

Hands Across the Sea

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[There is now a long pause in the correspondence; and the next letter from America is dated 1784, and is addressed to a connection of the Shackleton and Carleton families. Evidently the old friend was eager for news. War seems to have been the cause (as the letter explains) of the lapse in writing.]

America

Kennett,

10th of 8th month, 1784.

Respected Friend and Kinsman,
John Chandlee,

I received a letter from thee dated in the 11th month last, which was very welcome to me, in which I received the agreeable account of some of my friends and relatives on your side of the water, and many times thought of you, but the difficulty of sending in this time of commotion, made me backward of sending. By this may inform you I have been a widower the greatest part of thirty years. I having bought a farm or plantation in Kennett after I was married I have lived there ever since, and my son Thomas lives with me, and is married and has eight children, Hannah, Dinah, Martha, Mark, Samuel, Lydia, Thomas and Caleb. Martha is married and has three children, in their minority.³⁴ My daughter, Susannah, married Michael Harlan, and has four daughters.³⁵ As thou mentioned thy brother's marrying Richard Shackleton's daughter,³⁸ of Ballitore. I hoped thou would have mentioned whether his wife (Elizabeth Carleton that was) be alive or not. I have had several letters from her in years past. I think the last account of her, was by Thomas Carington,⁴⁰ who visited your nation some years ago. When our family left Ireland in the year 1711, I had one brother named John, and four sisters, all dead but the youngest; she married out, is yet alive, for what I know, and made a poor hand of herself.

I suppose it is a time of great favour to friends in your parts, that the Almighty is pleased to send so many of our publick friends to visit the churches, on your side of the

ocean. My hearty desire is for their being supported in the right line, in their public service where their lots may be cast. I am now far gone in the eighty-fifth year of my life, and as hearty as most of that age; gets to our meeting in good weather sometimes, which is very pleasing to me, especially when Kind Providence is pleased to cover with the wing of his Divine Love. I have been favoured with health since I came into America, which I am and have been thankful for; but I find my memory and some other of my senses begin to fail, but I must submit to the All Wise disposing hand of Providence who knows what is best for us. There was a brother of thy grandfather, John Chandlee that came to this country some years before us, has been dead many years and left several children. His name was Benjamin Chandlee and lived at a place called Nottingham twenty miles from me. I believe some of his offspring is yet in being, but do not make much appearance among Friends.

When thou seest any of the publick Friends from America, and has opportunity give my kind respects to them. I think I have had some acquaintance with most of them, in the best and nearest relation. I earnestly desire that their labour in the ministry may be blessed with success, to the stirring of the negligent in their duty in the work of religion, and the strengthening of the weak hands to confirm the feeble knees, that so they may be enabled to support Truth's testimony now in this declining age. I have wrote more than I expected when I began, and if this comes to hand which I think scarce worth sending, but at thy earnest request have blackened some paper, hoping these may find thee with the rest of my relations on that side of the ocean, in health as it leaves me and mine at present. If my cousin Elizabeth Shackleton, be alive please to give my kind love to her and her husband.

I think I never saw her, but have had an agreeable account concerning her, which with kind respects to thee and friends that may have any knowledge of me. I remain

Thy assured friend and cousin

THOMAS CARLETON.

[The foregoing letter seems quickly to have been sent on to Ballitore, so that Elizabeth Shackleton at once replies to her old cousin at Kennett.]

Ireland

*Ballitore,**2d of 7th month 1785.*

My dear friend and Cousin,
 Thomas Carleton

This day I saw an agreeable letter from thee, to my cousin John Chandlee, and it was pleasing for us to see thou art favoured with ability to write still, and that tho' thy natural faculties may in some measure have been weakened, as the consequence of thy great age, yet that thy spiritual faculties are lively, and thy desire after that strengthening virtue and life which has been thy support all thy life long is still strong. . . . It is a long time since I had the satisfaction of corresponding with thee ; the troubles in your country prevailed for a time, since there has been a way opened I often intended to let thee hear from me, and did not intend to let it have been so long, but being grown less capable of writing than formerly and easily interrupted hope thou wilt excuse mistakes, my sight has also grown very weak. and I dont write much of late. The account of thy children, and grandchildren is pleasing to us, and I think it would be pleasing to thee to hear of ours. My husband's second daughter Margaret was married about 9 years ago to Samuel Grubb of Clonmel,²² has 5 children, 2 sons and three daughters. She is, we hope, a sensible religious Friend, and like to be serviceable. Her husband also a valuable young man. Six years ago my husband's son was married to Lydia Mellor,⁴¹ a descendant of Margaret Fox, well suited for his business, and I hope like to a useful woman in her day. Our son being an exemplary religious young man is like to be a serviceable man in the Society. They have four children living, two sons and two daughters. . . .

