the same time & indeed it is said that [words crossed out] the plan was long ago formed The affair at Hydrabad [sic] was put a stop to by the howling of the women who when their husbands rose in the night to perpetrate their designs - under an idea that the Europeans wou'd finally prevail raised such hideous yells as alarmed the garrison & prevented them. Sometime afterwards they made a second attempt & upon a signal a whole company took off their leather stocks & trod them under their feet the next company were proceeding to **(16)** [6] do the same when the spirited [sic] conduct of Captain Smithies a young officer whom I dare say Mary has mentioned to you, [word crossed out] so intimidated them that they took up their stocks again; but upon retiring from the Parade so far recovered their illhumour [sic] as to hoot & hiss - A Committee [sic] was sent from hence to Vellore to inquire into the particulars of the affair

<sup>356</sup> Sir Hugh Robert Rollo Gillespie (1766-1814).

there - You will probably see their report sooner than we shall for tho we are so near & tho' many people are terrified to a great degree by their apprehensions of danger, no particulars are made publick [sic] all we hear are the private accounts of people who were present & have escaped; but all that can be suppressed is. - for indeed well may the Rulers be ashamed of inciting by ignorance & idle arrogance so horrid a massacre [sic] - and one too of so mischivous [sic] a nature that years may not do away the consequences of it - Hitherto Every Officer with a handful of Europeans led an army of Sepoys with confidence - The Sepoys have now learned to turn their **(17)** arms upon their Commanders & by so doing tho' a few have been sacrificed the rest have obtained redress of their grievances: the melancholy state of things was such that all sorts of concessions have been made to the Sepoys, -- one of the Sons of Tippoo alone appears to have been implicated in this attempt,<sup>357</sup> however they now no longer inhabit the magnificent Palace of Vellore they were all brought down to the number of 13 & a few of their chief women & put on board a ship prepared for the purpose about a week ago & I suppose are now in Bengal, there to be kept at a less expense & in a stricter state of confinement - Their wives the Begums, the children a numerous train are to proceed to Bengal by land & the Palace at Vellore is to be applied to some other purpose, &c nothing cou'd exceed the timidity of the Governor during this affair - he is said to have rode round his garden for excersise [sic] being afraid to venture into the roads and all concerned are trying to shift the blame from one to another - I cannot guess who will appear to be the culprit when the accounts reach you! - The lowest will be likely to bear the burthen [sic] of blame. The commander in Chief blames Col. Agnew he blames Capt: Pearce - The C. in Chief says he did read the orders - he is contradicted a censure has been published in orders of the Native Officers - It is said that they ought to have come forward & have communicated to Government the dissatisfaction of the troops about the shaving & the Caps Now nothing can be more unjust than this for how cou'd they they [sic] think of coming formally forward to communicate a thing so well known - They wou'd have been punished if they had - & the answer wou'd have been "we know it we are putting a whole Reg<sup>m</sup>: to publick [sic] scorn by making them do duty without caps & we have nine men in irons - Mary has got a copy of poor Mrs: Fancourts<sup>358</sup> narrative which she wrote after she had recovered herself but she was for a

<sup>357</sup> Muiz-ud-Din.

fortnight in a state of stupor - She is a very quiet innocent woman - younger **(18)** & better looking but that sort of quietness like Mrs: Dodson of Boswell Court - She was some time concealed with her children under a bed & afterwards in a stable as she & some other Ladies & children were missing for some time, the first accounts we received stated that they had been killed The unhappy Sepoys however furious as they were killed no woman - They met the wife of an officer in the dark flying with her child in her arms, they were firing; but the first who saw her distinctly cried out it is a woman don't touch her & on going near her and perceiving her terror & weakness, he took her to an outhouse in a retired part & sent his wife to nurse her child for her. - Is it not extraordinary to think of such tenderness in the midst of fury? - & is it not a pity that a being with such a heart cou'd not (however he had been misled [sic]) have been spared from the general slaughter that followed? - One child alone they killed - It was a dreadful murder a murder intended as a piece of Revenge & unhappily the revenge fell by mistake on the wrong person, if indeed any parents [words crossed out] cou'd have deserved such a [word crossed out] dreadful calamity - To this affair hangs a story a young officer with the carelessness too common with [word crossed out] young men in India, [words crossed out] was **(19)** [7] amusing himself with shooting & not perceiving anything around him but black men & trees he did not take great pains to call out, & shot an infant belonging to a wedded pair - He was siezed [sic] however or at least so noticed as to be complained of to the Reg<sup>t</sup>: - but as the military men here are extremely averse to all Judicial proceedings instead of sending the officer down to take a Publick [sic] trial they first held what I am told they had no right to do held a court martial to ~~know~~ ascertain whether or not he ought to be sent before a grand jury, & decided that he ought not as he did not sport with a design to ~~shoot~~ kill the child. - The parents of the child however were much dissatisfied [sic] with this Easy way of dismissing a man whom they considered as the murderer of their child - I do not know the name of this officer; but in the darkness of the night at this fatal time the parent of this infant met a young man a Lieutenant Ely & his wife with her child in her arms & mistaking him for the young officer who had shot

<sup>358</sup> Amelia Farrer, Lady Fancourt, "An Account Of the Mutiny at Vellore, by the Lady of Sir John Fancourt, the Commandant, who was killed there July 9th, 1806." The copy that Mary had is no longer among the letters, but was published by Hester's descendant Frederick Blunt, with an extract from Elizabeth's letter. W. F. Blunt, "The Mutiny at Vellore (July 1906)," *The Monthly Review*, XXIV, no.,. 72 (Sept 1906).

this child he killed him before his wife's face & then taking the child from her arms shot it crying - blood for blood. (20) Mrs: Fencourt [sic] is a daughter of a Mr: Farrer an Attorney [sic], perhaps you may remember the name of Farrer in large letters at the high house in Lincoln's Inn fields at the corner of Queen Street. - poor woman she picked up a ball that was shot into the room whilst she with her children & the maids were concealed under a bed it came close to her. -

I wish I cou'd know who you intend to send us out for Governor - We have heard Lord St: John & we have heard Lord John Townshend; anything wou'd be good for a change, this is dreadful nothing but intrigue & contrivance. I question for my part whether a chicken in the Govment [sic] house ever gets it's throat cut by the cook in ordinary way. - I dare say they are all circumvented by some extraordinary contrivance Lady William<sup>359</sup> I have told you of before - as friendly girl to sit & sew with you, you wou'd like her - that is whilst you believed her sincere which cou'd be long - but as the wife of a Governor & above all as a profound Politician she is truly ridiculous [sic] & mischievous - She is very simple very weak I shou'd say & has had [words crossed out] a miserable education. [words crossed out] - There is not a man in the house nothing but a set of [word crossed out] boys for the most part very ill taught & these are employed to go everywhere to inquire all sorts of family anecdotes & these they retail to Lady W<sup>m</sup>: & she to her husband & what is worse he acts upon them without considering that the information these spies give is not once in ten times true not [word crossed out] only because they fail no Veracity but that the people are too cunning for them there is not a soul here who does not understand their plans - those who have anything to conceal are fully careful to do it; & those who wish to mislead [word crossed out] easily form a contrivance to fill the inquirers with falshoods [sic] well knowing the purposes for which they go about -

Lady W<sup>m</sup>: herself is not inactive she sees everybody all day long & has no one pursuit, but making inquiries about private families; so a set of Clacking women who go from house to house to collect convey all sorts of idle stories about men & their wives. - or rather I shou'd say, in many cases, children & their wives - or sweet hearts. - She is rather pleasant as a quiet ill educated simple young woman; but ~~this~~ silliness with an attempt to be politicks [sic] is quite ridiculous & something worse very mischievous. -

<sup>359</sup> Mary Bentinck nee Acheson, Wife of the Governor, William Bentinck.

I have written you a notable letter, this is the seventh sheet and much of it perhaps will not be worth reading; but as it will be a great chance if it reaches you - I go on saving my conscience by supposing that you may **(21)** possibly not be troubled with it --

Sep<sup>r</sup>: 22<sup>d</sup>: - I have this night been informed that a ship was in sight at sunset & that it was supposed to be the Sarah Christiana which is that by which I am to send this - I therefore hasten to close it having now the happiness to say that we are all well after having passed four months of the most severe weather I ever experienced in India - The Land winds did not commence till the time when they used to abate the end of June & they have blown ever since with unremitting fury. I wish I cou'd be assured that you were all as well as we are; blessed be Almighty God for his favour to us -

On the 18<sup>th</sup> which was Biss's & Mary's birthday we had a grand Gala 27 sat down to dinner - I suppose they will tell you about it & that you know that their birth days fall out upon the same day - The young men go out upon their surveys in beginning of Dec<sup>r</sup>: & Heaven knows when we may all them again - They have improved to the satisfaction of their teachers which I rejoice at, for they were a very fine set of young men & this Institution is the very best thing which Lord William has done as it furnishes employment of a most goodly kind, for a set of men too often idle or worse. - **(22)**

Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>: 1806

The ship which has been so long in coming that every body thought it was taken is [word crossed out] come in I shall write on if I hear it possible to send at a later hour - but the other ships will be only a few days & this is an uncertain conveyance -

The letter Polly send by the Admirall is returned to us & is to be sent by this ship Adieu

God bless & keep you all believe me ever most affectionately your's

EGwillim -

**(23)** Received April 9<sup>th</sup>

1807 By the Sarah

Christina [sic]

**Letter-069-EG-11-1806 (Mss.Eur.C.240/4, ff. 344r-345v) Elizabeth Gwillim to Hester James, n.d., likely November 1806**

(1) My dear Hetty,

I wrote 7 sheets of paper in form of a letter to you I was about 6 weeks in writing it during all that time imagining that the Sarah Christiana wou'd sail. My letter has been on board this fortnight or these three weeks yet the Vessel is still in the roads & I am not sure that she will sail even with the fleet for she is the ship destined to convey the accounts of Government & they are not ready - however my letter is in, & cannot be recalled & I trust you will have it as soon as the rest - It is all about the Vellore business & a reply to your melancholy intelligence on which subject I have already said so much I will no longer dwell. - This I write to inclose [sic] a letter to Ned, & Nancy I leave it open that you may read the contents & I shall then not have occasion to write the same thing twice. - The fleet is not yet come in God knows when it may - The melancholy intelligence you sent us came very quick the ships containing that news came 27<sup>th</sup> of June after little more than three months Passage - The fleet that next arrived were longer than expected they came 27<sup>th</sup>: Aug<sup>st</sup>: We saw Mr: Graham. He dined with us I am glad he brought the things safe but there is no reliance on the young men he slept here one night - Richard lent him a change of Regiment Pantaloons &c - he went on board & never sent them - We have now been in mourning (the most sorrowful I ever wore) nearly four months - I conclude that you have sent us out some mourning - We must keep it by us for Court mournings & compliments I hope that I shall have nothing more serious to use it for - If it shou'd come soon it wou'd yet be very useful to [word crossed out] us for we are not here particular for first & second mourning having much difficulty to get anything - I have been a perfect slave to try to keep myself in something [sic] respectable & fit for the memory of one I loved as much as anything on Earth but it has taken all my time. --

