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## **The Suverkrop Letters, 1842-1887**

**Scotland/London, Australia, Sandwich Islands,  
California Gold Rush,  
Mexico, Isthmus of Panama, Mississippi River,  
Tennessee, Civil War Washington, Scotland, London**

V6

**Gilbert P. Gia, Editor**

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### **Forward**

**The letters of Isabella Ann Smith Suverkrop (1819-1903) and Edward Albert Suverkrop (1814-1895) provide an intimate glimpse into family life and society in America and Scotland of more than 150 years ago. In the mid-1930s their daughter said about the letters, "My mother found the letters written by herself 30 years previously. She kept them, and I have done the same for many years."<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> Suverkrop- pronounced *SOOVER-crop* - has been spelled Siwerkrop, Süwerkrop, Söverkrop, Suewerkrop, and Suwerkrop. Quoted is Euphemia Alberta Suverkrop (1859-1939) was Isabella's second child by that name. The first Euphemia died in infancy in California in 1857. Euphemia is pronounced *youfah-MIA*.

Feb 28. 1851.

This letter was written two weeks before her marriage, by T. A. S. she was at Redwood with her sister Jane. Mrs. Macleod.

I have acknowledge receipt of three letters, my darling's Pheme and Laby. Those of Eta & Jau came together. and today I was much unexpectedly rejoiced by the receipt of that which has made the journey from Edinburgh, in less than three weeks.

You seem to be greatly exercised about my change of state, I am sorry that your mother

**Lewis Paul Arthur (Lew) Suverkrop (1895-1965) was Euphemia's American nephew who corresponded with her and visited her at least twice in London. Decades later when Lewis wrote about his grandparents he noted, "My father was at sea from 1886 to 1892. His father from 1840-1846. And I made a voyage myself in 1916... Also, old man that I now am, I've never lost my interest, my very strong interest in sailing." The sea figures importantly in the letters, but generations of the Suverkrop family have valued them as a love story. Those letters appear in the body of this work while the Appendix contains explanatory notes and Suverkrop letters from before the American period.**

**I am indebted to the following for their kind help in making possible this document: Rick Suverkrop of the Republic of South Africa, Robert Brett Mackay Suverkrop of England, and those family members here in the United States, namely, Dana Suverkrop, Kim Suverkrop Farmer, Bard J. Suverkrop, and Donald M. (Don) Suverkrop.**

**Don Suverkrop mentioned above is the son of Lewis. Lewis was the son of Edward Albert Suverkrop, II, and he, Edward, was the son of the Isabella and Edward Suverkrop of these letters. Don was 90 when he caught the family-history "bug" and since then has lamented his late start in knowing his family's history.**

**Over the passage of a century, Isabella, Euphemia, Lewis, Bard, and Bard J. Suverkrop each transcribed the family's story. Although Don was late in coming, he played a crucial role in the creation of this paper. I recall the many times he offered to share the letters with me, and I recall the many**

times I demurred. There is no doubt whatsoever that without his measured persistence and encouragement this paper would not be before you today.

The Gold Rush letters transcribed here reside in the permanent collection of Sutter's Fort State Historic Park & State Indian Museum, California State Parks, 2701 L Street, Sacramento, California. Those letters appearing here dated before 1848 and after the American Civil War (after 1865) are in the possession of the Suverkrop family.

For improved readability I have added, deleted, and moved occasional punctuation and capitalization. Illegible and/or missing words appear as blank underscores. Some of the letters were transcriptions typed on a family typewriter which identified Lewis Suverkrop and his brother Bard Suverkrop as the transcribers -- although their work was done in different time periods. The bulk of the transcriptions was the work of Bard J. Suverkrop, and much of the supplied background history is also his. Those words are shown in parenthesis. Mine are bracketed.

Some transcriptions by Bard J. Suverkrop were the product of early-generation, voice-to-text software. There I have used strikethroughs and brackets for improved reading comprehension. An example from one of the letters: "*I should not think [Captain] Dickson will get out of this under £300 – for which naturally he will come ~~naturally~~ upon the underwriters [insurance coverage]. How devilish ~~luck~~ [lucky] I have nothing to do with the Warlock.*"

Some letters were handwritten copies of originals. In 2001 Bard J. Suverkrop wrote, "This is a copy of the original by Lew's Aunt Mia -- Euphemia. She did confirm that the letters were copied for distribution to the family. Lew thought that it was very possible that his maiden aunt had 'cleaned it up' for posterity. Both Lew and my father -- Bard -- commented that they believed Euphemia did edit the documents to 'sanitize' them. At any rate, the original transcription contains many spelling errors, bad punctuation, and what seem to be intention blank spaces. The hand written copy is rather illegible and might explain for the, at times, disjunct writing style."

## **The Suverkrop Story**

### **Edward Albert Suverkrop to California, 1848**

**[In the 1930s Euphemia wrote about her father.]<sup>2</sup> "In 1848 when rumors of the Californian gold fields reached the Islands [Hawaii], he set out on a voyage of discovery to San Francisco, and arrived at a period of intense excitement in the place not yet possessed by the United States Government & amounting to little more than a mission of Franciscan Friars."<sup>3</sup>**

**[Bard J. Suverkrop noted,] (Edward reached California on the 17th of June. His cargo was promptly dispatched and payment made in gold dust. His first impressions were recorded in a letter dated 19 June, 1848, addressed to his close friend R. C. Wyllie.)<sup>4</sup>**

**"I arrived here after a voyage of 18 days from land to land and of which five were calm. On arriving I found the place completely deserted owing tremendous excitement caused by the recent discovery of the gold mine at about 150 miles from here on the Sacramento. Everybody is gone up. Even our old friend Ricord<sup>5</sup> who is working up to his [\_\_\_\_\_] in water.**

**[Transcriber Bard J. Suverkrop wrote of that underline,] (I recall it as a pictogram showing a buttocks over a horizontal line. I'm thinking it meant 'up to his ass' in water.) The quantity of gold found even with the rough machines in vogue is enormous, varying from an ounce to more than a pound per person. It is said to be of a very pure description and is found in a clay & gravel soil deposited on the surface of granitic (sic) and**

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<sup>2</sup> All text in brackets is that of Gilbert P. Gia.

<sup>3</sup> [Euphemia likely wrote it in the early 1930s. The discovery of gold on January 24, 1848 started the Californian Gold Rush.]

<sup>4</sup> Hereafter, text in parenthesis is that of Bard J. Suverkrop.

<sup>5</sup> (The Ricord mentioned here appears to be John Ricord, who was on the Hawaiian Islands from 1844 to 1847. He arrived in February of 1844, a thirty-two year old lawyer from western New York.")

conglomerate boulders. Its appearance is laminated -- particles are also found of the size of a nail. The finding of this mine will be a sad disaster to the progress of the country and only a few hundred of people will advantage from it. The quantity that I saw brought to town yesterday myself exceeded 12,000 [pounds?] in value. It was taken by Dickson & Hay and Millies & Hayward at 16 Troy --1/3 taken in goods 2/3 in cash. Should no opportunity arise to schooner to the I's [Hawaiian Islands] within a few days I shall most likely start with a party, the Gov. and staff to explore this El Dorado on horseback - but of course business first. Gov. Mason with Capt. Fullsome [Folsom] & others are thinking of going, so I hear."

[Isabella explained,] "He speedily made acquaintance with the authorities, and was invited by the Governor to join a party that were proceeding up the country to explore the Gold region, and test the truth of the reports regarding it. Besides the Mexican officials, the party consisted of a number of American officers and other gentlemen including Genl. Sherman (later distinguished by his "March to the Sea" in the Civil War) and an escort of soldiers, all well mounted The necessary baggage provisions, etc, were carried by mules. My children have heard what an enjoyable trip it was, riding through a grand picturesque country & camping out at night under the canopy of heaven. Edward & Genl. Sherman became fast friends and slept under the same blanket! They visited old Capt. Sutter at Sutter's fort, he gave them every facility rumors [?] in acquiring the information they desired, [and they] found that the rumors of gold were well founded, & [they] returned."

(A lengthy report of the entire trip can be found in the Congressional Record entitled "Gold and Quicksilver Mines of California" dated August 17, 1848.)<sup>6</sup>

[Edward wrote,] "On the 7th of July [1848] I left the mill and crossed to a small stream emptying in the American Fork, three or four miles below the saw mill...(now known as Weber's creek)...They had about thirty Indians employed whom they pay in merchandise. On the 8th of July I returned to the Lower mines and on the following day to Sutter's." (On the 7th of July

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<sup>6</sup> [See Appendix F, *Gold and Quicksilver Mines of California*]

**EAS met Mr. Chester Smith Lyman whose diaries provide interesting reading on the life in the goldfields. Mr. Lyman had been in residence in the Hawaiian Islands from October 1, 1845 to June 3, 1847, and he and EAS [Edward] had been casual acquaintances during that time.)**

**(In the letter of October 12, 1848 to his [Edward's] brother-in-law Fred Sack, Edward tells of his excitement.) "Hardly believing my eyes on seeing the gold brought down, I accepted an offer of Governor Mason, who was bound on an Expedition to the El Dorado. It would be idle almost for me to tell you of my adventures and would take up more space than I have at present to spare--Suffice to say that as far as I know or have ever heard, there is no parallel example of the astounding Extent of these mines, in the Whole History of the World---The Gold is found in the mines- low down, in pieces like fish scales-higher up in small lumps, and in the hills it is dug up without washing, by persons digging with their knives, in pieces varying in size and shape from a large shot to 5 - 10."**

### **A Plan to Get Rich, 1849**

**(One idea that did bear fruition during this period first occurred to EAS [Edward] on his return to San Francisco in September. From San Francisco he wrote,) "I wish there were Graves Boats here--a man would make a fortune in a year with one. My Captain was offered today 400 for the hire of his long boat for two trips up the Sacramento a distance of 100 miles. The charterers sending the crew. I myself shall have to take my watch and trick at the helm as all our crew have deserted."**

**[Isabella] "Edward seeing that it was to his advantage to remain in San Francisco, settled his affairs with the Honolulu people, and finally entered into partnership with a firm of Englishmen in the new settlement, which augmented itself daily by arrivals of enterprising young men from business houses in Australia, South America etc. as well as many direct from Europe & the States."**

**(He mentioned this idea of a boat to ply the Sacramento carrying goods and passengers to and from the goldfields to his business partners. The overwhelming possibilities for profit in this project added to the need for his**

**prompt departure for New York and England the following spring. During this period of intense activity, EAS made another trip to Oahu on October 25, 1847-[1848] to convey more goods to San Francisco for the firm of Skinner and Judd.)**