Upon their marriage my husband gave up the school and house, and the business prospers so with them, they have 50 boarders. We retired to a commodious house near them, where my dear sister Deborah lived (she was removed now 7 years ago, I hope in peace in the 65th year of her age). My husband's eldest daughter Deborah was married near 5 years ago to my cousin Thomas Chandlee a worthy steady young man,²² a credit to his friends in all his dealings, and his wife an honest hearted sincere woman, willing to do good.

They have had four children and have two living, a daughter and a son. I have two daughters living Mary and Sarah, neither married ;²⁴ they are we hope religiously disposed young women and helpful to us. I am grown rather heavy, and not able to travel as much, unless to our own General and Particular meetings, but my husband is lively in body and spirit, and much from home on Truth's service, industrious in that way now, as in his outward calling when he was engaged in it. He goes generally to London every year, has taken his two younger daughters to Yearly Meeting with him. We have been favoured with the visits of divers of the faithful servants of the Lord from your country, and others whose labours I hope have been of service to many. The Youth has been visited, and I hope divers have joined with the visitations, and are willing to give up their names to serve Truth in their generation, which is a great comfort to us who are advanced in years. . . . Our dear and worthy friend, John Pemberton,⁴² has had hard labour in this nation in many places, among those not acquainted with Friends' principles, and I hope has had good service. Dear old Thomas Ross,⁴³ has been with him. I suppose they are together visiting in England or Scotland.

Our dear cousin, Samuel Carleton,³⁷ died some time after my sister, with whom he had lived, after he broke up house (in Dublin). He had been declining for a good while, and from a bulky person, wasted to be very thin and quiet and resigned, and we hope was accepted by Him who knows the sincerity of our hearts, and makes allowance in His great mercy for our infirmities. This I crave for myself, being attended by many, and that it may please Him to continue His help the remaining part of time assigned to us. While on this precarious stage of life that so He may please to appoint us a place of rest, if ever so mean a mansion, is the sincere desire of the mind, and with true love and affection to thee and thine, joined by my husband and children.

Thy sincere and loving friend and cousin,

ELIZABETH SHACKLETON.

[A brief letter comes in answer and is the last of the correspondence.]

*America**Kennett, in Chester Co.**Pennsylvania,**22nd of 12th month 1785.*

My Dear friend and Cousin

Elizabeth Shackleton,

I have a very acceptable letter from thee, dated the 7th month last, which was much to my satisfaction in divers respects; the more so, as the letter from John Chandlee mentioned nothing of thee. I knew not whether thou wast living or no, but now there is a way opened for corresponding I may inform you that through the mercy of Kind Providence, I am still in being now in the 87th year of my age, as well as I can expect; hoping this may find thee and thine in the same enjoyment. I have my hearing pretty well still, but my seeing fails much, it being the effect of age; but am secretly thankful I am, as I am. . . . I speak with humble reverence to Him who has been my Preserver from my youth, and I hope will be to the last.

I rejoice in Friend's company when they come to see me, but I cannot ride much abroad of late.

My son's eldest daughter named Hannah, was married some time ago, a hopeful young woman. Her husband's name William Passmore.³⁴ She died last third month, leaving a son named Carleton Passmore. Seems a fine hearty thriving child. . . .

I am almost ashamed to write and make blunders. Thou hast been pleased to favour me with an account of some of my kindred in your nation, on my father's side. I should be pleased if I should live to hear a favourable account of any of my Mother's kindred. Her brother, my Uncle Solomon Watson,⁴⁴ is dead many years. He lived I suppose in the Co. of Tipperary and left several children, some account of them would be pleasing to me.

The account of thy husband giving up his time to serve Truth and Friends, is most pleasing to me, I hope he continues in so doing.

Thy friend and Cousin,

THOMAS CARLETON.