Captain Willim whom I have mentioned in the inclosed letter [sic]; [words crossed out] probably may be better known to you than to me I shall send him to you, He is the (2) only person I know or that has offered to take things for us. - I think he will be safe, for he is gentlemanly in his manner & very pressing to be intrusted [sic] with things. - Polly sends views of all our houses -

I send by him a bag of seeds which you will please to send to Mr: Whitley as they contain many seeds which I shou'd be glad to see growing. - I send the bag of seeds by a Mr: Hoseasan who is going hence with a large fortune - They have so much to carry for themselves that I cannot ask them to take anything home for me but he will take the bag to Trincomali in Ceylon where Captain Willim & some more of the ships are waiting for the remainder of the fleet and will then deliver it to him - the seeds are directed to you p<sup>r</sup>. favour of Capt: Willim. - as some of the seeds have been procured with difficulty I was loth to trust them all to one chance (as I did everything to the poor Prince of Wales-) I have therefore divided them in some measure, Captain Willim's bag contains my own collection & half of D<sup>r</sup>: Berry's<sup>360</sup> - and I send another bag containing D<sup>r</sup>: Rottler's collection in the Mysore & very numerous & the other half of D<sup>r</sup>: Berry's - I have besides added a packet of flower tree seeds & some others fit for a present to any body you may chuse [sic] to give them to & who wants them whilst they are fresh. You never told me you wanted them or I wou'd always send them; but indeed they are of little use to any but those in the profession for Private Gentlemen's Gardeners wou'd either give them away or not take the pains to raise them - If any misfortune shou'd happen to Captain Willims bag - give the little packet with the rest to M<sup>r</sup>: Whitly but if that comes safe keep it. It is within a larger bag containing the other packets of Dr: Rottler & Dr: Berry's half & this packet has a label on it directed to M<sup>rs</sup>: James - This great bundle (-but it is not very large) is given to the care of Captain Torrens a very genteel & I think a very good natured young man who was Passenger on board ship with us out & who is going home with his Regiment the 19<sup>th</sup>: Light Dragoons - The first & best Regiment that has been in the Country. - I do not suppose you will see Torrens, he will either be with his Regiment or go to Ireland to his friends but he will send the seeds by a mail coach from some place where they land to you. - The little Packet which I put up were intended for M<sup>r</sup>: W. Cam in consequence of the letter which you inclosed [sic] from him but Sir Henry wou'd not let me send them to him because he said it was foolish to do so [word crossed out] for Lady Rodney [word crossed out] has a brother & sister-in-law in Ceylon where they may get seeds

<sup>360</sup> Dr Andrew Berry (1764–1833).



better than here; & because the gardeners wou'd only steal them &c &c - so give the little packet to whom you please -

I hope you like Mr: Keen I have had the kindest letters from him; but tho' the ships sailed [sic] hence 13 months ago we have even yet no news of their arrival in England, his letter to me was from S. Helena. - He is of a family who have great interest here - you will say perhaps it is a mercenary reason for thinking of anybody; but he may be of use to the poor boys in some way or other. - I have a great respect for him on other accounts - for I think him an excellent young man & like him for the love he has for Sir Henry. - I say nothing about all your fatigues & troubles; but I do forget them I trust in God that you James & the little one are well I pray for your health & happiness - May God bless & keep you -- I shall write further but here I shall close this as enough for one - Believe me ever most affectionately your's & M<sup>r</sup>. James's - EGwillim -  
- God bless you - Adieu -

(3) By the H.C's ship W.<sup>m</sup>

Pitt Mrs: James

No. 39 Bishopsgate Street within                      London

**Letter-070-MS-11-1806 (Mss.Eur.C.240/4, ff. 346r-352v) Mary Symonds to her Sister, Hester "Hetty" Symonds James, [November 1806?]**

(1) [in pencil: No Date Nov 1806]

My dearest Hetty,

I have written you two letters neither of which have yet left India although I wrote them in the hope & expectation that you would receive them at least a month earlier than this. We have been a very long time, without an opportunity of acknowledging your letters or communicating our thoughts to you. In both my former letters I have mentioned the subject nearest my heart, & all our hearts, the death of our dear loved mother. I trust I feel her loss if loss to one it can be called) as a christian. I am thankful to the Almighty for the great

benefits we have all received from her examples her meekness, moderation, her prudence which enabled her to do so much with her very, very little; her innocent useful life, & all her virtues, appear to me as blessings bestowed upon all and as such we ought to be most grateful for them and rather to think of God's goodness in so long continuing to us such peculiar advantages than to repine at his will in taking her to himself after a well spent life & in such happy circumstances, attended by friends [sic] & children who sincerely loved her. The account of this sad event we received on the 27th of June, and at the same time Sir Tho Strange arrived in India after his unworthy & unsuccessful journey, he brought out the news of his mothers death which happened after he left her & which he heard a few [sic] hours before he sailed. I do not think my dear mother (2) was in any danger of experiencing similar misfortune to Old Lady Strange had her life been continued to her as long, but I could not help comparing the events & I draw comfort from the comparison. When we came to India Old Lady Strange<sup>361</sup> was in good health & quite flushed with spirits in the supposed success & greatness of her sons. The eldest of whom was married to the daughter of a great Minister, rich & powerful. The second a Chief Justice & the third whom she had not seen from a boy & consequently knew very little of, was a Col<sup>L</sup> in the Army, all this from so humble a beginning [sic] as hers might well be supposed to fill her heart with joy, & pride, & how terrible must the great change have been which she just lived to see. A visit which her son the Col<sup>L</sup> paid her must have convinced a woman of her understanding that he could not be respected by any one, an Idiot, & a Sot. The eldest son & great support of all, became a Bankrupt & forced to quit his country at 53 years old,<sup>362</sup> & Sir Tho<sup>S</sup> having quitted his employment most dishonourably in hopes of regaining the wealth his brother had wasted, became the tool of a weak government, whose paltry or wicked vices he intended to forward by Ld Melvilles interest, his object was defeated by the disgrace of the Minister, himself on the verge of loosing [sic] his employment, & obliged to return disgracefully the bearer himself of a publick letter from his Sovereign addressed to the Courts in India expression of high disapprobation at his quitting the appointment his King had honoured him with. What a melancholy parting must this mother & son have had. Poor woman! it was too much for her,

<sup>361</sup> Isabella Strange née Lumisden.

<sup>362</sup> James Charles Stuart Strange, who had returned to India in 1804.

she sunk under it & died in three days afterwards. How unlike was this sad end to the peaceful departure of our beloved parent. Sir Thos Strange is the most altered man in the world, since his brother came out, to India, & he now seems to be running headlong into all the follies he can think of, he is just going to be married to a girl of nineteen ugly enough god knows, but he being 52, she has persuaded him that his resistless charms have won her heart & she has fallen so much in love with him during a month she has been staying at his house that he is obliged to take compassion on her young heart, & marry her, she is the daughter of Sir Wm Burroughs.<sup>363</sup> The youngest of two who accompanied him here on his way to Bengal, he left this place a few days ago with his eldest daughter leaving the love sick lass behind him she is under the protection of Lady Wm Bentinck till the happy union takes place, these Miss Burroughs's have been dashing about London in a great deal of shewy but I suppose not very good company, for the father came to India a Barrister about 15 years ago, he never practised his profession at all but he made a large fortune entirely by gameing it is said above a hundred thousand pounds. This like other ill gotten pilf soon melted for he went home only 7 years ago, with all this money, lost every penny of it in the same way he gained it, is now very much in debt & come out here, (to the shame of those who appointed him) a Judge on the Bengal establishment, with these two girls absolutely brought to market to sing & play to any stupid booby that has got a sum of money to lose at Hazard & to marry themselves off as well as they can. We have had no (3) we have had no news from England either publick or private since April an unusually long time to be without an overland despatch, & we are all very anxious to hear what is going on under your new administration & what new appointments are intended for India. We hope to hear of some man of sense to be sent out to govern this important country, & whomsoever he may be he will find employment enough for his utmost exertions & abilities in undoing if that be possible the mischief the foolish obsinate [sic] people have done your newspapers will of course be filled with accounts of the dreadful disasters in this country particularly the massacre [sic] at Vellore, with this I shall send you some papers which will be curious to yourself & your freinds [sic], one or two if I can procure them as I think I shall of the ridiculous orders of government which principally occasioned the mutiny. The discontent of the Troops has been quite general throughout the country, inexperience & obstinacy &

<sup>363</sup> Louisa Burroughs. Her father William Burroughs (1753-1829) was appointed to the Supreme Court in Calcutta in 1806.

extreme weakness characterise our government & all its measures. The concessions now made to the natives may probably be more mischievous [sic] than even the tyrannous [sic] orders themselves. The Indian Army is formed partly of Hindoos & partly of Mussulmans. They have until this time shewn great attachment to the English they submitted quietly to every regulation & fought our battles faithfully & well, & this because a few harmless prejudices of theirs have not before been interfered with. The Hindoos think themselves polluted [sic] by the touch of leather & the Mussulmans it is well known abominate the Hogs & every thing belonging to it yet the wise heads here must needs contrive either from want of employment or want of brains, to make a new Turban in which a (4) piece of pig's skin was introduced; a stick of cows leather & this turban an order was given out to inforce [sic] the Seapoys [sic] wearing. The Mussulmans objected to the pig's skin & the HIndoos to the form of the Turban which they said resembles that of a Pariah, or outcast. They remonstrated but were punished & commanded to comply.