**(Late in March [1849] a proposed journey to England via New York was begun. The reasons for the trip to England were threefold: to cement the association with the Pelly Company, to finish negotiations for the two boats to ply the Sacramento River, and to buy an iron warehouse which would be shipped around the Cape Horn and set up in San Francisco as protection against the hazard of fire. Because of the amount of gold needed, Edward asked a friend, a captain in the Pacific Squadron of H.M. Navy, who happened to be returning to England at the same time, to take a large quantity of the gold dust to the mint in London for him.<sup>7</sup> Knowing by this time the importance of the discovery and the necessity for rapid action, he made up his mind to take the shortest route possible.)**

### **To London for Business**



**Hat devices are H. M. Navy. Suverkrop family photo**

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<sup>7</sup> This is was the fourth HMS Calypso, a Sixth-Rate, 20-gun built at Chatham Dockyard and launched May 1845. Builder's measurements 120ft long, 37ft-6in wide and of 731 tons. Breaking up was completed on January 29, 1866 by Castle & Beech of Charlton. [www.britainsnavy.co.uk/Ships/HMS%20Calypso/](http://www.britainsnavy.co.uk/Ships/HMS%20Calypso/)

**[Euphemia:] "He himself [Edward] chose the quickest way to travel. I believe it was as follows. A ride across Mexico. From San Francisco he departed for the first part of Mazatlán, then bought a horse and rode to Veracruz for the steamer to New York. The [Mexican] route was on the usual public highway: Durango, Zacatecas, and Queretaro. There were other horsemen besides himself and they escorted ~~to~~ the usual public convenience called a Diligence. He had a desk for traveling, which had a secret drawer. In this he carried some of the golden quills,<sup>8</sup> such as were used for writing at the time. He reached London sometime before the vessel, which did come around Cape Horn. And he went at once to his sister Mrs. Sack."**

**[In April 1849 a Tallahassee, Florida newspaper reported the following:] "Advices from San Francisco, California, to the 7th of February, reached town yesterday afternoon. They were brought by Edward A. Suwerkrop, Esq who has made a very quick trip overland through Mexico to Vera Cruz, thence to Mobile, and thence to this city. Last evening we had the pleasure of a brief conversation with Mr. S. at the Irving House where he stopped, and obtained from him some very late and highly interesting intelligence, not only from California, but from the Sandwich Islands [Hawaii] and Mexico.<sup>9</sup> We were happy to have so intelligent a gentleman to converse with. We found that he had visited the mines with Governor Mason and Capt. Folsom, and had been over about three leagues of the diggings. The trip of Mr. Suwerkrop through Mexico was a quick one. He left San Blas on the 1st of March, and reached Vera Cruz on the 16th, traveling a distance of nine hundred and ninety miles over execrable roads, and was robbed en route, in sixteen days. He left Vera Cruz on the 16th, in the steamship Great Western, and arrived at Mobile on the 24th. He met in Mexico about one thousand Americans, Mexicans, Englishmen, Frenchmen, &c. &c. on their**

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<sup>8</sup> [A later correspondent said he concealed gold dust inside writing quills.]

<sup>9</sup> [The Kingdom of Hawaii was established in 1795, and by 1810 it had won the recognition of major European powers. The United States became its chief trading partner. In 1893 the Queen of Hawaii was overthrown, largely at the hands of five United States citizens doing business on the Islands. Hawaii then became a republic. It was annexed by the United States in 1898.]

way to the coast, bound to California.”<sup>10</sup> [The newspaper said Suwerkrop had transferred one-thousand ounces of his own gold to New York.]

(He contacted the Vanderbilt Company in New York and signed an agreement, which would deliver the steamer Gold Hunter to San Francisco early the next year. [See Appendix H. Steamship Gold Hunter] These negotiations completed, he then set out for England, arriving in Liverpool around the end of May. He proceeded directly to the home of his sister Anna Sack in Norwood.)

[Edward's arrival in England was noted in the June 22, 1849 issue of *The Welshman, Principality of Wales*:] “This gentleman has personally visited the “diggings” and speaks in the highest terms of the prospects of the country, not aim reference to the metallic riches, but likewise in respect of agricultural capabilities. The view from the higher range of hills is described as being extremely beautiful, and the soil very rich. On one point only does Mr. *Suwerkrop* seem to express a doubt, viz., as to the eligibility [suitability] of the site of San Francisco.”

[Euphemia:] “In the spring of the year 1849, my mother with two young ladies set out from Granton [Scotland] by steamer for London to visit friends, and generally to have a good time. Her friends returned before she did. I will now write in her own words, of what happened, as she tells it, in her “Reminiscence.”<sup>11</sup> [Written about 1901. Here Isabella tells about meeting Edward in 1849, after the passage of a few years.]

### **Edward Meets Isabella**

“The day before I left for home had a letter from PHEME, enclosing one from William McLeod, of which at first reading I could make ‘neither head nor tail’

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<sup>10</sup> [Floridian-Journal - Tallahassee, Florida, Apr 14, 1849]

<sup>11</sup> [On May 3, 2016 Rick Suverkrop wrote:] “I have a strong suspicion that the letter is in fact in the handwriting of her [Isabella Ann Smith Suverkrop’s] daughter Euphemia. I suspect she copied it for some reason, no Xerox at the time!” [Curator Nancy Jenner wrote:] “Comparison with remaining original letters indicates complete deletion of certain passages considered unfavorable by daughter Euphemia, plus rearrangement of narrative, in other instances.” Email of November 7, 2016 to Kim Suverkrop Farmer.]

on account of its mysterious allusions to a certain acquaintance of mine whose name did not appear.<sup>12</sup> Another note, however, unnoticed, now claimed attention. It was dated New York and signed E. A. Suverkrop, briefly noting that a ship had left San Francisco at such a date [in 1849] for London, and having business in New York had quite accidentally encountered his old acquaintance William, that he was meantime busily engaged, but as soon as he could get away was coming to Edinburgh to renew old friendships. A line at the end gave his address, that of a business firm in Broad Street [London]. This news of an old friend, unseen for a period of twelve or thirteen years, but always remembered with affectionate interest, came as a very pleasant surprise.”

“I took my letter to the breakfast table & acquainted my host with its contents, telling him that an old and intimate friend of my brother & myself this gentleman was, and how much I should like to see him. ‘Come to town with me’ said Mr Wilkins, ‘and we shall seek him out, it is quite near my office.’ We did so but ineffectually, Mr S. was absent. All that could be done was to leave my card. Mr W. proceeding to call again later, which he did leaving an invitation to dine next day, the last of my stay. Miss de Bruyer hurried up and accompanied me on a shipping expedition, [and] he and Crusen dined at Mr Wilkins. I sang, and we had a merry evening.”

“Now, of course it would have been impossible for me to have gone to the opera & all over London with young men, had I not been a stranger. In these emancipated days we have changed all that, but I always delighted in defying Mrs Grundy,<sup>13</sup> moreover I looked ten years younger than I was, and might have been, so I reasoned, a little sister or country cousin of those nice fellows who took so much trouble to give me pleasure. And Mama was a tremendous stickler for the proprieties & would never have dreamed of permitting such a thing, but she took it all very calmly when I told her about it, for after all, it was only once secret.”

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<sup>12</sup> [Isabella Ann Smith’s sister Jane was married to Donald MacLeod, and they lived in the United States. William MacLeod was Donald’s brother who became a painter and was the first curator of the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D.C.]

<sup>13</sup> [Mrs. Grundy was the pen name of a newspaper columnist who wrote on social manners.]

“He wrote to me every three or four days, and long before he made his appearance my sisters & I and our friend Isabella were quite prepared for what was coming, though it must not be supposed that my mind was made up on the subject. I could not write and say ‘Don't come,’ so I waited the course of events, thinking in the meantime as little about the matter as I could!”

“My friend had announced his intended departure for Granton, & we were on the look-out. On Wednesday, May 30th I was dressing when Isabella, [a friend] who was ready, knocked at my door with the announcement, ‘He's Come!’ & soon after, we all met around the breakfast table.”



Edward Albert Suverkrop (Suverkrop family painting)

“The door opened and Mr Wilkins came in. Overtopping him was a tall, sun-browed man, & just at first I failed to recognize but I knew it must be Edward. *I rose, and took a step forward. The next moment however I was very much astonished to find myself lifted off the floor in the clasp of two manly arms,* [Euphemia redacted the words in italics when she copied her

**mother's Reminiscence] and then came words of greeting in a well-remembered voice. Then he went over to be presented to Mrs Wilkins, and I feeling rather red and flurried had time to recover myself."**

**"None of you remember your father as he looked before the inevitable cares and trials of life had somewhat sobered his naturally joyous temperament, and I wish I could set before you his picture as I remember him at the time of which I write, when he had just completed his 35th year. He was undoubtedly very prepossessing in appearance. Tall, erect, well-proportioned in figure, and with a countenance sparking with life, and the sunshine of a happy, kindly nature, everyone was taken with him at first glance."**

**"He gave us some entertaining sketches during breakfast of his adventures in some civilized regions, and Mama expressed her astonishment to us after he had left the house with Robert 'that he should have come out of those wild places such a perfect gentleman!' 'Did you expect,' said I, 'to see him in a blanket, with feathers on his head?'"<sup>14</sup>**

**"Robert stepped out. When it was time for him to say good bye, Isabella and a friend accompanied him to town. Isabella wrote:] "At 9 pm I took leave of the family and attended by Edward and Mr Wilkins drove down to Granton. 'I shall come to Edinburgh the very first leisure I can command' were Edward's parting words before taking himself to his sister's house at Norwood --while I sailed on my pleasant & peaceful voyage, duly arriving on Jun. 2 afternoon about five o'clock."**

**"I seem to have had no end of correspondence. A London friend who wrote to me, Mr de Bruau, had been introduced to my 'California friend' and was not sparing of banter on the subject of his [Edward's] 'intentions.' However as in a subsequent letter he [Edward] complained of me giving him 'cayenne pepper.' I suppose I came off best."**

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<sup>14</sup> [Robert Mackay Smith was Isabella's brother. Isabella, her sisters, and her mother lived with him. See *Appendix B, Robert Mackay Smith, 1809-1888.*]

**“Next day Robert [her brother] accompanied us all to the Law Courts, where we saw some of our legal ‘knightly’ friends, and then Edward took Latty, Isabella, & myself to see a panorama of California. He made great fun of it, and of the man who explained it and murdered the Spanish names, but [Edward] allowed that one might derive some idea from it of the ‘Golden Gate’ and the beautiful bay.”**

**“When we got home, Isabella & Latty went to put off their bonnets. The drawing room door was open, and as we passed, I being last, Edward drew me within it, and shut the door. And now, almost without knowing why or how it was done, I had promised to share his life in the far-off land. I asked him not to speak to the elders yet, & then I escaped, feeling as if some strange thing had happened to me but not dissatisfied with my own part in the matter.”**

**“Next day I went shopping with Mama & and then to see Hans. There was a dinner party that day. Esther Miller (afterwards L. Creighile), Jas. Campbell, [and] Dr. Voelker, [who was] a delightful young German who became Professor of Agriculture in Cirencester College & was often with us in those days.<sup>15</sup> Mrs Brydon came in the evening, and all our friends took to the ‘Californian’ & were much interested in his account of the new Dorado.”**

**“Next day he spoke to Robert & he [Robert] to Mama -- she gave me a scene [stern lecture?]. Edward took himself out of the way, and Hans called, which was a little diversion, but Latty was out, and Mama deemed it necessary to stay in the drawing room all the time to tea time.”**

**“At last I bethought me to show him the pictures in the dining room, and she did not follow us - I told him [Robert], and he gave me his blessing. Edward had a talk with Mama after dinner, & we planned an excursion to Melrose next day, Saturday, but it rained.”**

**“On Sunday we all went to church. Our pew being a conspicuous one, the distinguished-looking stranger, as I afterwards heard, excited much**

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<sup>15</sup> [The Royal Agricultural University, Gloucestershire, Southwest England]

comment & conjecture. In my diary is this note –‘Mama is getting very fond of him.’”