P.S. I also received some time ago some lines in verse, concerning the loss at sea between Cork and Bristol of two

Friends,⁴⁵ composed by my cousin, thy daughter Mary Shackleton. I take it kind of her, but I know not how to make her amends.

[In this letter the handwriting is sadly changed, and in places so feeble as to be illegible.]

[In the following letter Jane Watson,⁴⁶ then on a religious visit in America with Mary Ridgway, gives a vivid picture of the old cousin Thomas.]

Philadelphia.

23 of 1st mo. 1791.

Dear Friend,

No doubt but thou hast heard by different hand, we have been much in the way of late of stopping in places up and down on this continent (America) to visit families which has retarded our journey visits, but I believe it is safest for us in all things to let the Lord's time be ours, whether in Meetings, etc., as we are independent creatures. This a sort of introduction to the cause of my presuming to write to thee. If thou remembers, that if we came near thy Uncle Thomas Carleton, at least I suppose he is thy Uncle, that I should go and see him, accordingly near the close of the family visit at Willington, being then within ten miles of him, I got a friend to accompany me to his dwelling the fifth of this month. I heard he was childish, but could not observe anything. I believe I wrote Molly word he was 92, but I think he said wanted 4 months of it. He seemed remarkably glad to see me, said he could not tell how to make amends for such a favour of my going all the way on purpose. I suppose while I stayed he shook me by the hand more than twenty times, often expressed the favour, kissed four times, said he longed much to see me, but said he was afraid he should not have lived, till we would again visit these parts. I was so well pleased with my visit, I would not for more than is necessary to say, have omitted it. His conversation was so innocent, so cheerful, and withal so instructing, that I was fully paid for my journey, if it was three times as far. He spoke of the great sympathy he felt for us, when we landed, and entered into such a field of labour. . . . He would once in a while drop into one of his innocent little turns, incident to the family,

so like dear Samuel Carleton, that he often put me in mind of him. One thing he spoke about Marriages :

If marriage was not lawful
Lawyers would not use it,
If it was not Godly
Preachers would refuse it ;
If it was not dainty
Rich folk would not crave it ;
If it was not plenty
Poor folk would not have it.

I put this down just as he said it ; it seemed so like one of poor Aunt Thompson's sayings. Before I left him I requested to have a little of his hair to send thee. He immediately took off his hat, for me to cut it off with my own hands. . . .

Poor man he has sustained a very great loss about four months ago, his daughter-in-law was removed by death. They say she was exceeding fond of him, and him of her. . . . He has now but one son, several grand-children, four great grand-children.

Now having given thee the fullest account that is in my power concerning that worthy friend, who is universally loved, if at any time thou canst find freedom to write me a few lines they would be truly welcome. . . .

Thy poor, little, very sincere,

J. WATSON.

NOTES

⁴⁰ Thomas Carrington (c. 1721-1781) was a yeoman, of Pennsylvania, son of Thomas and Mary (d. *ante* 1762). Thomas, the younger, married Mary Walton, widow, "of the Mannor of Moor Land, Seamstress," 21 ix., 1745, when he was of the Township of Lower Dublin, County of Philadelphia. In 1755, with wife and children, he was certificated to Richland M.M., and from this M.M. he removed to Abington M.M. with his wife, children, and step-daughter, Esther Walton, 26 vii., 1756. His wife died 19 iii., 1760, "Inter'd 21st with her son." In 1761, Thomas was "admitted a member of the select meeting of Ministers and Elders." In 1762, he married Mary Baker, daughter of Aaron and Mary Baker, of New Garden M.M. having previously, with his three children, Mary, Sarah, and Rachel, removed into London Grove M.M.

T. Carrington was in Europe in 1775ff. When visiting public-houses in Bristol in 1777, he was the means of the conversion of that noted Minister George Withy, of Melksham, Wiltshire. Withy was a careless youth, but was told that he would become a Friend and Minister and visit America in that capacity which all came to pass (*Biog. Sketches*, Phila., 1870).

James Jenkins wrote of Carrington, in his free and easy style : "About this time it was that I saw in Ireland Tho^s Carrington, an American ministering Friend of the wildest appearance and of manners

extremely uncouth. It was him of whom the anecdote is related of taking the whole to himself of a dish of pease for which David Barclay's wife had given half a guinea, at the time of the Y.M." (*Records and Recollections*, MS. in D.)