Another order was issued immediately after this in which it was directed that uniformity should be preserved in the looks of the Seapoys as much as possible they were to cut thir [sic] Whiskers for that purpose & the Hindoos were to appear without marks on thier forehead, how to tell a Hindoo that he shall not mark his forehead is much the same thing as if you were forbid to use the sign of the cross in Baptism, besides the timid fears of these poor people & thier superstitions: they were persuaded at one time that the English intended to convert them all to Christianity by force, & at another that they intended to make them & thier families slaves to them for ever, these are always the great evils they apprehend, & even the introduction of the Cow hat they for some time supposed to be introduced as a mark by which their children would one day or other be claimed by the company as slaves, finding however that was not enforced they have gradually complied with it; & possibly had these orders for the dress of the Army been given to the Officers commanding the Regiments, to be brought forward at their discretion, in the course of a few years they might have been submitted to, or at least the principle part of them; but no, these weak obstinate people would take no advice the order was issued & to be enforced all at once. The poor Natives persuaded that their eternal happiness was at stake determined to oppose & resist the thing they so much dreaded (5) & there is no doubt but a general massacre of the English was

intended throughout the country, to talk of cutting or pulling a Mussulmans whiskers is the greatest insult that can be offered to him & the folly of requiring uniformity in the faces of a regiment is surely the most ridiculous thing ever heard of. If I were to write Volumes I could not relate half the ridiculous things which have been done here lately in direct opposition to all the advice of the most experienced persons in the country, certain it is that the mischief done cannot be undone in many years perhaps they never may our mutual confidence has been so completely shaken. Poor Mrs. Fancourt<sup>364</sup> narrative I shall send you a copy of, & also another account given us by a Gentleman who was at Vellore. Col<sup>L</sup> & Mrs. Fancourt & indeed many almost all the Officers who were killed there we know, some only by sight but others intimately. The Governor has now ordered all the Sepoys to wear what marks they please & when they please, now this is running into a contrary extreme for although a general order frightened them yet they have for many years been in the habit of complying with the request of their Officers not to mark their faces till after parade. The other day two companies refused to march as they were ordered without two months pay in advance this resistance was immediately communicated to the government & the demand was complied with. It is (I believe) the intention of the government to represent the sons of Tippoo<sup>365</sup> (who were kept in the Palace at Vellore as a sort of state prisoners) as the cause of the mutiny by having incenced [sic] the Troops, & encouraged them with the hope of Plunder, & it is so far true, that they did, taking advantage of of [sic] the discontent of the army, endeavour to make a party & regain thier liberty, but undoubtedly the discontent which enabled them to make the attempt, originated in the ridiculous orders of Government. However even admiting [sic] that the Sons of Tipoo - (or princes as they choose to call them, tho no princes at all) have been the sole cause of this shocking affair, then [words crossed out] why were these men placed in such a situation as to suffer them to do so much mischief? Why were men left in such a wretched state? They had very large allowances which they had no use for, they were guarded by troops which for the most part had been in their fathers service, and of course were easily bribed to secrecy with the gold they were so (imprudently supplied with.

<sup>364</sup> Amelia Farrer, Lady Fancourt, wife of the commandant, Sir John Fancourt, and author of an eyewitness account of the Mutiny.

<sup>365</sup> Tipu Sultan.

You will see by a paper I send you how many British lives this business has cost, besides which the two Batalions [sic] of Seapoys were utterly cut to pieces & destroyed, & all this has been owing the folly of changing the form of a Seapoys Cap.

I hope long before time you have seen our friends Mr. Keene & Mr. Prosser & that they have both succeeded in getting the packages ashore which they were so kind as to take charge of. Mr. Toppington the mate of the Airly Castle took a large case containing an Argus Pheasant & many loose feathers of the same kind of Bird & also some other curious birds which may be worn as ornaments, should he have been so fortunate as to convey them safely to you you will see a curiosity which may be amusing to yourself & your friends, however should it be lost do not be uneasy about it for Betsy has another complete bird lately given to her, which she will send whenever an opportunity offers, but at this time we do not know any person going home whom we could ask to carry (6) so large a package. I shall send you by some person or other a few drawings, as you told me you & Dear Mr James, were pleased with the sketch of our house I have made you several others which though bad enough as drawing will yet serve to give you an Idea of the places we have inhabited & I shall write their description on the back. We have a Mr. William in our house at present he is a captain in the Bengal service, a Son of Mr. George Williams of Friars Gate Hereford, whom you must recollect, this young man arrived yesterday & is come ashore to stay with us as long as the ships remain in the Roads, but that we expect will be but a short time, by him I shall perhaps, send the drawings, & amongst them you will find one which badly done as it is you will highly value it is the copy of our dear Mothers picture I shall also send to you a portrait of my most excellent friend Richard Clarke which I have done for his father, but it is his particular wish that it should be first sent to you, & that you will shew it to whomsoever you think amongst your friends will feel an interest in his favour. If you have received my letters which I wrote to you last March you will not be surprised to hear that you have one friend in whose mind he is particularly desirous of obtaining that interest, but least you should not have received those letters, I shall make use of the same contrivance I did then & on a separate half sheet, repeat as nearly as I can recollect what I then said. You will be so good as to send the portrait to Mr. James Clarke when you have done with it & he will forward (7) I am sorry to say my representation is very far from doing him justice for he has not much

beauty of feature but a peculiar sweetness of expression which is very difficult to represent at least too difficult for me to catch, tho I feel as every one does who knows him its influence; he is most wonderfully beloved & is a proof that virtue must be pleasing to people of all description The picture has a dulnes[sic] in the eyes which he has not, & it is altogether graver and heavyer [sic] looking which I beleive [sic] is owing to his not being able to sit to me regularly only at scraps & spare bits of time when perhaps he was tired with business. The mouth & lower part of the face is however somewhat better, but his eyes have a very sprightly arch look when he speaks. He is a well proportioned young man & a good hight [sic] about 5 feet 10 inches, his disposition is infinitely better than that of any young man I ever knew, for he inherits all his fathers generosity and benevolence, yet having more experience in the world in early life he is rather more cautious & attentive to worldly concerns, his temper is sweetness itself, he is never ruffled by trifles or sorrowed by misfortunes but he has occasionally shown that he has no want of proper spirit. This temper is joined to a mind perfectly virtuous to habits of industry, he has abided all the irregularities which young men usually fall into & that most honourably to himself for he has had the same opportunities & been exposed to the same temptations, but fortunately for him not till he had had sufficient experience to see the folly & great danger of doing wrong, he has strong feelings a very warm & tender heart, with extreme delicacy of manners & a great proof of their pleasingness is the high opinion the young men his acquaintances have of him, for they consult him as a superior in understanding & knowledge of business yet with the confidence which his sweetness of temper naturally inspires, I do assure you I have never seen his equal, although **(8)** I have seen many good, & unless we could mix with beings of a superior order I am persuaded that in no one can be found less to condemn or more worthy of admiration. I believe you will have a letter from him both he & Mr. Biss threaten you with saucy ones too in return for the rubs you gave them in your last letter to Mr. Biss about thir [sic] not writing regularly, & giving a proper account of the things you send them out. Poor Richard was rather unlucky in his investment having to this time never received the Cloth for coats, which you mentioned or the cotton stockings & three pair of the silk ones, We suppose you must have made a separate package of those articles & sent them by some other ship for if Mr Prosser had brought them I think he would not have forgotten it, & yet you did not mention (in any letters which has come to hand), that you had separated those things from

the other packages. The box of Paints also which you have repeatedly mentioned we have never received, but as the Indian ships have been so unlucky lately we conclude that those things & doubtless many letters have been lost, the loss of the Lady Burgess from the last Fleet which arrived here was a dreadful thing, & as she was the only ship for this place direct she of course had all the Madras letters in her except those which came by private hands we thought ourselves very fortunate in having these you sent us by Mr. Graham they were a great relief to our minds & it was particularly gratifying to us at that time to see a person who had seen you. We have been in hopes of receiving the Packages you mention in those letters before this time & I have delayed writing as long as I could in expectation that should have the pleasure of acknowledging their arrival but as the ships they were to be sent by have been detained at Portsmouth so late as the end of May, (which we find they were by an overland despatch arrived yesterday) we begin to fear the ships will be forced to go to Bengall to avoid our monsoon which is near setting in & in that event they will probably not put in here till January or February the letters will however be sent round by the Post, if it should be the case, but there is yet a chance that they may come here. We were very anxious for their arrival some time ago as we had great difficulty in procuring any decent mourning & have really been forced to wear [sic] wretched things we have had muslin dyed in this country for every purpose which looks well enough but they have not the art of fixing the colour so that our poor skins are every night as black as our gowns, & the smell of the dye they use is very odious. Our friend Mr. Biss is as you will hear from himself still at Madras but Ld Wm has said that he & all the young men of the Institution are to be sent on surveys to different parts of the country as soon as the cool weather commences. Wm Shewed me part of a letter he received from his sister in which she says her mother had requested her to write to me but she did not choose to begin the correspondence, but declined it from (diffidence giving reasons for so doing which are by no means well founded, for she certainly is a remarkably good writer & would be a very valuable correspondend [sic] to me. The ground on which she has declined writing to me makes it a very delicate matter for me to begin otherwise it is a thing I very much wish to do, & perhaps before the ships sail I may prevail on myself to sacrifice my modesty to my gratitude which is very great to Mrs. Biss & her kind & excellent family for their attention to my dear mother my feeling on that account direct me to do any thing & every thing that lies in my power, to oblige them. (9) Genl Trent



will no doubt be curious to see the accounts of the Vellore business & I shall refer him to you for them as I cannot get them copied again in time. Richard has sent copies to his father & I believe to his uncle.