“Pheme came home next day, & Peter [who was Edward’s classmate and Isabella’s brother] to whom Edward had written, arrived by dinner. By this time everything was on a satisfactory footing, only the engagement was to be a secret. This I observed with the general public, but not with my own special friends. Edward voted for a miniature likeness of me, so he called on Mr Musgrave and arranged for him [himself] to sit first; which he did three times.” [see Appendix I, Gold Locketts.]

[During the several months Edward was in Great Britain, his words about California interested newspapers. On June 22, 1849 *The Welshman - Principality of Wales* - wrote, “Beds of coal have been also found near the coast, but cannot, of course be worked under the present state of things. In addition to these very promising accounts there is a verbal corroboration afforded by Mr. Suwerkrop, a highly intelligent gentleman, who was the Dutch Consul, at the Sandwich Islands, and is now in London. This gentleman has personally visited the ‘diggings’ and speaks in the highest terms of the prospects of the country, not aiming reference to the metallic riches, but likewise in respect of agricultural capabilities. The view from the higher range of hills is described as being extremely beautiful, and the soil very rich. On one point only does Mr. *Suwerkrop* seem to express a doubt, viz., as to the eligibility [suitability] of the site of San Francisco.”]

[Isabella’s letter continued,] “I went into town with Edward several times as [and] called on Mrs Cramlin, & June & a friend came with us to ~~Duloch~~ [Dulwich] where we all enjoyed the splendid paintings, especially the Murillos [Bartolomé Esteban Murillo]. As the gold dust had arrived, your father took his sister & myself to see it melted.” [The larger story about Edward’s connection with the California Gold Rush is in *Appendix C, Edward’s Parents* and in *Appendix D, Edward, the Warlock, and the Australian Period.*]

“A weird sight it was. The glowing furnaces and men raking them with long shovels, finally pouring the liquid metal into moulds - the contents when

cool & in the form of bars, were sent to the bank. There we saw them, or more like them, on a subsequent occasion, & I tried in vain to lift one!"

"It made a welcome variation to us both when your father got a day free of city business and we could take long country walks - The neighborhood of Norwood Sydenham was [is] very different now. Great part of it was real wild country, and there was abundance of woodland, & the prettiest flowers and gardens. The 'jerry-builder' not yet a power in the land with his long straight rows of cheap dwellings."

"We had gentlemen to dinner several times, never any ladies. I do not think my sister-in-law particularly liked her own sex, or cared to cultivate them. One family was the exception, that of Dr. Smith who lived at Croydons with several unmarried daughters. We dined there. And the doctor was my father-in-law's physician. At Woodvale, his family joining, as in the evening, with other young people for a dance. His youngest daughter, Fanny, was a brilliant pianist. Then there was company at dinner. We had the dessert and wine laid in the drawing room & moved \_\_\_\_\_ [there?] to partake of it. Which I thought a pretty & refined finish to a repast. It was a beautiful room looking on the garden, and opening from it was a conservatory, in which besides many nice flowering plants, was [had?] a camellia tree with 60 flowers. We generally had music in the evening, Mr Bolderman had a fine voice & sang well like most Germans."

"On the 9th October Edward brought me back to Edinb. It was a fatiguing journey & we had nothing to eat but some buns bought at one of the stations! We left Norwood at eight, London at ten, and did not reach Edinb. till half past one next morning! Of course they were all sitting up for us, and supper on the table, but the part of it was that I was so "done up" that day, that I was perforce in bed till the evening."

"Latty went off on a visit to Mrs Duncan. Your father left me for London on the evening of the 11th and sailed from Liverpool by Cunard steamer at two on the Saturday following. He had completely won my mother's heart, and she praised me highly for resisting his ardent wish that we could be married in Norwood Church, consent or none, for the thought it would be difficult to say him nay."

**“His portrait had come from London. There it had been set as a broche in pure Californian gold, as you know, with a lock of his hair behind. My ring required alloy to make it wearable, but the engraved and raised work has long been worn away as it has not left my finger for forty-eight years.”<sup>16</sup>**

**“Next day, Saturday, Edward & I, with Mama as chaperone, let out at 8 am for Glasgow, then Peter received us and we returned home. Sunday passed in church to begin with, & then I showed Edward all my old & beloved haunts, some of them changed [today], but not the loch & mountains. We left early on Monday with Peter & went on to Edin. Edward sat for the last time to Mr Musgrave and took the train for London in the evening, leaving me to ponder over the events of the last weeks, to wonder what had so entirely changed the whole aspect of things around me and of my own life, and, like the old woman in the ballad, to ejaculate, ‘This is no me!’<sup>17</sup>”**

**“Your father wished to take me out with him, but of this the seniors would not hear, to his great disappointment. We were to wait till he returned "to settle at home!" This was no part of the program according to my view, I thought it would be a very flat ending to a pretty little romance, but we consoled ourselves by hoping that he might be able to come for me in a year.”**

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<sup>16</sup> [The gold lockets of Isabella and Edward appear no longer to be in the Suverkrop families. *Appendix I, Gold Locket* shows the miniature locket of Robert MacKay Smith.]

<sup>17</sup> [Probably Carolina Nairne, aka Lady Nairne, née Oliphant, Aug 16, 1766 – Oct 26, 1845, Scottish songwriter and song collector.]



**Isabella Ann Smith Suverkrop, Suverkrop family collection**

**"I sat for my miniature a good many times. It was only a head, but the cloud background and details of curls took up time. It was thought good, but at Mama's desire it was sent to her after our marriage, and unaccountably disappeared. I \_\_\_\_\_ [must confess?] that \_\_\_\_\_ [the miniature?] of my fiancée I was not pleased with -- it did not do him justice. He sent me from London the unique little brooch which I consider my most precious possession, [and said] that my setting should be of real Californian gold, which he was daily expecting. A quill full of dust, which he was bringing home for my acceptance, was taken by the Mexican robbers, very politely, on his journey."**

**[Edward's sister Mrs. Anna Margaretha – Gertrude - Sack invited Isabella to travel from Scotland to Norwood, near London. There at the Sack's Woodvale House Isabella might stay while Edward was in England.]**

### **Isabella Meets Edward in London**

**[This is Edward's letter of August 28, 1849 written from London:] "My dearest Belle. I did not get your letter yesterday till too late to answer it by the mail --not had my sister written you asking you to speak to your Mama about spending the time that I have still to remain in England under the care of my sister at Norwood. I shall write to your Mama myself, urging her to grant my sister's request, as it will be impossible for me to leave this [business] before the middle of next month if even then, as I have to attend**

**to the loading of the [ship] Flora. Should the Calypso come in the meantime, I should not feel myself warranted in prolonging my stay in England, as being almost the only agent of others in the steamboat in which a large amount of capital is embarked, I must sacrifice my private interest and feelings for the benefit of those concerned more than I am.”<sup>18</sup> [See Appendix H, Steamship Gold Hunter]**

**“If your Mama object to your travelling alone, should she accede [agree] to this our urgent request, write me immediately and I’ll come post hast -- or should she wish to come also or would wish PHEME or LATTY to accompany you. Believe me that you and they would be most welcome.”**

**“Pray ask Mrs Musgrave what I am indebted to her for my precious portrait? I’ll send her a post office order, and she may finish it when I return you to the arms of your anxious Mama.” (Mrs. Musgrave was a popular miniaturist. She and her husband, William T. Musgrave, a painter, were both active from 1843-1864 in Edinburgh.)**

**“You cannot think how anxiously I am looking forward to reeving your Mama’s approval to this project. I am so nervous about it, so overjoyed at the possibility of her acceding, that I can hardly contain myself. Write immediately what I am to hope for, and believe me your own, Edward.”**

**[Isabella’s Remembrance:] “Had a letter from Mrs Sack inviting me to come to her during Edward’s stay, & having arranged it with Mama we returned home rather sooner \_\_\_\_\_ [and made necessary?] and sundry preparations in the way of new dresses having been made. PHEME and I left for London by sea on the 8th Sept. and arrived early on the 10th, a quick passage.”**

**“We were met by Edward and went out to Norwood by railway. Mrs Sack had gone to town, but Mr Sack [Frederick William] was there & received us**

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<sup>18</sup> [Monmouthshire-Merlin (Wales), Apr 28, 1849, as reprinted from the New York Herald: “The British ship of war, Calypso, was at Mazatlan, to leave soon for England. She was to take away over 2,000,000 dollars in specie. 1,000 ozs belonged to Mr. Suwerkrop, the Danish consul, who placed it on board the Calypso, for want of a direct means of conveyance to the United States.”

very kindly with his eldest daughter Margaret. (No children of the Sack's survived into adulthood.) Woodvale House was a large and handsome residence surrounded by grounds with a small lake in which ducks were disporting themselves, and plenty of flowers, & all, fruit etc. We walked about after lunch & a pretty kitten came out & curtsied! "

"Mrs Sack came home in the evening, accompanied by Mr Boldon and a handsome young German who lived with them, and of whom they were all very fond. The remaining members of the family were Minna -- a pretty interesting girl of eleven -- Tilly (Dulcie) two years younger, and Gertrude -- 'the baby' and pet, about five -- also Albert who was in the service of the Mercantile Marine & at home between voyages. He was I think about 15. Fred, the eldest son was abroad, and Louis the youngest, absent at school. Lizzie, the beauty of the family, also at school in Hamburg."

"Pheme stayed two days and then left for Liverpool, and I settled down to a very quiet existence for nearly a month. I found my sister-in-law clever and entertaining, if somewhat cynical. The gentlemen were usually absent all day, & so [I] dined early; a very different life from the continual whirl of society in Edinb."