Dated from Dublin, 29 iii., 1779, Samuel Spavold and he wrote an *Epistle to Friends in Ireland*. And from London, 9 iii. 1778; he wrote *A Christian Exhortation to the People*, respecting attendance at fairs, etc., in which he refers to England as his native land. Prior to his death in 1781, he visited Nantucket and other parts of North America.

The following is taken from the Minutes of Western Quarterly Meeting, Pa., 19th of 8 mo., 1782.

Answer to first annual query :

"One Minister, to wit, our esteemed Friend, Thomas Carrington, late of New Garden Mo. Meeting [Pa.], who departed this life the 5th of the 9th mo., 1781, aged about sixty years.

"He was one, who, from his natural capacity, & the Life & virtue attending his Ministry, manifested his Commission not to be in the wisdom of man; but in the Simplicity of the Gospel, often reaching the witness of truth in the Hearts of the hearers. With the Concurrence of his frd^s he spent several of the latter years of his life in visiting the Churches of Great Britain and Ireland; returning from thence well recommended, & appeared to have gained a greater Degree of depth & experience in humble waiting for, & moving in that ability which rightly qualifies for the Ministry & other services in the Church. The remainder of his time he spent much in the service of Truth, until the approach of his last illness, which he bore with patience; and departed in Unity with his Brethren, & (we trust) in peace with the Lord."

Information *per* kindness of Prof. R. W. Kelsey, of Haverford, Pa.

⁴¹ Lydia Mellor (1749-), *aft.* Shackleton, was a daughter of Ebenezer and Margaret (Abraham) Mellor, of Manchester. Her mother was a grand-daughter of Rachel (Fell) Abraham, youngest daughter of Margaret Fell-Fox. See *British Friend*, vol. 3 (1845), p. 168.

⁴² John Pemberton (1727-1795) was the youngest of the famous trio of Philadelphians, Israel, James and John. He died in Germany, while on a religious visit. He is frequently mentioned in Rancocas *John Woolman*, 1922.

⁴³ Thomas Ross and John Pemberton wrote a letter to the Mayor of Waterford, dated in that City, 4 mo. 4, 1785, enclosing extracts from the writings of pious men *re* stage plays (printed in Dublin same year).

Thomas Ross (1709-1786) was Irish by birth and emigrated to Wrightstown, Pa. He visited Europe in the Rebecca Jones party of Ministers in 1784. He died, at the house of Lindley Murray in York, from the effects of an injury to his leg received on ship-board, and his remains were interred near those of John Woolman. "He was a sweet spirited and acceptable minister" (*Rancocas John Woolman*, p. 570).

James Jenkins narrates, on the authority of Joseph Rand, of Newbury, that T. Ross addressed a congregation there in the following words: "Friends, you have a comfortable meeting-house here, well-built and secure from the inclemency of the weather—the gallery too seems to be a convenient one and the pillars which support it substantial," &c. Just that and no more—no spiritual application followed. After the meeting, John Eliot (who accompanied him) said, "Although Thomas did not shine to-day, he is sometimes an highly favor'd Minister" (*Records and Recollections*, pp. 243, 244.).

⁴⁴ Solomon Watson (1682-1758) was born at Kilconnor, Co. Carlow, Ireland, son of Samuel and Elizabeth Watson. He married (1) Abigail Bowles (d. 1716/17), of Ballitrane, Co. Carlow, in 1707, (2) Elizabeth Bevan (died 1732), in Dublin in 1718, and (3) Deborah Smallman (died 1750), of Waterford in 1737. At the time of his second and third marriages he is described as "of Clonbrogan" and at the time of the death of his third wife as "of Cashel." The entry of his death gives "Clonmel" as his place of residence.

Information from Edith Webb. Above Abigail (Bowles) Watson must not be confused with Abigail Bowles, *née* Craven, wife of Samuel Watson, who died 1752.

⁴⁵ These were Edith Lovell (1741-1781) and Joseph Sparrow (1755-1781).