We have a very fine young man living with us at present he has been with us these three months his name is Gwatkins<sup>366</sup> he is of a very genteel family in Cornwall & has been remarkably well educated in every respect he is in the Civil service & was introduced to us by a letter from Mr. Cove who is somehow distantly related to his father, his mother is a niece of Sir Joshua Reynolds we are never without one two or three young men in the house nor indeed are any of the families in Madras for it is thought both dangerous & disreputable for any youn [sic] man to live at a Tavern, in general they take houses of their own as soon as they have appointments, but Sir Henry & Richard are both so fond of Mr. Gwatkin that although he has had a very good appointment some time, they cannot make up their minds to part with him. Poo [sic] young Bennington whom I mentioned to you in my former letters is lately dead, he came out with Ld Wm Bentink which circumstance his parents thought would secure his fortune being made but unfortunately [sic] they forget that the poor boy had not abilities to do himself credit & consequently that their having him in the ship was rather a disadvantage as it gave them an opportunity of knowing his weakness but too well, & they never paid him the smallest attention. Poor creature he was both weak & faulty for where he left us [sic] & joined his Regiment he fell into all the follies of the young men he met with & they are a very profligate set in his Regt he gambled swore horridly & practiced other vices in short he destroyed his health & came here such an object so thin & ghostly [sic] that he was a shocking spectacle & quite a hopeless subject for by the account of Biss & Richard he declared that all his sufferings had not improved his principles, he was so very ill that the Surgeon, who attended him advised his going to Penang [?] & there he died I have kept this letter open as usual, till I am threatened with the packet closing without it but I always like you to have the latest information possible, I have copied the papers I sent you last march & enclose it least [sic] you should wonder what I am talking about in some part of this **(10)** I think you will now guess who is the person therein alluded to. I have not said one word about my niece because it is so long since I heard of her; I heartily pray for her health & beg

<sup>366</sup> Edward Gwatkin (1784-1855).

you will give her a thousand kisses for me, I have sent some little drawings for Mr. Keene, but have directed them you because I like that you & George Samuel should see them pray remember me most kindly to him & tell him I hope to receive [sic] some hints from him. I have been trying to work in body colours a little lately & I send you a specimen, of my performance, in a copy I have made of a holy family from a print, you will find it amongst the drawing which are for yourself, I think I shall like it for some things & therefore beg the favour of you to send me the following colours & c which I am sure God will have the goodness to assist you in procureing [sic], & I beg the favour of you to let them be properly packed & directed for

Me.

Drawing paper of every description & size. 1 Dozn Sheets each brushes of all sizes for water colours ---1Do--

Sky brushes one or two, two good penknives & 2 pair of scissors

(Paste do---do--- one small palate knife or powder knife, 2 ounces of red Lake

2 do --prussian blue these are for the body coloring

¼ pound of Okre

[sic] 1 Ounce of

Smalt

2 do -- brown pink

1 Cake of Gaul

stone 1 Do

Prussian blue

2 Do Lake

2 Do Indigo

2 Do Vandyke brown

I believe I have nothing more to add to this but my last love to dear James & a thousand blessing & kind wishes for you all, & to assure that I am most affectionately yours

M Symonds

(11) Per H.C.

Ship

Sheatham

M<sup>FS</sup>. James.

No 39 Bishopsgate Street within

London

M<sup>FS</sup>. James.

No 39 Bishopsgate Street within

London

**[An Account of the Vellore Massacre written in an italic hand]**

On the morning of the 10th July an insurrection which had been planned and concerted between the Princes, and the Native Troops of the Garrison of Vellore broke out in that Fortress at half past two o Clock. \_The Smallest alarm was not excited or the least Suspicion of what was to take place, felt by any of the Europeans within the Fort, till the moment of the Mutiny taking

place. From the result of long and careful enquiries, it appears that the resolution to attempt the insurrection and to effect the massacre of all the Europeans on that night, was not taken till the Evening of the same day, when the intention was communicated to the Palace, and to Prince Moizuddeen<sup>367</sup> Preparation were accordingly made, and the Principal Conspirators took the duty of the Main Guard, and the different Guards. Most of the N.C. & N.C. Officers in charge of the different Guards, were those who were Principals in the Conspiracy and bound by oath to attempt the establishment of a Mussulman Government, and the destruction of all the European. It appears that the Men on the Main Guard were ordered after being relieved to load, by which precautions the greatest proportions of the Men on the Guard were loaded by 12 oClock. The 1<sup>st</sup> B<sup>n</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> R<sup>t</sup> had the whole of the Guards The 2<sup>nd</sup> B<sup>n</sup> 23<sup>rd</sup> R<sup>t</sup> had been warned for a Field day the following morning, and had been supplied with blunt Cartridges. To be ready for the Field day, a greater proportion of men than usual slept in the Barracks, and it appears to have been from this Circumstance that it was resolved by the principal Conspirators that the attack should be made that night

**(12)** The Garrison Guards consisted of 256, including non Commissioned Men, and about 535 of the 23<sup>rd</sup> were in the Barracks Exclusive of the Garrison Guards it may be estimated that the Number of Men of the 2<sup>nd</sup> B<sup>n</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> R<sup>t</sup> on Regimental duty and off duty in the Barracks amounted to 103 Men. There would therefore be about 900 Men within the Fort. As soon as the hour of Two was struck and in Consequence of Messages having passed from the Main Guard to the Barracks Subidar Sheikh Adam, and Jemidar Sheikh Hussain of the 23<sup>rd</sup> awakened the Sepoys of that Corps, and ordered them to rise, arm, and fall in. Those who were dilatory or questioned the Motive for such orders, the Jemidar struck and abused. The Regimental Piquets were the first that got ready, and the Two Light Companies of each Corps The two Native Officers broke open the Regimental Stores, brought out Barrels of Ball Ammunition, and ordered the Sepoys to fill their Pouches-- as soon as a sufficient number were ready and formed they were marched down to the European Barracks, which they surrounded. About half past two, a single Musket was fired as a Signal--at this instant the Sepoys of the Main Guards who had previously loaded, jumped up

<sup>367</sup> Muiz-ud-Din, son of Tipu Sultan.

and fired **(13)** upon the Europeans at the Guard who were Sleeping, and at the same instant, the Sepoys who had surrounded the Barracks commenced firing upon the Men who were Sleeping\_ The firing became immediately general, and the Drum of the Main Guard which Commenced beating to arms was instantly silenced, and the Drummer Shot\_ The 3 Officers on the Main Guard were also instantly shot The firing Continued and the Sepoys having Surrounded the Houses of the Officers prevented them getting to the Barracks\_\_ The Europeans in the Barracks had only 6 rounds of Cartridges in their Pouches, and the Sepoys had possessed themselves of their Magazine, as well as the Arsenal--a heavy and destructive fire was kept up, upon the Barracks thro' the Windows; about 5 oClock the Sepoys had got 3 Six Pounders to bear upon the Barracks, and opened a fire of round and grape Shot, which did great execution\_ The Europeans being unable to get out of their Barracks, the Sepoys had entire possession of the Fort, and were dispersed all over it, and along the Ramparts firing in every direction, and by word of Command.\_

It might have been hoped, that at daylight this horrid Mutiny would have ceased, but the fire became much heavier and smarter\_ It now appears, that about 6 oClock the Sepoys went to the Palace, and the Native Officers had a conference with Prince Maizuddeen, and Mahuddeen received from his Servants, the Mysore Flag which was instantly hoisted, and the Sepoys were presented with Beetle, Rice, &ca &ca &ca in the Palace\_\_ A great number of the Palace adherents came into the Fort, and assisted in the insurrection, and assisted in working the Guns, and taking aim at the European Barracks The Guards posted on the outside of the Fort, came in, and joined the insurgents\_ The Men who had slept outside the Fort the preceding night (about 500 Men) as well as the Sick from the Hospital came in, and also great numbers of the Inhabitants.\_

The Sepoys had by this time put to death every European Officer that was found and plunder and liquor soon engaged their attention Every House was plundered of every article in it, and the different Cash Chests in the Public Offices, most fortunately at this time began to occupy their attention\_ Entirely occupied with drink and plunder they soon became unruly, and inattentive to the instructions of the Principal Conspirators, and every attempt to make them Unite for the purpose of securing the Hill Fort, and adopting the necessary precaution for maintaining the large Fort proved ineffectual The Sepoys and the Inhabitants were

promiscuously engaged in plundering the Paymaster's Cash Chest, and the different Officers Houses. The firing was still kept up, upon the European Barracks. It happened by (14) fortunate accident that Mr. Jones, Surgeon, Mr. Dean, Assistant Surgeon, Lieut. Adjutant Ewing, Lieut<sup>t</sup> Mitchell, and Capt<sup>n</sup> MacLachlan driven by the fire of the Sepoys out of their own houses, assembled in one House, and by disarming a small Guard posted at Lieut<sup>t</sup> and Adj<sup>T</sup> Ewing's they were enabled to defend themselves from the fire of the Sepoys till greater numbers attacking them, they were driven out of their house, and succeeded in getting into the European Barracks. After getting in, they headed the Men of the 69<sup>th</sup>, made a dash out, and formed, they got upon the Ramparts, which they soon cleared, and took down the Mysore Flag. In this operation one man who had ascended the Flagstaff was shot from the Outside of the Fort. The 69<sup>th</sup> soon got possession of the Gates, and kept them. About this time the alarm was spread that the Cavalry were coming. The Sepoys who were busy plundering, threw down their Arms, and made their Escape thro' the Sally Port by hundreds. About Ten o'Clock Colonel Gillespie with the advanced Squadron of Cavalry arrived, but having no Guns with it, no thing could be done till the remainder of the Regiment came up. The Colonel was drawn up with ropes over the walls into the Fort, and took the Command of the 69<sup>th</sup>. The remainder of the 19<sup>th</sup> Regiment, and all the Native Cavalry Soon after arrived, blew open the Gates, and charged into the Fort Very little opposition was made, a smart fire for a few minutes was kept up, but soon ceased. The Fort was of course instantly recovered, and the barbarities committed during the Morning by the insurgents exposed. The following Unfortunate Victims to their brutal Rage were cruelly, and inhumanely Murdered. The Sick Europeans in Hospital were also cruelly Massacred Every Officers House was plundered, and the Survivors had nothing left, but the Cloaths on their backs A few Officers lived outside the Fort. at the Commencement of the Mutiny Capt<sup>n</sup> Stevenson of the 23<sup>rd</sup> fortunately galloped off to Arcot to communicate the alarm of what was taking place at Vellore. His report happily procured the assistance of the Cavalry under Colonel Gillespie, as before Stated. Lieutt Colonel Forbes, and Major Trotter who also lived outside finding they could not get into the Fort, went up to the Hill Fort with Colonel Forbes's family, and were joined by a few other officers. The Guard upon the Hill received them, and behaved steady, tho' it is now ascertained some of them were in the Secret. Immediate Examples were

made of some of the insurgents taken in arms, and many were cut up by the Cavalry, on the outside.\_

The number of Men of both Corps, computed to be killed, on the morning of the 10<sup>th</sup> July is 500 Men.