(If all went well, they could be engaged for a year, and then Isabella could go to her sister Jane in Tennessee and Edward could meet her there to be married. So it was settled. With the approach of fall, Edward was anxiously awaiting news from Isabella as to when she would arrive in Ashwood, Tennessee at the home of her sister Jane McLeod. In October he [Edward] was finishing a wooden house built on the end of one of San Francisco's long wharfs. The City itself was encroaching on the cove. Several of the piers were solidly lined with houses built on piles, containing shops, restaurants and other businesses.)

[In late 1849 a newspaper in Tasmania reported this:] "Two small steamers are now plying on the Sacramento, and measures are now taken for the establishment of a line of steamers between San Francisco and the Sandwich Islands [Hawaii]. E.A. Suwerkrop, Esq, was building in New York a steamer of 300 horse-power, to draw only five feet and a half of water, for

the navigation of the Sacramento.”<sup>19</sup> (The vessel was 435 tons in weight and seventy-five feet in length and twenty-six feet beam The steamer was under the command of Captain Couillard and made three trips a week from San Francisco's Pacific Wharf to Sacramento at the foot of Third Street. Passage was \$25 to and from Sacramento, freight was \$2 per 100 lbs. and \$.75 per measured foot. Unfortunately while the profits of these first steamers were enormous, competition soon was to arrive and the fares fell rapidly.)

### **Edward Crosses the Isthmus**

[In this letter to Isabella he describes his return to California:] “Jan 8, 1850. I promised to give you a description of my journey across the Isthmus. I will therefore begin at Chagres, a poor miserable place, consisting only of a few houses inhabited by a mixed population of half Indians, half Spanish. The small harbor is protected by a fort built by the old Spaniards (Ft. San Lorenzo), and non-withstanding its age, and the ravages of time. The frequent assaults made upon it by the Buccaneers of old, it still stands as a monument of the warlike and enterprising spirit of the conquistadors of the New World. It is however difficult to imagine that in the degenerate race one deals with now, we see the descendants of that chivalrous nation. Nothing now remains but a few grand ruins of their former greatness.”

“You may easily suppose that a great deal of bustle and confusion attended the disembarkation of such a number of passengers. Fortunately I was one of the first to get on shore with my friend Mr Klauke who thanks to his commission as Mail Agent had a boat called to himself. I was therefore able to get a canoe to take me up the Chagres River before the remainder of the passengers had come ashore, thereby enhancing the value of a passage. I had to pay forty dollars, nearly eight pounds, for the said canoe with two Indians to take me to Cruces, a distance of some 60 miles by water, but not a third of that distance by a direct line.”

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<sup>19</sup> [Colonial Times --Hobart, Tasmania-- Dec 18, 1849]

**“Nothing can exceed the romantic beauty of the river, covered as the banks are with the most luxurious vegetation. The gigantic [trees?] covered with eternal verdure supporting with their mighty arms parasitical plants of all descriptions.” The rainy season had been over for nearly a month, and the river which during that time is subject to heavy floods, had much subsided, rendering the ascent comparatively easy, and as I lay extended full length on my mat, I had time to reflect and wonder at the almost sudden transition from the icy region I had left not a fortnight before, and the delightful climate I was now luxuriating in.”**

**“By dint of paddling and hauling up the rapids, I arrived at Cruces in forty-eight hours without accident, but not without adventure. On landing the first night at an Indian village to get a cup of coffee (village six miles beyond Gatun?) and to stretch my long legs with a walk by moonlight, I saw a panther quietly walking down toward the river to refresh himself with the bath or indulge in the inexpensive luxury of a drink of the pure limpid water. At first I was rather startled and drew my pistol, when the thought came to me that as he had done me no harm, nor appeared to notice me, I had better let well alone, stood still, and my lord the panther without even favoring me with a friendly growl, passed on. I returned to the village to enjoy my cup of coffee, glad that I had reflection enough not to provoke a quarrel. The moon being nearly full, I continued my journey by night. You can imagine nothing so enchanting as a trip up the Chargres river at such a time.”**

**“The chattering of the birds, the wild song of the boatmen, the howling of the monkeys and other inhabitants of the forest all contribute to relieve the monotony of the journey, and break the solemn silence of these Primeval forests. Now and then a deeply laden canoe with specie [gold], darts rapidly down with the current toward Chargres. There to be re-embarked and carried to Europe to minister to the wants and luxuries of the civilized part of the world.”**

**“Besides seeing a few inoffensive alligators basking in the sun at midday, and shooting a lizard – iguana nearly three feet long, which my natives said they would have for dinner, I arrived at Cruces without further adventure.**

Here I slept and, thanks again to Mr Klauke, succeeded in hiring two excellent mules, one for my baggage, the other for myself. All for the small sum ? [question mark is in the letter] of thirty-two dollars, 6 pounds ten, for a journey of 27 miles. Since the discovery of California, the gold fever rages here, too."

"I started about 7 o'clock in the morning from Cruces, which is merely a collection of grass-built huts inhabited by the natives, pigs, and fleas ad nauseam..... The road from there to Panama [city] lies through narrow passes and watercourses, nearly impassable during the rainy season and goodness knows bad enough during the dry. One comfort, however, is that these passes are so narrow and deep, and are in shade by the luxuriant tropical vegetation so that the sun tries in vain to pierce them with its scorching rays. The journey is therefore made with comparative ease, and it is only upon arriving within a few miles of Panama all that you are exposed to the heat."

"Panama, now almost in ruins, lies at the head of an immense bay of the same name. Its ruins give melancholy proof of its former importance, now again to be revived. The cathedral, it's college, and large monasteries are evidences of the religiously civilizing spirits of its founders and military defenses. Now alas, all, all falling into ruin, shew<sup>20</sup> the commercial importance of the pass [route] from the Pacific to the Atlantic Ocean."

"The old town of Panama lies about 9 miles from the present one but was pillaged and razed to the ground by the famous buccaneer, the Welshman Henry Morgan in 1670. This man, with his band of robbers, held sway for several years in the Isthmus, having taken Panama and Chargres, (1671) he was enabled to make predatory excursions on both coasts, and after acquiring vast wealth he retired to Jamaica, was made deputy governor, and rewarded by King Charles II with a knighthood. Luck is reward of merit – such as it is!"

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<sup>20</sup> [Shew, meaning show, remains in common usage in Scotland, North England, and Ulster.]

**"I had hardly finished writing my last line when I was obliged to ship myself and effects on board of the Panama (operated by the Pacific Mail Steamship Co.) [was] Capt. Baillie: both in quality, excellence. I wish I could say the same of all those on board. The Panama was built to accommodate fifty cabin and forty steerage passengers. We muster 290-odd besides the ship's crew, so you may suppose we are pretty closely packed. I have a comfortable cabin, well ventilated on deck, which I share with my friend Klauke and Mr John Starkey of Liverpool."**

**"The generality of our passengers are of some standing in society. Men who possess something to push their fortunes in the world besides talent and energy. Several are returning to San Francisco, and we have some ten or twelve married couples, or ladies who are about joining their husbands in San Francisco. Among them is the family of Capt. Sutter, a German who may be called the father of civilization in California. His wife and daughter are very agreeable, unsophisticated Swiss peasants. Several of our passengers had not the precaution to purchase through tickets in New York and had lingered in Panama off from two weeks to two months. Those there during the rainy season have contracted a low fever, very annoying but not always fatal. Persons like myself acclimated to a warm temperature, it never affects, but one poor fellow breathed his last yesterday. He was of excellent family and died as a Christian."**

### **Edward Writes from San Francisco**

**"May 15, 1850. My dearest Love. I received yours of the 7 March and in a few days shall be rejoiced with another [letter] wherein you will have heard of my arrival. In some newspapers I sent you will see an account of a tremendous fire we have had here again on the 4th inst [last]. When a man set to work clearing away the ruins of his house, and had erected a building – covered it with canvas and [he] slept under it – on the same spot that 24 hours before he had slept by under a different roof. Little more than 10 days have elapsed and the better part of the buildings are up again and business doing as usual. We have secured news today of the Flora having put into Rio and was there on the 1st Feb'y. I wish to goodness she would come in, as her cage [cargo?] would sell splendidly." (A few days after the fire, the**

steamer The Gold Hunter which Edward had contracted for in New York, arrived in San Francisco.)

[The following letter from San Francisco dated October 15, 1850 was sent to Isabella in care of Will McLeod, Esq., 71 Irving Place, New York. It was carried there via the ship Columbus, "per Columbus."]

"My dearest Bella. So truly have you kept your promise of not writing again, and were it not for your recent lines in the Economist of August acknowledging receipt of my letter of 18 June, I would almost have thought you had been ill or had taken your departure of N York without giving me due warning --- The next mail, arriving here about the 21st instant will however bring something decisive about your movements. If so you can depend upon me seconding you to the best of my ability and agility – For as soon as I hear you are about embarking to N.Y. by the next steamer I shall be off for Panama, *coute qui coute*.<sup>21</sup> If however you decide upon accepting the chaperonage of any fine Smith [relative] I must fold my hands and cry for patience to bear the evil of waiting till you come ..."

"Good God what a poor, poor creature would man be, if he had not the 'pleasures of memory of the past' to refer to, for the enjoyment of the present ... You cannot think how curious I feel about my contemplated change of life – For the life of me I can't explain it by writing here. I would – this is a feeling of superlative happiness altho not unmixed with a certain degree of anxiety let I am, by asking you to live with me here, causing you to regret, to feel the want of old associations and the comforts of your home --- So my dearest love I then feel as if I could send business and California and all to – botheration – and do something rash. How I long to have you by me to counsel and advise – for me to whisper all my confidences – oh when will this wretched state cease? Seems I have now my whole time occupied in my business and that at present receives all my attention, in a few months it will please God be different and I shall have you by me. God Bless you dearest till next mail – with kind remembrances to the McLeods, believe me your ever attached, E.A. Suverkrop"

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<sup>21</sup> French, "cost what it may"

## **Isabella, Are You in the United States?**

**(By the middle of November, Edward had yet not heard from Isabella. Hoping that she had already reached Ashwood, Tennessee, he wrote there in care of Donald McLeod.)**

**“San Francisco 15th November 1850. My dearest Bella -- I wrote you last on the 1st inst. [of this month] to the usual care of McLeod at New York – and altho I expect to receive a letter in answer to mine of the 14 July, I thought it would have come from your hand instead of PHEME’s [Isabella’s sister], but *no importe* the issue is the same and as you appear to be in a regular bustle of departure, your excuse for not writing is evident. PHEME’s letter of the 6th Sept, therefore brings me the gratifying intelligence that you intended in the beginning of October to take your departure for New York in the first place, another meeting with Donald, proceed on to Tennessee, there to await my arrival. Long and anxiously as I have been expecting this intelligence and making my preparations in consequence, it would be impossibility, were I not to neglect important matters \_\_\_\_\_ to proceed to join you by the steamer that carries this mail -- for reason which you will learn with we meet, convincing you that I act for the best. [He will delay in meeting her.] My plan is however formed. I shall leave this at latest you the first December steamer and proceed by the way of New Orleans to Ashwood – there to claim you as my wife [and] begging you will accelerate the day that is to indissolubly join us and make such arrangements as you and Jane [Isabella’s sister] deem necessary for the event. You are the paramount object of my life, and as such the first that is to be processed or attained in my intended visit to the state. Once [you are] mine, other matters of secondary consideration have to be attend to.”**

**“They are as follows: On leaving the south, I shall have to proceed firstly to Philadelphia in order to have an interview with Gen. Bille the Danish Ambassador in order to give an account of my stewardship of his Danish charges and subjects and their affairs and have given him a piece of my mind and arranged matters. I shall then proceed to New York to finally arrange my outstanding interests in order to bring them to a satisfactory conclusion. Now it remains with you to decide, whether at the season of the**

years I expect to be in the U States, you will accompany me and embark for your future California home, knowing the vigor of the winter at New York, or being separated for a short time, I proceed to arrange my business in the north, I rejoin you again, and proceeding to New Orleans we embark then upon the voyage I have already described in a former letter. Believe me, dearest, I do not wish you to form a decision until we see each other. My object is to be frank and candid as persons in our situation should be towards each other. I must go to New York as a *sin qua non*, but it is only a very secondary object in comparison to you. It is true I might first have gone then and then have joined you, but that would have been making the secondary the primary object."