Edith Lovell (*née* Bourne) was the wife of Robert Lovell, of Bristol. She joined Friends in her spinsterhood and about 1767 she appeared as a Minister, feeling "engaged to drop a few words in meetings" (Testimony). She had paid a religious visit to the South of Ireland and towards the end of 1781 was ready to return home. Joseph Sparrow, a young Irish Friend, was about to visit his fiancée, Mary Davis, of Minehead, Som., and agreed to bear E. Lovell company. They embarked at Cork on the *Elizabeth* for Bristol on the 29th of 12 mo., 1781. The lighthouse which would have guided the vessel was not lit and as a consequence the vessel was wrecked in a storm on the Culver Sands off Burnham.

Richard Shackleton described Edith Lovell as "a sweet minister, not large in her gift" (*R. and E. Shackleton*, 1849, p. 140).

There is a slightly different account of the sad event in James Jenkins's *Records and Recollections*, pp. 138, 139. He describes J. Sparrow as his "dear and intimate friend." Mary Davis became the wife of John Merryweather, of Ringwood, Hants.

The poem of Mary Shackleton, *aft.* Leadbeater, is printed in *The Friends' Magazine*, vol. 2 (1831), accompanying an article by William Ball.

⁴⁶ Jane Watson (?1739-?1812) accompanied Mary Ridgway on many of her missionary journeys. They were in U.S.A., 1789-92. Rebecca Jones, of Philadelphia, calls them "the female Hibernians" and "our noble warriors" (*Memorials*, pp. 185, 191). In one of J. Watson's certificates for service her ministry is stated to be "sound and edifying though not large." (See art. by Edith Webb in *Journal*, x. 280.)

Mary Ridgway (1728-1804) was of Mountmellick, Ireland. She was a daughter of Joseph and Mary Sparkes, of Exeter. In 1753, she visited Ireland and was accompanied on part of her visit by Elizabeth Carleton, *aft.* Shackleton. Presumably on this service she met Joshua Ridgway, of Ballicarrol, Queens Co., and married him in 1754. During their short married life she did not undertake much public service. This period of her life has been fully related by James Jenkins and appears to have been a very sad one: her husband is described as "a gay young man of handsome fortune." The private troubles of this period and later are touched on slightly in printed records—"her exercises through life was many both outwardly and inwardly (those from without of a very peculiar and trying nature" (Leadbeater, *Biog. Notices*, 1823). "My sympathy is great with dear M. Ridgway; in thy freedom (though I suspect it will be a painful task) I should like to know the true state of things, that more than enough might not be in circulation" (R. Jones to Joseph Williams of Dublin, 24 v. 1800).

The brighter side of the picture is given by J. Jenkins :

" In the year 1776, I was one of a large company who dined at her house, and I have seldom seen what is called ' the honors of the table ' done more gracefully than by her at that time . . . thereby proving that polite hospitality is not incompatible with the Christian character " (pp. 606-611).

In note 35 there is recorded the marriage of Susanna Carleton and Michael Harlan—we have before us a reproduction of the wedding certification of these friends, by Gilbert Cope, of West Chester, Pa. The first signature after those of the parties (both signing Harlan) is that of Thomas Carleton and below are other signatures of Carletons and Harlans.

Calorics in Early Indiana

From a very interesting account of early Quakerism in Indiana, which has recently appeared in the life of Charles F. Coffin (1823-1916) we cull the following :

" The old horizontal stoves [in the meeting house], which would accommodate a stick of cordwood ; how the boy envied the caretaker who tip-toed solemnly about—from time to time—to fill them up again. Those old stoves never warmed anything but people's heads. The air near the floor was cold certainly, and that stove on the women's side of the room with its pile of bricks ! Each woman who sat in the gallery picked up a ' taker ' (or woolen holder) and took a brick to her seat to keep her feet warm. The return of those ' takers,' so that others could use them, was a cause of great interest to the children. Some were passed from hand to hand, but many attempted to throw them back to the stove. Mary Roberts was a sure shot, but by far the majority of them wandered wide, landing in laps and on nice bonnets. A great deal of suppressed indignation and many red faces resulted, and the impressive way in which the ' taker ' (which had wandered far from the proper path) was passed on was strikingly funny."

John Wesley and Friends' Workhouse

" Feb. 1744. Mr. Westley intended to have gone to see y^e Quakers Workhouse and I with him, but time would not admit. That is said to be y^e best to take a Plan from of any in London."

Quoted in *Trans. Wesley Hist. Soc.*, xiv. 40.