(15) The following is an Abstract of the Europeans killed and Wounded by the insurgents on the Morning of the 10<sup>th</sup>

		Lt. Colonel	Maior	Captain	Lieutenant	Pav master	Deputy commissioner	Conductor	Laboratory Sarieants	Sarieants				Privates	Grand total
Killed	1	1	1	2	7	1	1	1	1	11	4	2	1	73	107
Wounded	-	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	4	3	-	-	65	76
Total	1	1	1	4	9	1	1	1	1	15	7	2	1	138	183

Upwards of Twenty of the Wounded, have Since died.\_ List of Officers killed and Wounded on the 10 July.

Killed.

	Colonel Fancourt	Commanding Officer
Garrison Staff	Mr. Smith	Pay Master

	Mr. Mann	Deputy Commissary
H.M.69 <sup>th</sup>	Lieut <sup>t</sup> Popham Lieut <sup>t</sup> Ely	
1 B <sup>n</sup> 1 R <sup>t</sup>	Capt <sup>n</sup> Miller Lieut <sup>t</sup> Oreilly Lieut <sup>t</sup> Smart Lieut <sup>t</sup> Tichbourne	
16 R <sup>t</sup>	Major Armstrong	
2 <sup>nd</sup> B <sup>n</sup> 23 <sup>d</sup>	Lieut <sup>t</sup> Col <sup>l</sup> McKerras Capt <sup>n</sup> Willeson Lieut <sup>t</sup> Winship Lieut <sup>t</sup> Jolly	

Wounded

69 R <sup>t</sup>	Capt <sup>n</sup> Bairow Capt <sup>n</sup> Maclachlan Lieut <sup>t</sup> Mitchell
1 B 1 R <sup>t</sup>	Lieut <sup>t</sup> Cutcliff



Several attempts were made to get a party of Sepoys to go, and secure possession of the Hill Fort, but owing to their being engaged in plunder, they could not be collected\_\_ It appears there were but few Native officers within the Fort during the Mutiny, most of them having gone up to the Hill Fort.

The insurrection appears to have been planned and matured for two months previous to its actually breaking out\_\_ The attack had been resolved upon to take place twice previous, but the day had been changed\_

**(16)** Copy of a letter from Captain Smythies

The poison [~~has~~] I fear is dessiminated [sic] far & wide, who would have thought that at the same time the atrocious deeds were perpetrated at Vellore the same plans were entered into at Hydrabad [sic].

The night that was to have proved fatal to every European in the place is supposed to have been the 12th. In the dead of the night when all was hush, certain of the Band assembled to carry into execution their fatal purpose. All of a sudden the most dreadful howling vibrated from one end of the line to the other (a mile in length) it proceeded from the Wives and the families of the Sepoys endeavouring to drag their husbands to their houses & induce them to desist from their design fearing the European Regiments would ultimately overcome & make a dreadful example of them, such effect it produced as completely to ruin the line, The Artillery fell in and the people finding every one upon the alert retired to their respective houses; their plan being thus frustrated of course it took further time to concoct any measure that was to be adopted. Things were a suspicious appearance on the 26th when the 15th Regt were at Parade, the 1st Battalion of them took their stocks off & threw them on the ground, in defiance of discipline & every other consideration, I observed a man of the Grenadier Company of the 2nd Battalion seize his stock evidently to induce the remainder to follow his example I instantly stepped out of the Ranks & seized him, which had such an instantaneous effect that no other man in the Corps pulled off his stock the 1st Battalion's seeing they were not followed by the 2nd Battalion (such cowards are mutineers)

immediately buckled on their stocks again and the regiment was peaceably dismissed for the evening. As I was returning to my house I was hooted and insulted by the Grenadier company of the 2nd Batt<sup>n</sup> who would not quit their lines & something serious was expected to happen. If any thing does happen they vow to be revenged upon me however I have the consolation to know I am well armed & should be able to shoot two or three probably before they would force me to retire

**(17)** Extract from the standing order for the Battalion of the Regiment of Native Infantry established by the Commander in Chief in General orders dated 13th March 1806-

10- It is order by the Regulations that a Native Soldier shall not mark his face to denote his Cast, or wear Earrings when dressed in his uniform & it is further directed that at all Parades & upon duties every soldier of the Battalion shall be clean shaved on the chin. It is directed also that uniformity shall as far as it is practicable be preserved in regard to the quantity of hair upon the upper lip--

**(18)** [in an italic hand]

General Orders by  
Government August the  
1806

The Right Honorable the Governor in Council has derived great Satisfaction from information that the Sepoy named Mustapah Beg<sup>368</sup> of the 1st Battn 1st Native Regm<sup>t</sup> who gave the only intimation which was Received of the projected Mutiny at Vellore previously, to the Occurrence of that unhappy event, has returned in Safety to that Garrison.

His Lordship in Council regrets the Circumstances which precluded A more early attention to the intelligence which was Conveyed by that faithful Sepoy of the treacherous intention of the Native troops of the Garrison of Vellore, But his Lordship has the highest Satisfaction in Conferring upon Mustapah Beg a reward proportioned to the Honourable proof which he manifested of his fidelity & Attachment to the British Service

<sup>368</sup> Mustafa Beg's earlier warning had been ignored and he was penalized for it.

**(19)** His Lordship in Council has - Accordingly resolved that the Sum of 2000 Pag/a [Pagodas] Shall be immediately presented to Mustapah Bag [sic] & that he shall receive for the remainder of his life a pension equal to that of a Soobadar of Infantry. His Lordship has further resolved that Mustapah Bag [sic] shall be presented with a gold medal in the name of the Governor in Council as a badge of honor & distinction

**[note by F. W. Blunt]**

**(20)** The Mutiny at Vellore, July 1806

Exactly 100 years ago, and almost exactly 50 years before the appalling mutiny which shook the British rule in India to its very foundations, a mutiny & massacre at a smaller scale occurred at Vellore then a fortified town situated about 88 miles to the west of Madras. After the conquest of Seringapatam in 1799, the whole of Tippoo Saib's family, twelve sons and eight daughters, were removed by the British to Vellore, which was fitted up for their residence & [word crossed out] a liberal allowance was made for their support. On the 10<sup>th</sup> of July 1806 a revolt & massacre took place in the town, in which some of the family of Tippoo were active participators. The causes which led to this mutiny, and the circumstances of it, are narrated in the following letter, which was written from Madras in September 1806 by a lady whose husband occupied a high position in the Government there, and from which it will be gathered that the outbreak at Vellore was not an isolated attempt, but was intended to be followed by others, the consequences of which might have been far more serious.<sup>369</sup>

**(21)** [blank]

**(22)** [blank]

<sup>369</sup> This is in reference to the account by Amelia Fancourt, which Elizabeth refers to Mary having had. It is no longer among the collection of letters, but it was published by Hester James' descendant along with the note here and a selection from one of Elizabeth's letters, F. W. Blunt, "The Mutiny at Vellore (July 1806)" *The Monthly Review*, 24, no. 72 (1906-09).

**Letter-072-MS-03-1807 Mary Symonds to Hester James, March 4, 1807 (Mss.Eur.C.240/4, ff. 365r-368v)**

(1) Madras 4th March

1807 My dearest Hetty

I wrote to you last month A pretty long letter by Mr. Ball a worthy & much injured man who I hope will arrive safer in England & succeed in obtaining redress for the wrongs he has sustained under this most arbitrary & oppressive government, he will be able to tell you some particulars of us & of the situation Sir Henry stands in, he is the only man who has spirit to oppose the measures he can but condemn. I have written a long letter to the Thoburns giving them as circumstantial an account as the limits of a letter would admit of & I shall send to you all the papers I can collect copies of, on the subject & as your communications will of course be mutual I shall consider it matter of little consequence to whom they are addressed. In my last, I had the pleasure of acknowledging all the Packages you had so carefully & nicely collected & packed for us. We have dressed 3 of the hams which are excellent & the confectionery is all come very dry & good, being packed in bottles. Betsy was delighted to see the Almonds which are the first we have received dry. & she & Sir Henry are pecking at them every day insomuch that there is a great appearance of a drying wind having found its way into the bottle. The only things which have suffered in carriage are some bottles of Capillaire,<sup>370</sup> only two of which arrived whole but that is quite immaterial as we have very little use for it & the natives understand making beautiful clear syrop which answers the same purpose. Betsy made presents of some of the pieces of muslin which were very much admired, & all the gowns are neat & elegant. The white beads are a beautiful imitation of Cornelian & the blue & black ones are a very pretty & pleasing variety. All the head dresses appear very pretty but we have not yet worn (2) many of them the Caps, two or three of which Betsy has tried are very Genteel & becoming. The mobs are much worn here but I cannot say I am an admirer of them for I have seen but one woman who looked well in them & she is a very handsome & dashing looking body, a Lady Ogilby lately come out. The little worked Caps & shirts both made & unmade I like much, they are

<sup>370</sup> Capillaire or Maidenhair refers to a fern in the family *Adiantum* used to make a medicinal syrup, sourced either from southern France or Canada.

so light & so easily done up. The Tiara & bands are very pretty & what I like very much & one of the grey nets I put on as soon they were unpacked & have worn it every day since I am now writing in it.

The shoes fit me exactly & I hope the man will not lose the measure as a straw shorter would not fit, & I do not like them too big. Richard Clarke is much pleased with his cloth & c, & the soap you have sent is very acceptable pray add a bar or two of common, mottled soap to the next packages, & if you can without inconvenience send a dozn or so of bottled goosberries [sic] & currants they will be an extraordinary treat. The cranberries are come beautiful & most acceptable they are. I have only opened one pot of your preserves which was a strawberry pot & excellent, but I think stone pots are preferable to the white ones & the preserves which come in them are higher flavoured, & the risk of breaking is not so great. Your old walnuts, & a pot of brown mushrooms are all we have opened yet, both are as good as possible In future do not trouble yourself to send so many varieties of sugarplumbs [sic] for although they look very pretty & are very ornamental to the table yet as those which have fruit in them do not keep very well ( such as the barberrysugar plums &c) & as the Coloured ones are not admired in flavour they are scarcely worth the trouble &c.