"Do you think dearest Bella, that it will be better for us to discuss verbally the subject of our future domestic arrangements? Do not wish to make any final arrangements in regard of that matter as they might not meet with your approbation, and as I wish to consider your comfort and to meet your wishes in every possible way I can, I think you will agree with me that we wait until our arrival here to see what is best. My ideas are most decidedly in favor of a snug little place in the vicinity of this dusty place and a married friend to join our party. I shall have you entirely mistress of your own actions and I promise to be very obedient."

"This therefore dearest girl will be the last letter you will receive from me. Within a fortnight we shall embrace each other –never more apart. Only fancy that. To me it is an indescribably exquisite feeling of happiness about to be enjoyed and already with my grasp and I pray Him to bless it."

"There are three steamers leaving all about the 1st Dec. but I think I shall decide upon the Oregon, the dearest [most expensive], but the best and most substantial of the lot. Besides she is in the Government service and is in all respects a superior boat. We shall cross the Isthmus during the wet season of the year and arrive there when the rains have ceased. May the blessings of our Heavenly Father rest upon us both and accompany us through the varied paths we have yet to travel together. I am your most affectionately, Edward S."

## Isabella's Trip to Tennessee

[She departed England in November 1850 with plans to meet Edward in Tennessee. This letter was written from Buffalo, New York to her brother Robert:] "November 13, 1850. My dearest Robert. Thus far I have come in safety, and without any further adventure than what is pleasant and amusing; and finding to my great joy, that I have to wait a whole day for the steamer, I cannot employ part of it better than in ~~convincing~~ [commencing] this letter, leaving it to be posted at Cincinnati, where I hoped to meet Donald [Isabella's brother-in-law Donald McLeod]."

"We, that is Frederica my elder German maid and I, left New York at seven, on Monday morning, on the steamer and proceeded up the Hudson River 24 miles to Pier where we took the Erie Railroad for Geneva which we expected to reach that night at ten o'clock. My kind friends Messrs. Hood and Bryson, both of whom had traveled that route came down with me, got checks for all our heavy baggage, fourteen in number. By which I should have no more trouble with tale [?] reached in Geneva. Mr Bryson wrote on the card the names of the best hotels that [at] the different places with other necessary directions and special instructions that when I was in Buffalo, I was to do as the Buffalo'eons did! In consequence of which advice, I was half afraid I should awake in the morning with a hump on my back; but I am happy to say it seems quite straight, as I was before."

"~~They have seen~~ [I have to say?] as far as I went is not particularly interesting except for several miles; ~~whether~~ [similar to?] our ranges of Basaltic rocks. The banks do not rise high, and there are no distant hills. All the country around New York being perfectly flat."

"At 8:30 we got into the train, which ~~has come post of~~ [is composed of] a series of long cars, containing each 40 or 50 small sofas in rows holding two persons placed like ~~to use~~ any church; but so contrived that two of them can be turned to face to face thus making tolerable a comfortable quarters. I always manage in this way for myself and [my] maid as the sofas are much closer than the seats in our [English] first-class carriages. I can ~~take~~ ~~line~~ [recline] on one and put my feet on the other and look out of the window at my ease. At the center of the car, is a passage for the conductor

to walk and in the midst of all is a stove, which over heats and makes it very unpleasant, however, you can open the window. Behind each car is a small platform, with steps by which you alight."

"At first we traveled through what I should call a 'rubbishy country.' No trim banks like those at home to the railway. Everything looked as if it had been made yesterday. Rank seedy grass covered with stones while ~~he year, and their~~ [here and there] rose small wooden houses surrounded by something which looked like a turnip field, but to giving evidence that it was not by certain things scattered over it the color of an orange and as big as your head; viz. pumpkins."

"Presently we got to the banks of the Susquehanna, which we continue to follow nearly all day. It is a shallow stream, about as broad as the Clyde above the Glasgow Bridge, and runs through a beautiful wooded country. Sometimes winding along a broad flat valley bounded by high hills sometimes overcome by steep, ~~Irqi~~ [rocky] banks covered with trees, ~~who~~ ~~has~~ [whose] fallen leaves one could easily imagine to be brown heather."

"The only foreign feature of the scene, where the wooden houses and fences. The houses generally made of smooth, neat, narrow planks, with slated roofs. The trees are high, but not ~~thick~~ [thick] in the stems. All the brilliant coloring of the woods has gone, the only remaining leaves are quite brown. There were large ice circles hanging from the railway banks, though the sun was hot and the sky cloudless."

"We had breakfast at 8:00 in the boat and when the other people ~~dying~~ [were dining] we were not hungry. At 3:00 we got out and had a couple of coffee from a young woman who informed us that the conductor would 'holler' when it was time to go. About 4:30, we stopped at Binghamton and here I got out, as I was told the trend would wait three or four minutes. This time, the conductor did not 'holler,' and I had not been ~~have~~[half] a minute in the waiting room when the engine yelled, and I reached the platform only in time to see a [it] make off with all speed."

"Poor Frederica standing on the [rear] platform and calling out, "Oh my! Oh stop!" at the pitch of her voice! I had only time to call out, "Stay where you

are and take care of the things. I will come after you," I then turned to a good-natured looking man and told him my mishap. He said it was "too bad" but that he would go with me to the telegraph office, and we should send Frederica a message to stop at Quwego, two stations on, 24 mi., as I could not reach Geneva that night [and] next morning we could get on."

"When we got to the office, the clerks were not there; however, my obliging ~~France~~ [friend] hunted them out and we sent an ~~imitation~~ [invitation] to Frederica to stop -- till I came -- with the luggage she had in the car, but not those for which I had checks [luggage checked through]. The [telegraph] charge was 33 cents."

"My friend then said I should come and ~~arrest~~ [rest] at his house till 6:30 when the next train went. When I told him I was from Scotland he asked if I had had ever been in Glasgow, for he had a young gentleman from that place boarding with him, Mr Turnbull, 'The nicest man he ever came across. A real gentleman worth two or three million dollars.' Besides the above, he was the 'prettiest man he ever looked at... And kept three servants, and groomsman!' "

"When we reached the house, a very large and handsome building -- ~~would~~ [wood], painted white, neatly plastered, and painted within -- it became evident that my friend was Mr Knickerbocker, proprietor of the principal hotel. He took me into a parlor, left me for a few minutes, and returned with Mr Turnbull, the millionaire, whom he presented to me with the grace of a born gentleman."

"Mr Turnbull proved a very pleasant frank use [fellow?] of about 25. My host then vanished, and we chatted together till ~~she~~ [tea] was announced. Mr Turnbull offered his arm and we went into a room capable of holding 200, where tea, coffee, cold tongue, and every kind of bread was laid out, and a saucer full of preserved blueberries put down to each."

"After tea, Mr Knickerbocker appeared with a letter which he had written to the inn keeper at Quwego, by name Mr Chase informing him of my disaster and telling him to take care of me, "as I was, much a Lady!" Then he and Mr Turnbull conducted me to the station."

**"I arrived at Quwego a little before 8:00 PM and found that Frederica, and her packages, had already been made prize of by the minions of Mr Chase and had been entertained with the necessary food. She was waiting for me to come. Of course ready to go out of her wits with joy. So off we went to the hotel and to bed with speed and thankfulness. The innkeepers here ~~and they all guess~~ [convey all guests] to and from the station without charge, which is very convenient. You may be sure I blessed the telegraph!"**

### **Memories of the American Trip**

**"Ashwood. Tennessee, December 2nd 1850. I wrote Robert from Buffalo, which letter Donald afterward posted at Cincinnati, or Louisville. I believe I stopped short in my narrative at Oswego, where Frederica and I recover each other after a brief separation and my amusing adventure. We rose at 4 next morning and started for Cayuga Lake [a finger lake in Central New York State] where we embarked for Geneva, a town at the other end. The Lake is about 50 miles long and in summer the wooded Rocky banks must be very pretty. I fell in here with a pleasant old Episcopal clergyman and had a good deal of conversation with him."**

**"We arrived at Geneva about half past two. Found all our traps safe at the railway depot. There was no extra charge made for our going on to Geneva that day instead of the previous one. [?] We took the train at twelve for Buffalo and arrived about 7. P.M. I might then have started immediately for Sandusky, as the steamer sails every evening, but I was so tired I never thought of inquiring about it. Neither of us had eaten anything for twelve mortal hours, so the first thing we attended to after our luggage was tea with accompaniments, and then bed."**

**"Next morning I wrote to Robert before I got up and then F. and I sallied forth to see the town. It is built of brick with tolerably wide regular streets, but it is flat and not very clean. Population 52,000. But imagine my blue and orange shawl hanging from the door of every "dry-goods" store in the town! Only a coarser quality. The red and gray would have been worse, as F. has one. To resume. We dined at the public diner, where there was a very handsome and abundant table. Everything being served on metal dishes with hot water under and carved at a separate table by the waiters. Each**

man consuming his food in the shortest possible space of time and then rushing off."

"I thought it prudent to go down to the steamer and secure berths. I found the "Empire" a most superb steamer. In fact the boats here beat hours to nothing. I shall try to get a sketch of one to show you how stylish and airy they look. The Empire measures 300 feet from stem to stern, all of which on the main deck is appropriated to the passengers. The upper deck formed by the cabin roof is sacred to the Captain and crew so that the passengers have nowhere to walk except a space of about 2 two yards broad extending from the paddle boxes all around the Stern. This to me was the only fault in the steamer. It made the view confined, though to be sure when you are on Lake Erie it does not signify much; you see nothing but water and a wooded bank on one side."

"The lady's cabin is at the stern end of the boat. The saloon is in the center, and the gentleman's cabin at the bow. All the berths are in state rooms containing to each, with one door opening inside, and one and one to the deck. The lady's cabin is divided from the others by handsome mahogany doors. These are closed at night and open all day. It is most luxuriously fitted up; with sofas and chairs of every description, covered with crimson plush. A fine carpet covers the floor. There is an excellent Rosewood piano, so that the gentleman draw towards this department in the evening. At meal times the tables are fastened together, and chairs placed at the other end. Men who have no ladies with them are not allowed to sit down until all the ladies are seated. We left at 9 P.M. but were detained in the harbour till long after I was asleep. I believe we finally left at one."

"There were two young ladies on board about 18 or 20. They seemed to have no one with them, and sat down to the piano and played and sang before all those gentlemen in the most abandoned way; the performance being of the very poorest description. They had a companion, however, that was sufficient to cover a multitude of sins. A Maltese kitten, as they are called here, as blue as if it had been one of Minka's own blessed offspring. It was running about the cabin when I caught sight of the blue countenance of it, and you may be sure it was not long before I had it in my lap, having

enticed it with a lapel of my polka. There were also on board three delightful old ladies. They came all the way to Cincinnati. Two were sisters, Mrs Hayes and Miss Emerson from Boston. Distant relations of Ralph Waldo Emerson. They were dear old things, full of the milk of human kindness. Mrs Hayes, a widow without family, her sister a maiden of sixty, or thereabouts, would never been in love, with a man that is, but was evidently in love with all the world."

"We arrived at Sandusky at night. Thursday the 14th November. The Captain allowed us to remain on board till next morning, when we started at 5 A.M. for Cincinnati. We traveled all day on the roughest road I ever experienced. Though a railway, it was like the worst of highways. Reached Cincinnati in the evening, nearly dead with fatigue and headache. I was met at the station by Donald, who, guessing I would be tired, had taken a comfortable private parlour in the hotel. Soon by the help of some good black tea, a rare luxury, I felt quite revived and was able to sit up half the night, asking and answering questions of all kinds. Jane's friend, Mrs Stetson had wished him to bring me there, but he very judiciously declined. However we called next morning before leaving for Louisville. Mrs Stetson was very kind, she is a cordial pleasant woman; as indeed most American matrons are."

"We left at two. Did not see much of the Ohio river, as it snowed and was very cold, but we had a comfortable boat and arrived at two p.m. We rested at Louisville all next day, Sunday. I did not go to church, as it snowed in the morning, and the evening was too cold and dark to go out. Mr Hamilton Smith, who married Miss Hall's niece called and wished us to go out to his house in the country; but we did not go. A Miss Key also called. A very pretty girl, superbly dressed."

"Next morning at 5 A.M. we left in the stagecoach for Nashville. This was the worst part of the journey. There were nine of us crammed into a space too small for nine cats! That is if they were all actively disposed! The other passengers though they behaved well enough were such a disreputable looking set that I was very glad that Donald was with us; especially as we traveled all night, and had to get out to change coaches very often so that I

should certainly have lost something had he not been there to look after the luggage."

### **Isabella is in Nashville**

"The first day we breakfasted after American fashion at 7. Dined at one o'clock, and then had nothing until 12 o'clock at night. Then we had some bad coffee, hot heavy bread, and boiled partridges; the last were very good. Sitting bolt upright, with no room to move yourself, sleep was out of the question. This continued for another whole day; added to which, the window was completely blocked up by a man who set against it so that even if there had been anything to see, I could not have seen it. The road seem to run through an everlasting forest with nothing but naked trunks and branches as far as the eye could reach. We crossed the Sault River on a raft, and forded two other rivers. Finally we got to Nashville on Tuesday evening."

"We rested all the next day. We were invited to dine at the house of a great friend of Jane, Mrs Watson. However, Donald did not feel well, and neither did I; and besides I did not care to be at the trouble of dressing. We called about 3 o'clock, found the lady very kind, and agreeable, and her only daughter, Jane, a beautiful girl of eighteen with jet black hair and eyes, pale face, and fine features."

"While I was there, another friend of Jane came in. A young lady, who rejoiced in the name of Septima Fogg. She proved, however, very unlike her name for she is a delightful girl. She had come for Jane Watson to go with her to call on me. She was as frank and pleasant as if she had known me all her life. There were other of Jane's friends, and strange enough, they all thought me very like her. So do the people here. Now I believe I have sufficiently narrated my traveling experiences, as I wrote mamma about my arrival here."

[Jane's husband, Donald McLeod, was the master of a finishing and residential boarding school for the daughters of wealthy Southern planters. The school and the family's residence was under the same roof. Later letters show that the entire building was owned by the Polk family.]

**[Isabella's letter continues:] "I resume my letter after having had a nice little drive with dear Jane. She has the use of Mr Polk's buggy. The "buggy" only holds two, but we have a slave perched on the side to drive us, which mode of turnout we find very convenient, not to say imposing to the view, as the said driver is man of all work, coachman, groom, gardener, and drawer of water. There is a species of den, or cavern, in the back of the aforesaid buggy, where a small "Nig" may be deposited to jump out and open Gates, however, as the horse is very steady we are going to drive him ourselves, after this, taking only the latter appendage. [slave]."**

**"You would hardly believe it, but this 2nd of December is like a day of June. Little Belle and I climbed the Hill at the back of the house this forenoon, and though I only had my merino frock and old beige shawl, and there was a breeze blowing. I felt quite oppressed. After dinner Jane and I and the babes (Fanny and Lily) sat in the open porch for a long time without bonnets, and now I am so warm I can barely write with comfort."**

**"The climate here is of that kind. You will have three days of cold dry weather; clear, with bright sun all day, and severe frosts at night. Then it gets cloudy and warm, and rains come. Perhaps with a thunderstorm, as it did last week, the lightning illuminating the house, and the peals of thunder shaking it, but no one minding it in the least. Then it will clear up again with a Frost, but never longer than three days. You never get tired of the same kind of weather."**

**"This house lies in a deep Valley. Nothing but woods to be seen all round. The trees, as far as I can judge, chiefly Oak, Walnut, Hickory, and one or two kinds unknown. They are tall and graceful but not very thick in the stem. Many of them have wild grapevines twining round them, forming the most fantastic knots, loops, and twists, amongst the branches, and then flinging down in such a profusion of smaller branches and tendrils that it looks, they say, when in leaf like a cloak thrown over the tree. The wild plants are not to be found at this season of the year, and no one seems to know much about them. I have seen Violet leaves in abundance in the woods. The dog Violet, and celandine. Yesterday I found some Cactus leaves, I am told it has a yellow flower."**

**"The Messrs Polk all live in the neighbourhood. Also the widow of another brother. All called on me soon after I came. Mr Lucius Polk is a widower and at present from home with his grown-up daughter. There are others who attend school here. Mr and Mrs Andrew Polk have gone to Nashville for some time. However, we return their call before they went, and I have been to Mr Lucius Polk's several times. Mr George Polk lives at a greater distance than the other two, we have not been there as yet, but must call on the ladies soon. Mrs Rufus Polk, the widow, is staying there at present. She is very rich, and her daughter who comes here to school, will be quite an heiress; she is her only child."**

**"This house is on the property of Ashwood, belonging to Mr. Andrew Polk. His house is about a mile distant. It is a pretty house outside, and the grounds are naturally beautiful, but art has done nothing for them except to keep down the brush wood, and both house and grounds want the thriving comfortable air of an English or Scottish establishment. The produce of the estate is principally cotton and Indian corn. Both are now nearly all gathered, and the stocks left standing, which has a very waste appearance."**

**"The corn grows about six or 8 feet high, and a yard, or so apart, and the ears are covered with large husks. Husks are made into mattresses, the ears are gathered, and the stocks left standing. It has not half the beauty of any other kind of grain when ripe. Pigs are very abundant in the woods feeding on nuts and acorns. Pork is an inexpensive luxury, and I can testify that the Tennessee hands are equal to Belfast. Jane says she made some capital Hamburg beef last winter, and is going to make some for me."**

**"I am now sitting at the pretty little Gothic window of my own room. Writing at a nice wee table, and dear Jeanie is nursing the baby beside me. My room is the upper one to the extreme right in the little engraving, and very home-like and comfortable it is. You would like the American beds, for they have no curtains."**

### **Life at Ashwood**

**"One day passes somewhat like another, generally, in the following manner. Frederica comes to me about seven, lays everything in order, and lights the**

fire then departs, and I get up. She has nothing to do it present but dance [provide] attendance on me. I do not like to be waited on and only allow her to do it because she is nothing more important to attend to. She washes and does up collars, etc. very well, and is getting me a beautiful load of white wool to be lined with rose colour and to be worn bye and bye. Moreover, she has the greatest genius for locking up everything. I have given her accordingly undivided control over my keys. I hope she will be a comfort to me in San Francisco."

"Well.... I dress and go down to breakfast at \_\_\_\_\_. When that is over we have prayers in the school room conducted by the Rev. Mr Cressay. The "Gloria Patri" played on the organ and sung. School then begins, and Jane and I are alone till dinner at half past one. After dinner we sometimes drive, or I take a walk with the girls. We take tea at six. Then there is a very long evening. Sometimes Mrs and Miss Armstrong, or some of the girls come in, and we generally have music and go to bed early. Donald reads prayers just before tea, which I think a very good time."

"There are twenty-three girls at present. Besides Phemie and Belle and Mrs. Armstrong's youngest daughter. There are four resident teachers. Mrs Armstrong and her daughter Alice, Mr Bressle the music master, and Miss Nichols. There is another music master, Mr Kley, who lives at some distance. Mrs Armstrong is a very gentle ladylike creature, and Alice one of the most retiring, modest, sweet young things I ever saw. She plays and sings beautifully and is very clever. She plays the harp, piano, and guitar and is organist at the Chapel. Miss Nichols, who teaches French and Italian, euro I admire very much. She has several rich relatives, one a brother, who we sure to stay with them, but because her parents are poor, she prefers maintaining herself. She is twenty-three or four. Very pretty, lively, and conversible, and very well read. Mrs Hitchcock, who is herself one of the most cultivated and charming women I ever met, has the highest opinion of her. She is fond of walking and she and I often have a stroll together. Her brother, a young Doctor, lives at Columbia, and frequently rides over here, but he is too full of admiration of itself, and to thoroughly empty of everything else for my taste."