The desirable things are, Scotch Carraways, Almonds candied, little white carraways, Barley sugar, & Orange (& cinnamon, candied) Chips, Peppermint, Tolo & Refined liquorish Lozenges, Raspberry Vinegar, [Nargoo?] Cherry & Raspberry brandy & brandy Cherries. I have lately been favored by Dr. Berry with his permission to make the first drawing of a plant which is quite new his being the first that was every [sic] possessed by an European. This is the Columbo, the root of which is a very fine medicine.<sup>371</sup> A Mr. Fortin who commanded a Trading Vessel, was requested by Dr. Anderson & Dr. Berry to procure for them from the Mozambique A piece of the Columbo root in the state in which it grows, for the usual methot [sic] of preparing it for traders is by cutting the root into small pieces or thin slices & drying them. Mr. Fortin procured from the People of Madagascar a large piece of the root nearly a foot long, & when it arrived here it had the appearance of a

<sup>371</sup> *Jateorhiza palmata* (Lam.) Miers, a medicine long known in Europe, but whose origins had been deliberately obscured by the Portuguese who traded it from Mozambique.

dried yam, & it looked so dry & dead that they had not a hope that it would vegetate; however being fond of experiments of this nature they determined to put it into A Tub of mould & try if it would be affected by it, when to their great surprise & satisfaction, after some time it put forth a green shoot which grew very rapidly, the leaves resembling Cucumber leaves, & from the point of each leaf there grew a cluster of very small Flowers, which unfortunately the Botanists find to be all male flowers so there is no fruit, but I believe they say it is a Bironia, I shall however get it accurately described, & will send home by the next ships a copy of my drawing of the root leaf & flowers which you will have the goodness to shew to Mr Whitley & let Lizzy take a copy if she wishes it, & then present service [?] to Dr. Sims\_ This is speaking all in good time you will say as I do not intend to send it 'till the next ships, but my reason is this Dr. Berry has (3) had a drawing made of the root only by a Native, & this he intends to send to England by these Ships but it is so very ill done that it gives no Idea of the thing either in form colour or texture, however as it will be thought a great curiosity by naturalists it is possible Dr. Sims may see or hear of it.<sup>372</sup>

We have no good opportunity of sending any thing home by these ships as I do not know any one family who are to sail by them, I believe the passengers are all people from the Interior with whom we are unacquainted. I therfor [sic] think you will receive [sic] nothing from us except two or three little Carnelians which are not worth mentioning but I give them to Mr. Lee as he wishes to carry something for us. There is a red heart & a pair of drops for Nancy Green, A cross and a pair of drops for you & a heart which was presented to me & is mad [sic] of Petrified Tamarind tree, of which curious substance I also send you a specimen in the rough state. Mr Biss had been for some time stationed at the Village where it is found & great numbers of trees may be seen there quite whole & perfect in their form, he sent me two pieces of it, & I have an account of it which was collected & written by a Mr. Fallofield who is the Resident at Pondicherry near which place the Village is situated, I will send you this account as it may amuse you & it is curious. The place is very much infected (4) with Tigers & Leopards. Wmm Biss has seen several & one, the other day

<sup>372</sup> Berry published an account of the root and a drawing, perhaps by the native artist mentioned here, in Andrew Berry, "An Account of the Male Plant which furnished the Medicine Known as Columbo or Colomba root," *Asiatick researches* v.10 (1811).

crossed the road in which he was riding, within 3 yards of him. They are very bad neighbors, but there never was known an instance of a Tiger venturing into a Tent & in the day time they keep to the woods entirely except when compelled by thirst they come down to the edge of a River or Tank to drink. Wm Biss is vastly indignant about a lecture his sister sent him out for not writing, his is a curious fellow for he expects to have long letters from all his friends filled with most interesting particulars & to return short ones, & my gentleman is so touchy, so very tender that it is high Treason but to hint that any thing he does is not what you wish it to be, he is a good soul but I believe he will be spoiled for every body loves [?] him wherever he goes, & I find the Pondicherry Ladies are setting thier [sic] caps at him mightily. I wrote him a long letter the other day, & he returned me a small sheet of paper with four short paragraphs three of which were messages to be delivered to other people & the one which was to me was only an acknowledgment of my letter. So I sat down immediately & paraphrased his epistle & sent it to him as a letter & now he writes to Richard that I have put a sad quiz upon him, & sent him the shape & form of his own letter word for word, he seems to a little annoyed by it but he is not angry as I know he would have been if I had used any other method of reprovng him. He says he is going on extremely well with his (5) his Survey & has done twice as much as is required of him in the time he has been at work; which of course is very creditable to him, I am most happy in hearing of your having such charming companions as his two sisters, for from all I hear of them I am convinced they must be excellent fine girls, I wish the oldest who is so healthy & lively would take it into her head to pay her brother a visit she would be a great comfort to him & if she wished to marry I will answer for her having plenty of opportunities of good young men, with fair prospects which it is ever in the power of a good wife (who begin early to take care for him) to realize.

I shall write to Mrs. Biss this time to thank her for her kind letter to me & her excellent hams & pickles I wrote to Miss Biss by the last ships & I assure you glad enough I was of the opportunity for I have ever wished for a correspondent in Hereford I know enough of the place & people to make me relish an account of their proceedings, & I shall ever feel a strong attachment to it as the Place in which the happiest days of my life have been spent. & has having numberless real beauties to recommend it, which I never was truly sensible of until the

last visit I paid, when I looked at each object (as I then thought) probably for the last time, and it will at least be a long, long--interval between my last look & my next should i have the happiness to see that hour, as I hope & trust in God I one day shall. You make me most happy by the pleasing accounts you send us of your dear little girl. I cannot tell you how much I long to see her sweet face, & to be known & loved by her. I find among my treasures a little heart as white & pure as her own, & therefore I have put it up (with the others) for her. I hope you will not have cause to be uncomfortable for want of letters from us as I wrote in January by Sir Thos Troubridge<sup>373</sup> & in Febry by Mrs Ball and as only 3 ships are dispatched now it is probable we may have some other opportunity which be assured I shall not omit.

I must beg of you to let me know how my dear mothers house is disposed of that is who inhabits it &c, as I fear Ned & Nancy will be but indifferent correspondents, I hope however as he grows up that our dear Tom will write for them. I hope to have time to send a few lines to him, but as I am very full of business, from a desire to copy some of the papers relative to Sir Henry it may not be in my power to do so, I however beg you will at all events communicate to all my friends my kindest regard, & good wishes & with my love to your spouse & bairns believe me

Your truly affectionate sister. Mary Symonds

(6) By the H.C.s Lord

Casttenagh M<sup>TS</sup>. James

No 39 Bishopsgate Street

London.

**Letter-073-EG-XX-1807 Extracts from letters by [Elizabeth Gwillim] to Miss Thoburn, and Nancy Green n.d. (Mss.Eur.C.240/4, ff. 369r- 373r)**

<sup>373</sup> Sir Thomas Troubridge, 1st Baronet (1757-1807) was a Royal Navy officer.



**(1) [Extract from Miss Thoburn's letter]**

I spent yesterday morning with Dr Anderson he is very attentive and his Garden contains all the useful plants that bear hot climates and all the trees that are either useful or beautiful his attention is wholly given to the Fruit and Forest trees of large growth His great pride is having brought into this country the Bastard Cedar<sup>374</sup> it thrives here exceedingly is found in every Hedge row & is certainly a great acquisition in a tropical climate - it is a native of Jamaica It's Verdure is very fine & the foilage [sic] most profuse even after the greatest drought the country can experiance [sic] It's leaves are food for the cattle when scarcely a blade of grass can be obtained I think it is more like a lime tree (but fuller of leaves than any tree) & is like that tree covered with Flowers that have a honey smell - The Natives who have seldom any delight in novelties are very fond of this tree they have a superstitious respect for bees & as this tree smells of honey they set a great value upon it & if they do not go [word crossed out] so far as to be industrious in planting it they take the greatest care in sheltering & protecting any young trees of it they find springing up either in the roads or about their huts Dr Anderson boasts that he wants no cultivation of it as he has the crows very active in aiding him the fruit or nut of the tree has a smell by which they are attracted & they carry them into (2) all their retreats & in such places they attempt to open them but the shell being too hard they leave it & after the rainy season it springs up Wee [sic] have a great many trees of it about our grounds & one fine large tree that shades the whole-~~of~~ side of the house where Mr G has his study its branches sweep the ground on one side & spread over the Verando [sic] on the other so that when one sits in that one seems directly under the tree the squirrels run up & down the branches all day they are very pretty & very numerous all about the houses & gardens here Dr A made me particularly notice one tree which is a great height & size smooth [word crossed out] shined & is eighteen Feet in circumference this tree is only 12 years old , wee [sic] have all the variety & beauty that wood & water & works of art can produce on a plain washed on the one side by the sea & every where crowded with inhabitants whose natural grace exceeds what wee

<sup>374</sup> *Guazuma ulmifolia* (Lam). Also known as West Indian elm, Guasimo

[sic] see represented in the finest ancient sculpture

Here are frequent groves of Cocoa Palms the head of these form a fine shade whilst the tall stems leaves the ground on which they grow clear for the purposes of the Indians under these therefore they delight to build their Villages They raise in the more artfully constructed houses about two feet of brick which they cover with coarse mortar or Chinam incloseing [sic] one or two small rooms in the corners they stick Bamboo sticks about 2 or five feet high & these support a kind of hurdle or mat made each of a Cocoa Palm leaf by turning down on each side divisions & plaiting it into a sort of matt [sic] The middle stem is set in the clay or mortar & this is the wall of the house the roof is generally the same but is sometimes of the Palmyra<sup>375</sup> leaf spread over each other like fans a house if it is to be raised from the ground costs I understand 6 or seven half crowns a fresh built house looks very green & gay but becomes brown almost as soon as a ribbon wou'd fade They look however not less beautiful when brown if they are kept in tolerable order, doors windows & chimneys I have not said any thing of because they know nothing of them the [sic] use their houses as a shelter from rains & sun and wou'd consider any aperture but that [word crossed out] necessary to **(3)** to come in at as an imperfection their cooking is performed without the house where also they sleep in matts [sic] unless prevented by the rains & for doors they need not lock up their houses when they go from home they have no liquor but water and their meat & rice is bought daily & their wealth is always carried about them. What they acquire by labour they have in Gold of the purest kind they do not put it bags or boxes but send it to the Goldsmith who fashions it into earrings [sic], bracelets, arm clasps belts ornaments for the hair nose-rings toe rings & bands with belts for the ancles [sic] & ranges of necklaces The gold is given to him in coin & he returns it undiminished in weight however fine the workmansh[ip] but receives pay according to his labour which however very moderate their ornaments are their resource in misfortunes they talk of them as money & always tell you how many pagodas are in each the youngest & middle aged Woman are loaded with finery but there is something very melancholy in observing that old women are generally destitute of them. They seldom (never in these parts at present) burn themselves when they lose their husbands but his sickness funeral expences [sic] **(4)** & superstitious ceremonies take all their ornaments a Gentoo widow if she be childless which appears to be frequently the case is as great an object of pity as can be seen she has little