**"The other day Miss Nichols and I had been out walking and were coming home at our leisure when Doctor Nichols road up to us desiring me to make haste home, for there were a host of Columbia people including the "Beau" of Columbia, by name Dr. Spindle, to see me. Presently after, the carriage of one of the detachments of visitors was seen approaching to take us up; so we got in and drove home. I was going and just as I was, but Jane sent me a message to put on my Tartan frock, so in spite of my principles I was obliged to yield. I found the parlour full of ladies dressed up to the ninety-nines, all of them wearing white kid gloves. Dr. Spindle, and all! Of course they asked me what I "thought of America".**

**"Yesterday, punctual to the day, came Edward's letter, but it made me quite doleful, for the poor dear had not received yours, and was in misery at not hearing from me, and was, of course, in suspense about what I was going to do. I think he would probably start on Nov 15 without writing again."**

**"There had been great rejoicing at San Francisco on the admission of California into the Union. Edward did not go to the ball. He was told by friends that the number of ladies was 'quite prodigious'. The state of civilization is now very satisfactory."**

**"The hilarity of the day was, however, sadly interrupted by a dreadful explosion. One of the River steamers burst her boiler and killed a great many persons. Edward was standing 50 yards from the spot when the accident happened; which he says was too horrible for description. He himself was in the best of health and busy enough for two or three pairs of hands and heads."**

### **When Will Edward Come?**

**"I have written to Edward both to New York and New Orleans desiring him to telegraph to us as soon as he arrives. I am beginning to be very much exercised about him; especially as he has been so disappointed about letters. I hope he will be repaid for all his sufferings. He has been exemplary in writing to me."**

**"I think Edward will be here the first week in January and his movements after that will depend upon his time. We will defer our marriage to the last available day. I have it at 12 o'clock and depart in peace. [?] The delay that has taken place will cause us to arrive at a very favorable season, viz. near the end of the rains. They had begun when he wrote."**

**"Bye the bye, what do you and Latty and people who see on all sides of a subject think of the London exhibition? People here talk of it a great deal, but merely as a desirable show and the means of producing pleasurable sensations. This is not or ought not to be the object. Christmas will soon be here, and we shall have a partial clearing of the house ... How I wish there could be a clean sweep, and that dear Jane could have a little breathing time ... It is such an arduous task of providing for such a number, but she retains her health, which is a blessing. Since I came she has taken some long walks, so I flatter myself I have given her new feet. One day we went to Columbia to return some calls. We had Mr Lucius Polks' carriage, and the darling wore her nice Brown dress, a straw bonnet lined with white, and trimmed with blue velvet, the little blue asters and gowans [Scottish, commonly called daisies], that I brought her, inside it. She looks so young and pretty! I would have given anything for you to have had a glimpse of her."**

**"We see very little of Donald. He is so constantly immersed in the labours of the school, and is certainly unwearied in his attentions to the girls who are all much attached to him. In fact he is more like an uncle, or elder brother to them, than a master. He encourages them to converse and will give himself any amount of trouble for them."**

**[Isabella's letter of January 4, 1851,] "My dearest darling Bird. Since writing last Saturday I continue to be without farther favors from your side of the Atlantic. Tomorrow I hope to receive one in answer to my Buffalo epistle, addressed to Robert, and, as I believe, unfinished and unsigned. I have been rather uneasy this week in consequence of having no letter from Edward; though there is a Californian mail in. The accounts in the papers represent Cholera to be prevalent in San Francisco for several weeks, though confined chiefly to the dilapidated and destitute in the worst part of town. The rate is only 18 deaths a day, which considering the population is**

a very small proportion indeed. Still one cannot altogether to vest oneself of fear, when there is so much at stake."

"We are so far from posts here, that it takes as long to come from California to Tennessee, as it would to go to Scotland. Letters from New Orleans are always from 12 to 14 days on the way. From New York 9 days. I have come to the conclusion that people who live in the remote corners of the earth have need to be possessed of patience, and I had better endeavored to cultivate that virtue until Edward makes his appearance."

### **Isabella With the Polk Family**

"I do not think that I have anything to tell you, and that reminds me that I gave you a wrong description of the Polk family. It is Mr Lucius Polk with the large family of daughters, who lives right opposite this house. He is a widower. Andrew Polk, who is from home at present has the largest house and is considered hereabouts is quite a Nabob." [person of conspicuous wealth or high status.]

"We dined at Mr George Polk's on New Year's day. They live 2 miles off in the other direction, in the woods. Their house is an unpretending wooden cottage creepers growing all over it. It must be very pretty in summer. They are about, however, to build a larger house in a more assessable place. The approach to the..." (rest of this page is missing.)

[The letter continued,] "Mr and Mrs George Polk will be pleased to have Miss Smith [Isabella] to dinner tomorrow at 2 o'clock. I wrote to accept the invitation. Jane and Donald had a similar one, and Miss Mary Polk, from the house opposite, Hamilton place, was going and called for us in the carriage. Jane wore her new silk dress and looked very nice. I wore my Tartan with the black Polka."

"We found the Rev. and Mrs Cressy there, and a Mrs Long , and when dinner had commenced the wife of General Pillow came in. We did not sit down until 3 P.M. I believe everyone arrived late owing to bad roads and clocks. Mr Polk took me into dinner, and I sat next to him, but as there were only 3 gentlemen to seven ladies , there could be no regularity elsewhere. He is a

very kind and cordial man, and his wife pretty and ladylike. They have a large family of young children, and the dinner was served by two black men. Very pretty China, white and gold, with groups of colored flowers on it. Table linen, cloths, and napkins of the finest, and best. First we had soup with rice in it. Nothing else on the table. Then the unfailing ham was placed on the table at the top, and a handsome boiled turkey at the foot. Said turkey, flanked by corner dishes containing oyster sauce. I imagined of course that this was all the dinner and was filled with amazement that there was not the ghost of a potato, vegetable of any kind to eat with it: but long after I had dined very comfortably --being hungry--the turkey gave place to a roast of beef, ducks, and a beef's heart appeared at the sides, and four vegetables at the sides of the corners."

"After this the upper cloth was removed, and the sweet course [was] set down on and under one. It consisted of a China pyramid custards in the center surrounded by jellies and creams; the latter turned out shapes, the former elevated on class stands, such as confectioners use. There was a plum putting at the head, and enormous round cake iced all of her with sugar at the foot and for flat tarts, which were called lemon pudding."

"There were four small decanters a very good light Sherry on the table, and when the servants removed the cloth, they lifted them, and set them down again with the same glasses we had used at dinner, but which were now not required, as the host either took white himself with his fruit; nor asked anyone else to do so."

"The fruit was set down into high China dishes, and five silver cake baskets. It consisted of apples, oranges, raisins, almonds, figs, prunes. Soon we all rose and went to the parlour."

"This is a small room, very plainly furnished. It contains two rocking chairs and about a dozen small ones. An old-fashioned bookcase, with glass doors; but not a table of any kind, nor another article. There are three Windows in it with Venetian blinds closed on the outside, chintz curtains hung closely to the inside, one curtain to each of the two windows at one side of the room. An end window had a small space left between the Venetian shutters, and together with the open door admitted light enough for all needful purposes;

but you have no idea what an imprisoned feeling it gives one to be so pertinaciously debarred from the sunshine. There may be some sense in excluding it in the heat of summer, as doubtless leaving all the doors open; but in January there is neither rhyme, nor reason in it. One need never expect to see an American lady be found doing anything in her sitting room for the same cause. She could not see too sew; and hardly to read."

"The girls have all returned again to school after the Christmas holidays, and next week I suppose matters will go on as before [those attending Jane's husband's school]. Jane has been very much annoyed changing servants, and the best to be got, seems to be a very inferior order of help. They are slaves, hired from their masters."

[On Sunday afternoon she resumed her letter:] "Dearest bird. I fully expected letters from home today, but to my disappointment none came. It is two weeks since I received your last. Jane and I went to church together this morning. It was a lovely mild day, and I enjoyed both the walk and the service so much that they have put all my fears and anxieties to flight."

"Mr Cressy has service for the Negroes on one or another of the plantations one evening in each week. He generally preaches here in the school room on Sunday evening." [Euphemia noted, ] "This [the above] is the only letter which has been preserved by my aunt [mother?] till the next one telling of the arrival of Edward. It is dated at Ashwood, February 8, 1851."

### **Edward Is Here!**

[Isabella:] "My dearest and best of birds. Ere this you will have received a letter from Edward. Setting your mind at rest as to the time of his reaching here. You will know by now, if you have his letter, that he arrived on Friday morning. He left again on the Wednesday week, two days ago. During the time he was here I do not think we were half an hour away from each other from morning to night. It was a time of exquisite enjoyment for both of us, it seems to me as if I did not know half his worth before. His goodness, and nobleness .... As to his idolatry of myself, it makes me feel afraid; for I am sometimes so faithless as to think that it cannot last. What am I to be so

**exalted!! But he will not allow that it is wrong; he says that I have been given him to love; and that he cannot love me too well."**

**"It was delightful to me to find that he was such a favorite with all who see him. Especially our own Jane and Donald. Jane says she never saw anyone she thought so much of. -- Her husband, of course understood, as the exception. Indeed his [Edward's] sunny temper and taking manners have made him universally liked."**

**"During his stay here the weather was very disagreeable, a great part of the time we had severe Frost then it began to rain, it is only since his departure that we have had a return to the spring weather had before. He is to go via Vicksburg to Philadelphia to see the Danish Consul General. Then goes on to New York on more business. He thinks he will return by steamer to Charleston. Before he left we arrange matters so far, that we take the steamer from New Orleans in March."**

**"I am thankful that as he goes North, Edward is getting such mild weather; for he is very susceptible to cold; from his long residence in the tropics. He caught cold on his journey here, and one evening he coughed so much, and had such oppression on his chest that I feared he was going to have an attack of inflammation; a very common complaint here, however, we doctored him very successfully. Jane made him some linseed tea. Little Belle cooked up a mess of vinegar and molasses, and I put a mustard plaster on his chest, which last remedy relieve the internal pain, as if by magic; and his cough was greatly gone when he left."**

**"During the last few days of his stay we were very gay. Dined at Mr Cressy's. Went to an evening party at Mr Smith's in Columbia, to another at Mr Andrew Polks, and had a dance at home. I enjoyed the dinner at the Cressay's most of all. Their cottage is an Elizabethan one in the woods, and as it is only half furnished, they live in two rooms; but their parlour is the most comfortable, the warmest, and the neatest I have been in. It was so homelike to sit down, a party of six, to a neat, nice little dinner, and then draw round the fire in the same room."**

**"Mrs Cressay is a very beautiful woman, and though very retiring has a highly cultivated mind. Mr. C. though somewhat over-learned with Churchism, is an agreeable, gentlemanly man; and has read a book or two. Edward likes him very much, and it is he who is to tether us, not the Bishop. At our own party, we had besides the usual number -- which is large enough in itself for any purpose -- a profusion of Polks, and Pillows, and some from Columbia, who magnanimously drove 7 miles in the very coldest night I ever felt; fondly imagining they were coming to witness our marriage."**

**"We had Mr Polk's Negro band, and as it was now my 'time to dance', I had no excuse for not joining in the cotillions, which are certainly very amusing manifestations of the motive power. The company stand up, as if for quadrilles: perhaps sixteen couples, and when it is time to commence, the band strikes up a tune, something between a reel and a polka. The chief musician shouting out at the same time instructions to the dancers, never seem to know what to do without being thus instructed. They then set off, helter-skelter, "deil tak the hindermost"<sup>22</sup>. No regard whatsoever paid to either time or space, and when the leader is at a loss what antic to set them to, he cries out "hands all round", and immediately the whole company joined hands, and gallop around the room as fast as their feet can carry them. Your partner generally holds you by the left hand all this time, but sometimes you are sent off on a tour by yourself, receiving a whirl from every man you meet, like a teetotum [a small spinning top spun with the fingers] till you make a circuit of the room and are welcomed back by your partner. Edward and I had plenty of fun about it, you may be sure. He was in the highest spirits and universally admired. One of the prettiest girls in the room told me she thought I was very much to be envied. Certainly in the minor points of personal appearance he appeared to great advantage, with his fair complexion, white hands, and pretty feet."**

**"The party at Mr Smith's was a small reception. We were asked at 8 P.M. We had to drive seven miles...went in the Rockaway. A sort of small Omnibus**

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<sup>22</sup> [Devil take the hindmost appears in Robert Burns, "Address to a Haggis"]

that Donald has for taking the family to church in wet weather. We enjoyed the drive very much. Of course all the beauty and fashion of Columbia were there to meet us. We were well scrutinized, so we behaved very well and never looked at each-other, till supper was announced; when Edward made one dart from the piano, where he had been making himself agreeable to Miss Sally Smith. In this country people always stand to eat their suppers."