<sup>375</sup> *Borassus flabellifer.*

left to make life desirable and is frequently compelled after being disused to labour to earn her subsistence [sic] by some fatiguing employment & to add to her wretchedness it is expected of her that she does not take any pains in her cleaning her hair or person they are cleanly people & consider dirt (as we humorously call it sometimes) mourning & never permit their persons to be dirty but in affliction a Widow is not allowed to marry again though her husband die when she is not more than 5 or 6 years old & before they have lived together. an Indian village makes no appearance no smoke or smell of cheerful hearths apprize [sic] you of it before you come to it when you do the little huts concealed under the trees wou'd hardly draw your attention the chattering in the Bazars [sic] however & the crowds of people that are employed about them will give you a notion of the numbers they contain there is generally a Choultry or two near each of these places these are richly ornamented with carved worked work but they are seldom more than a Portico inclosed on three the roof being supported (5) in front by a row of columns from six to eight [word crossed out] some of these Choulttries have back apartments & if they are endowed Bramins live in or near them who boil rice for travellers & it is a religious duty in the rich to build and endow them all the towns are full of them as well as those so frequent on the road sides they afford no earthly ~~shelter~~ convenience [sic] in general but a shelter from rain a well of good water generally near them If the weather be dry the travellers seem not to sleep within the Choultry all the convenience any of these people require for sleeping is a bit of matt [sic] in which they wrap their bundle this they spread under them on

the ground & then loosening the muslin they have wrapped round them they spread it over their bodies & feet & the same quantity of muslin which they wear on their heads is also in part let down ~~& covers~~ wraps up the head & hangs down like a Cloak thus protected they lie down to sleep secure from muskatoes [sic] or any other teasing [sic] flies which are all they have to fear Plantains one can hardly one can hardly [sic] call trees but the sorts are innumerable some are very good They are like Pears when you eat them some sorts less juicy but warm to the stomach indeed they are perfect food which is an advantage of many of the Fruits here The Rajah Plantains is as fine a Fruit as ever I eat Oranges are dark Green outside are remarkably juice & sweet the peal [sic] has an aromatick [sic] flavour the Tamarind is a very beautiful Tree & very high ----

**[Nancy Greens letter from Mrs G, copy in an unknown hand]**

This is a very pleasant country for those who are never tired of Company Balls dinners &c but wee [sic] have no Publick [sic] amusements it is a Pleasant Country too for those who have any curiosity to know the history of the world which may be studied to advantage amongst the oldest nation of the world now mixed with the most Polished modern ones Or to those who delight as I do in the Production of nature I have received a considerable degree of attention since I came here & even the servants **[letter continues in different hand]** bring me whatever they find that has not fallen in [...] I am sometimes [sic] so tired with looking at novelies [sic] till I sometimes [sic] wish they were less numerous this extraordinary People their habitations the animals their utencels [sic] for the purposes to which they are ~~applied~~ applied are so new & curious & excite my attention as to the Hindoos the Original inhabitants of the Country you will aquire [sic] the best notion of them from the Bible the [alusions?] & discreptins [sic] there (6) will correspond with whatever these people do at this day & it is pretty clear that they have not chainged [sic] thier [sic] manners since the time of Moses probably they are still older the women dress in the same manner & hold the same place in society the wifes [sic] and daughters of the richest people go to the well for water

- In the morning they are less Ornamented but in afternoon when they fetch water for their great meat which is always at night they wear all their ornaments frequently the weight of a thousand Pagodas in gold a pagoda is eight shillings workd [sic] into the most delicate shapes & mixt with pearls rubies & emeralds and an equal weight of sillver [sic] on their toes & legs & in rings strings of bells making a double fringe round their feet & large bands that wear their legs in pits with the weight all of them have a grasefull [sic] manner of walking beyond our best publick [sic] [word crossed out] performers their trinkets & except thos [sic] on the nose for which I cannot yet acquir [sic] a taste are disposed with great taste & the large quantity of thin musling [sic] which they fold about them without seem or shape without pin or string or any fastening but the folds has more elegance in it than any contrivence [sic] that needles & scissors could give.

When a set of these women walks from the well with their Bright Vaces [sic] on their heads they look more dignified than you can imagine & the flowers they add their dress any feast time gives them an air of gaiety that is very pleasant - as to the Moor people as they are calld [sic]

the Arabian nights will give you an almost exact description they are more shewey [sic] delighting in the most brilliant colour this tast [sic] in the wealthy moor people is very admerable [sic] & they produce very fine effects from their mode of dress. But the lower order look dirty paltry & uncomfortable whereas the very poorest of the Hindoes [sic] look clean even the Cast that do nothing but mend the roads & are not alowd [sic] to live the towns look neat they weare [sic] nothing but white with a narrow border & tho it is coarse it is clean & the bright sunshine of this country it makes a brilliant clearness to all coulors [sic] these people are I think the Handsomest casts and are remarkably good but no might can raise the people from their Original casts the woman are very pretty (7) wear a gread [sic] deal of Ornaments & if they have not gold content themselves with Brass & beads their arms are covered with bands & braslets [sic] they work with their Husbands the men dig or raise the work & the women carry the matterels [sic] in small baskets on their heads with a Child in one arm or rather on riding on the hip as they do here - they will carry a load that a strong man cannot easily raise however the men set it their heads where they seem able to bear it & they walk with infinite chearfulness [sic] & spirits when they arive [sic] at the place the burden is to be set down they put up their hands & shove it forward they do not take long walks but merly [sic] carry the metereals [sic] from the heap to the workman

**Teams File Name: Letter-074-EG-XX-1807**

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[Probably from Elizabeth Gwillim, to an unknown recipient, n.d.]

(1) When I came here I found the Country in the finest verdure possible & the trees in blow in which state they have remained ever since and it is now 6 months. this climate is lovely from Nov<sup>r</sup>. to March the mornings are cold or else it is much like a pleasant summer in England & the corn feilds [sic] & Hedges look much alike but it is rice not wheat. I have in my own Garden plenty of Turnips very good carrots rather short but sweet french beans very good - & a sort of bean eat shelled of the Country. The Country Green a very nice vegetable English Cabbage with poor hearts, but sweet green peas of a small sort but extreamly [sic] good -

Cucumbers, Endive quite white parsley, Mint, - besides which we have cellery [sic]; excellent spinach, mustard cress - small lettuces sage & almost every thing but broad beans Caulliflower [sic] & brocoli [sic] which will not do here yet for Gardening &c has not been attended to here till lately but I doubt not but everything wou'd grow except peas all the rest is to be had the whole year Potatoes grow in the North & we have many vegetables of the Country The Oranges are very fine the Limes in abundance. Melons Pine apples - are very good [word crossed out] Grapes do not come till april & May The Plantains are a nice fruit the Pears & the Guavas are a good pick some think they have the flavour of a strawberry & so they have but they have a forbidding smell on the outside like Onions (2) The Mango of the best kind is as large as a pint bason<sup>376</sup> of the colour shape & texture of an Apricot but juicy & rich with a good deal of the fine apple flavour & almost too rich for me of the green ones they make tarts which very well supply the the [sic] worst of Apples - here are also various fruits of an acid not good for [words crossed out] eating but excellent for tarts amongst them the Callacca<sup>377</sup> so like a Gooseberry that I am not sorry at all that you have done more for they are quite as good with the advantage of the fresh taste - Raspberries Strawberries and burberries are most esteemed here. English Pickles are very valuable we pay 3/6 per Bottle for vineger [sic] English but I only give it company for I think the country vineger [sic] just as good - which is made of Tody or Arrack a liquor drawn from the Cocoa Palm tree.

The fatted Beef is too rich for me the leaner sort is sweet but small & not tender. All sorts of Poultry are as fine as in the london markets & we have sea, & river fish in great profusion the sole, the mullet & the Skate and Eels are all like the english indeed the shell fish Oysters Crabs shrimps & prawns ar [sic] large as the tail of a lobster and very fine here are also some other kinds. Veal is very delicate but small Pork & roasting Pigs very good of the China-~~sort~~ breed China hams are good and they make good bacon in this place the mutten [sic] when fat is very nice but you must feed it yourself they have no wool but short hair they are very full of meat - very fine grained you may buy a wether<sup>378</sup> [?] sort of sheep - alive for about three shillings the Kid is most delicate we have no woodcock but snipes wild ducks & teal-

<sup>376</sup> A dish in which pudding is baked (see E. Taylor, *The Lady's, Housewife's, and Cookmaid's Assistant* 1799)

<sup>377</sup> Karanda, or *calacca* (*Carissa carandas*), as above.

<sup>378</sup> A castrated male sheep is called a wether.

~~most people~~ every day in the winter season and some people most indeed catch the teal in winter and keep them all the year. Hares are very cheap and good but Partridges are but the name for they are as dry as a stick. They make the bread like French bakers & it is as white as snow Muffins & ~~and all sorts~~ whatever can be made of milk & eggs Custards, Trifles &c and all sorts of Pattry [sic] is in perfection the butter is fresh every day and is very nice they take very little pains to beat it up as it comes crumbling in general but for Table and all people who make their own butter have it as fine as in England & indeed are very ostentatious in displaying it for they have for table butter made into a kind of model with leaves turning back like a pine Apple or Cabbage

Nothing can be a greater mistake than the general idea that in India Ladies have nothing to do. It is an absolute labour to explain anything to the servants they speak so little english for if you explain they cannot remember the - men are the best. It will not do to bring out notions too delicate here for they come to you in all places and in all causes you must write notes about every thing We have two women one whose whole business it is to sweep the kitchen and to make curry for a man never cooks that dish nor ever sweeps. The other sweeps the rooms I have a maid that waits on me who is as all are without any exception or without any idea of shame a W<sup>379</sup> - & a Tipler & chews beetle all day she is dressed according to custom with rings on her toes hands and bracelets earrings (3) gold chains & necklaces &c she cou'd not stick a pin in your handkerchief thread a needle nor [comb?] your hair nor help you on with one bit of cloth[ing] & is a story teller & stupid I do not know if she be a thief but others I have had with all this gold [geelry?] here is neither Hair dresser or Milliner and even ones lace we must wash ourselves and make all caps hats &c you will wonder why such maids are kept but they wash your feet & drive out the musquitoses [sic] and such trifles Women of Cast are very good but they never go to service so one has only these creatures who act for one. The wives and daughters of the mad [sic] servants would not wait on anybody and their daughters are married about ten years old tho they do not live with their husbands till 13 - or 14 - these women are very chaste and good and never marry again if they loose [sic] their husbands -

<sup>379</sup> Whore?

Coppy'd from Mrs. C - letter [Mrs Clark?]

**Letter-075-MS-XX-1807 Mary Symonds to Hester James, n.d., (ca. 1803)**

**(Mss.Eur.C.240/4, ff. 376r-377v)**

[No date, prior to 1807, she mentions a letter from her mother. The references to cut out figures suggest 1803]

**(1)** My dear Hetty

I had almost a mind to be lazy, & not write to you, by this opportunity, but I now think the enclosed company, may be able to afford you some entertainment & as I have had my share of amusement [sic], in making them it is but fair you should now have yours; however I fear I shall have some difficulty in explaining them to you. I intended to make a great many more, & to fix them in a box, to represent a street, but I fear if I do so you will have some trouble in geting [sic] them passed at the India house; they are done very slight, but I promise you some good drawings by the next ships; this method I invented to give you some Idea of the population of this country, I intended to place the rows of people very near to each other in a box, & they would then be about as thick, as the people are here in the streets; to a stranger it appears quite dangerous to drive through them, but the horse keepers, who march [?] by the side of the Carriage make a horrid noise calling to them to go out of the way, and they contrive to divide off, while you pass & I have never heard of an accident, I have written the names on the backs of these things, I shall send you a great many **(2)** figures done in the same way as there are an immense [sic] number of employments which I can describe better in that way than any other.

Toddy is a liquor which is drawn from the Coccoanut trees, it is thought very wholesome if drunk early in the morning before the sun rises, & as soon as it is drawn from the tree, but if it is kept till the sun is up it becomes fermented, & has an intoxicating quality for which, the natives drink it. I have drawn a toddy man, who is distinguished according to the custom by a cocoa palm leaf. The carriages of the natives are extremely elegant particularly the Hackery which is drawn by milk white Bullocks, I intend sending you an accurate drawing of one very soon, in



the meantime there is one in one of these rows, which may give you some little Idea, you will also see a curious method of carrying children, two women carry a long bamboo stick with a piece of cloth tied to it in which the child is put, one of the rows consists entirely of women with chattys<sup>380</sup> and brass pots I intended to bend it round and make a little well in the middle to shew the manner of drawing water; it is never done by men, & a man would be much despised who should go near enough to hear the womens conversation there; the high cast women never carry the pots on their head, but on the shoulder & the Braminy women never touch any earthen pot They only use the Brass ones; They are also distinguished by wearing the cloth like trowsers [sic], as the men do, the other women wear theirs straight round like petticoats.

I have written to Nancy Green, & if I had time I could write a great deal more to you, but as the ship sails this evening I dare not stay any longer I hope to write again very soon, Pray tell James & George Samuel that they are the impudent fellows for not writing to us, & if they dont set about writing soon I shall begin a new plan with them, & write them such long tedious stories as shall tire their sleepy heads to read; pray tell G- S- I dont care a pin for him or his kitten, & the Thoburns are all snubs, naughty Girls what a set correspondents have we left behind us, I declare, you the only one that deserves to be called a friend, or that seems to be sencible[sic] of our absence, Your letter & my mothers gave us the greatest pleasure, but we were very sorry to hear that the children were not well I hope you will not miss any opportunity of writing if it is but a few lines at a time as I feell [sic] the greatest anxiety about the dear little boy pray tell me from time to time who he is most like, with my kind love to James & all my friends (3) (notwithstanding their sad neglect) I must conclude with a sincere assurance that I am

Your very affectionate Sister

M. Symonds

The figures mentioned in this letter are those I have given to Sir Henry for the Miss

<sup>380</sup> CHATTY, s. An earthen pot, spheroidal in shape. It is a S. Indian word (Hobson Jobson)

Carews. This was intended to be sent by a ship which afterwards did not sail but is still detained here.

M<sup>TS</sup>. James

**Letter-076-MS-XX-1807 Mary Symonds to Hester James, n.d. (Mss.Eur.C.240/4, ff. 378r-378v)**

(1) I have told Mrs. Toussaint that you will call on her and I have requested Miss T- or her to help you in the choice of some things for us flowers feathers beads &c &c all the best of fashionables. They can be very usefull [sic] to you in that way, and I dare say Miss T- will go with you to some shops as she did with Betsy. I have written to them for a bonnet or two and some caps, and therefore they will pack with them and thing you like to buy for us unmade, but

don't let that little order prevent you from buying any pretty caps & c you may see at any other very smart place

Mrs. Toussaint lives at No 21

Jackville Street

To speak for Miss Fortin

[?] To tell Betsy about

Mrs. King

(2) By the ship

Calcutta M<sup>TS</sup>.

James

no 39. Bishopsgate Street Within

London

H. Gwillim

**Letter-077-EG-XX-XXX [From Elizabeth Gwillim, an addition to an earlier letter, n.d., perhaps 1802] (Mss.Eur.C.240/4, ff. 379r)**

(1) The eight other dancers come forward as in the figure dances on the stage - two of them of Masks & these two play various Buffoon tricks -- This you are to think is part of a letter but written so long ago there is no more to be met with however I sent it to explain Mary's drawing by her desire. - New Year's day is kept with the same state as xmas day the servants make their presents, but this is a very expensive day to the Masters for between my own servants those of the Court & various people it cost me about 50 Pagodas in presents - You must learn to understand Indian money or else I can never talk to you - 8 Doodies<sup>381</sup> make 1 fenam<sup>382</sup> - 12 fenams 1 Rupee 3 ½ Rupees make one Pagoda - a Doodie is called 10 Cash but there is no such coin as a cash - 1 fenam is about two pence halfpenny a Rupee 2s/6 - a Pagoda sometimes 8s/. sometimes more or less. -

**Letter 078\_HG\_01-1809, Henry Gwillim to Hester James, Cape of Good Hope, Jan. 15, 1809 (Mss.Eur.C.240/4, ff. 381r-382v)**

(1) My dear Hetty,

With much difficulty have we gotten to this place after a tedious passage of eleven weeks & two days, in the course of which we encountered a most tremendous gale, which lasted three days & three nights, & for nearly four & twenty hours we had little expectation that we would be able to weather it. We left Madras in company with eight other Indiamen under convoy of the Albion man of War of seventy four guns, but we have not seen or heard of one of them since the gale,

<sup>381</sup> "Dodo" is recorded as an alternative name used in Madras for cash or kas, eight of which made up one pagoda. See Henry Thoby Prinsep, *Useful Tables forming An Appendix to the Journal of the Asiatic Society, part the first, Coins, Weights, and Measures of British India* (Calcutta, Bishop's College Press, 1840), p. 16.

<sup>382</sup> FANĀM, s. The denomination of a small coin long in use in S. India, Malayāl. and Tamil *paṇam*, 'money,' from Skt. *paṇa*, [rt. *paṇ*, 'to barter']. (Hobson-Jobson, [p. 349](#)).

and should we get no intelligence soon, they must either be lost, or be so damaged as to be obliged as to put into some port to repair. We suffered much, in ship & cargo to the amount I am told, of thirty thousand pounds; but happily for us our injuries were not such as irreparable at sea as to prevent us from proceeding on our voyage.

We left Madras roads on the 25th. of October, the storm began on the morning of the 19th. of November & we anchored in this bay on the Thursday afternoon the 12th. instant & came ashore the next morning. Our ship is the Phoenix; we like our Captain & Officers much, and I like this place as far as relates to climate & situation; but every thing is most extravagantly dear, & should we be detained here long, which I think very probable I must be **(2)** ruined. The common passage from Madras to the Cape is eight weeks or thereabouts. Dick. Clarke & Pol., who are with me, are both very well. Though exposed to such severities during the storm, we none of us suffered at all in our health. It is now the height of summer at this place & we have abundance of fruit & vegetables. I pay for each of us sixteen shillings for board & lodging, besides other expenses. Would to God I were safe in England, though I have much of disagreeable to encounter when I get there; what my enemies are doing I know not. I hear from no one. Not a letter have I had except two or three of no consequence, for close on twelve months. I never was more anxious in my life to hear from my friends than I am now; and I have never more reason to be so. I shall hope to find a letter from someone when I get to St. Helena.

You, I hope, are well. I shall be most glad to see you again for I can never forget the kindness I have had from you & James. How is little Hetty? The poor Bishop of Ely I see is dead: it was the first thing I saw, upon turning over the English papers upon our arrival at this place. My losses have been very severe of late.

Enclosed is a bill upon Mess's Coutts & Co., for a hundred pounds drawn by a Lieut. Tilly Kettle in my favour, & endorsed by me to James. This is the first of the set: the second I put in the Preston, one of the ships I left in Madras & from which we separated in the gale: the third I have with me. A letter of advice also accompanies it.

I think that we shall scarcely be able to get to England before the end of May. We must stay here sometime in the hope of being joined by the other ships, or some of them. We cannot go without convoy, & the Admiral will not give convoy to a single ship. We have indeed found an Indiaman here, the Wexford from Bombay: she has been here more than a month; but in the present state of things that circumstance is not likely to be of much use to us. Our own ship

must stay some time as she wants further repairs & some of her cargo is so much damaged, that, I imagine is best to be sold for the benefit of the insurers. I have thoughts of making an excursion into the country.

Pray remember me very kindly at Brompton. I hope they are all well. It will be a great pleasure to me to see them again; I love them dearly. I feel their value every day more & more. Advise James of my kindest regards & deep sense of the many friendly acts he has done me. Pol. joins me in love with, my dear Hetty, Yours affectionately, H. Gwillim.

To Mr. James: Jan. 17, I send this by the Rose, a Botany Bay Ship; but as the Camelot, which is a store ship & armed will sail in two or three days & that should be the much safer conveyance, I have taken out the bill & letters of advice & will put them in the Camelot packet. Put the accompanying letter for my brother into the Post Office.