"Mr Smith informed us that there was a Scotch dish, of which he hoped we would partake. It was handed accordingly, under the name of Scotch stew, and found to be a vile imitation of Minced Collops [Scottish recipe for ground beef cooked with onion and steel-cut oats], made so hot with pepper that it was impossible to eat it."

"We then went back to the parlour, a young lady was asked to sing a Scotch song for my delectation. It proved to be "Wandering Willy". If it had been "Yankee Doodle " it would have been quite as near the Mark. The words, to be sure, were those of 'Wandering Willy'; but they were eked out in each line to suit an American air. We were glad to get into the Rockaway again, and rock-away home. Voting the party an unmitigated bore"

"I must tell you what I had on, as you remember you were assured I would have no opportunity of wearing my plumage. To Mr Smith's I wore my blue silk with the body of my lace frock; with the tucks. It makes a very pretty Spencer, trimmed with Mama's lace -- French. To Mr Cressay's I wore my black Tarlatane, and my black Polka, which fits me to perfection and is the neatest one I ever had. It is open in the front, with flaps turned back; and has white sleeves lined with white silk. I wore it also to Mr Polk's, with my lace frock, as it was an intensely cold night, and we danced in the Hall, on a waxed floor, which exertion, by-the-way, or my only pair of black satin slippers, into holes. This place, for the same reason, absence of carpet, except on parlour or bedroom floors, is dreadfully destructive to shoes. I have sent to New York, for a new supply."

"I got one of my new silk dresses -- Edward's present -- made up for our own party. It is a rich lavender and white brocade, very successfully made here in the house; low neck, in short sleeves, and waste. It looks beautiful,

and I have a large piece over, to make long sleeves. The other silk, I think even prettier. I shall send you a little bit, probably in my next letter."

"Edward is much pleased with Frederica, who is really an excellent creature, faithful, hard-working, and a universal genius. She made a plain omelette, the morning he left, which he said was the best he ever tasted. We have been making an amusing calculation of our savings in house-keeping. Edward takes no cream, in his tea, and Frederica takes no butter. He never saw anyone lock up, as she does --the very virtue in which both of us are most deficient."

"One evening, when we went out, she found his purse, gold pencil case and watch lying in his room, so she carried them off, and lock them up in my room; in a drawer. Since he left I see she has gone a little farther, for I found a pair of his trousers hanging in my closet. Very pretty ones, by the way, made of Chinese crêpe. They are worn in the tropics."

"I have been called to my duties, rather before my time; having had buttons to sew on, socks to darn, and underclothing to mend; where the seams had ripped at the first washing. I had to do it all before him; for he would not stay away from me. There is always a good fire burning here, in my nice cozy little room."

"Thank Latty for those blessed revelations of Mrs Browning. It is such an enjoyment to know that there are people in the world supremely happy besides ourselves. Especially such a woman! What a mate for Browning!"

"Edward and I had a great disappointment on Sunday. It was the first Sunday of the month, and we intended to take the Holy Communion together, and were looking forward to it, as a Solomon and delightful privilege. We read over the service together on Saturday evening and the passages of Scripture describing, and elucidating the ordinance; both of us I believe, anticipated the Sabbath, and this part of its worship particularly, with particular feelings. Perhaps with minds more chastened than we had ever before experienced in preparing for it."

**“When Sunday came, it was raining in torrents. Donald set off in the Rockaway, taking Mrs Armstrong, Alice the organist, and several young ladies of the choir. On reaching the church, he dispatched the vehicle back for us, however, and coming in at the gate, the great stupid Negro managed to let the horse run a way; and so smash the machine as to render it useless. It was now very late, but Edward was so anxious to go that Jane sent over to Mrs Turnbull to ask the loan of her carriage. It arrived in due time; viz., allowing about twice the time that in English messenger, and coachman would take. We got to church; but only as the blessing was pronounced. Mr Cressay had given them no sermon on account of the wet day, and there were only seven or eight people in the church. He came here and preached in the evening, as he generally does.”**

**[Isabella’s daughter Euphemia wrote,] “Very soon after that letter was posted, a sad time came for all in the school-house at Ashwood. It is to be regretted that the letters telling about it, are lost. They were probably sent to Glasgow, to uncle Peter Smith.<sup>23</sup> The pretty wooden building took fire, and was burnt to the ground. Most happily the fire was discovered in time for all to be saved a life; but much clothing, and furniture was lost by the devouring flames. Mr MacLeod and all the teachers, had to find other work. The Polk family decided not to revive the school, their loss was too great.”**

**[Euphemia:]“The final letter from Ashwood, and the last one to her sisters before her wedding, is dated February 28, 1851.”**

**“My darlings PHEME and LIBBY. I have to acknowledge receipt of three of your welcome letters. Most charming epistles. Those of 24th and 29th Jan came together, just as I was dispatching my letter to Robert. Today I was most unexpectedly rejoiced by the receipt of that of 9th Feb. which made the journey from Edinburgh in less than three weeks, by some hours. The quickest we have had. Edward returns next week having left New York the day before yesterday.”**

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<sup>23</sup> [Isabella’s uncle Peter Smith was a Glasgow merchant in the Russian trade.]

**"It was too late for me to write after the fire [the school had burned], but being afraid that he [Edward] might hear the news and perhaps [think] that we had all perished, I telegraphed him on the Tuesday. 'Ashwood, burnt down. We are all safe and well at Mrs Andrew Polks" [a neighbor]. And next day we received reply, 'Arrived, telegram received. Have you lost all? What can I do? Answer.' And without waiting for an answer the poor dear wrote and sent me 100£ , imagining that I would require clothes and of course wishing to expedite the process. I replied, of course, that I had saved everything."**

**"He then wrote that we would sail from New Orleans on 28th March [to San Francisco]. I cannot say what day Edward will be here. He is to come by a different route via Charleston, but I am getting all in order to have nothing to do when he comes."**

### **Marriage**

**"You seem to be greatly exercised about my change of state. I am sorry that positively nothing happened on either of your dreaming, as far as I can guess now. The important day will be the 12th of March as it seems they will not let me be married on a Friday. (She was married however on Friday the 14th). Though I say it would suit me better than any, being the day on which the working classes in Scotland always marry. However Jane maintained its inappropriateness, and Edward and I are to have a honeymoon of most complete idleness. He returns next week, having left New York the day before yesterday."**

**"We are quietly and comfortably settled here now [After the fire]. Mrs Polk comes and goes and is very little in our way at any time. And we remain here till I leave, and Jane will tell you what she is to do [re rebuilding] after that."**

**"I have got much into the county custom of sitting in my bedroom, but I do not intend to keep it up in San Francisco. Here the houses are built entirely for summer, though the winter is by no means a very brief one, and are so full of doors and windows that it is very uncomfortable on the ground floor on a cold day. Today after being so mild that the peach trees are beginning**

to blossom, it has been severous violently so Jane and I came into my room and settled. She to read David Copperfield and I to cover a cloak for Edward, this I must tell you being the first that I have tried. I have achieved successfully, but it vexes the ghost<sup>24</sup> considerably when about half done -- and so being tired of it, and Jane poor dear fallen asleep on the sofa -- I laid it down and was indulging in pleasing meditation, when the door opened and Belle came in with your letters. This of course roused us both up and after luxuriating over the various epistles til their contents were exhausted, I had thought to complete my task as aforesaid."

"Immediately after Edward went away I gathered up all his clothes and after mending those that required a 'stitch in time' I stored them away in a drawer which as I told you Frederica I saved from the fire -- also a portmanteau and dressing case. There were however a pair of black cloth trousers and a pair of boots which though carried out of the house became the property of one of the many lookers on that night, and these are the only articles lost by me. In my own person I have been most miraculously fortunate. I had thrown all my little valuables into a box, which however I had no time to take and it got burned. But during some hours the next morning Frederica picked up all my ~~rings~~ [things] off the ground which had been trodden till it was one heap of mud. After examining everything I found the only missing article was my little gold seal with I.A.S. I was very sorry because I had it for some years, and Peter gave it me. I never expected to have it again, when, a week after the fire, a man found it and brought it to me."

"I attribute my losing nothing to my having all my things together and in good order, and [it] will be a lesson to me in a place where fires are so frequent as in San Francisco. I was so near my departure, and Edward, absent, that I had all my best clothes folded and put in trunks. I had on my black silk with a velvet jacket both of which are rather the worse, and although not aware of being near the fire at the time, I find my silk petticoat you quilted, dear Pheme, very much burned all round the skirt next day.

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<sup>24</sup> Perhaps as in *guilt vexes our spirit* from *Gospel Standard, or Feeble Christian's Support*, John Gadsby (London) 1863

However when I begin my travels I shall be more in the need of cool things than of warm clothing which is very fortunate."

"It has never been ascertained how the fire originated, everyone claiming to having been unusual careful that day and when first discovered, the roof was blazing so that it could not have been a spark from a fire, but I think it was the school room chimney becoming overheated [schoolroom was part of the house] and communicating the heat to the woodwork, or it may have been a spark on the roof. It will probably never be known."

"San Francisco must be a most beautiful place, that is the bay, not the town. Edward brought a sketch by a son of Captain Mary at [of] whom he knows. The hills enclosing the bay are a magnificent range of peaks like those of Scotland and different from anything I have seen in America, and the interior is more like home scenery [of Scotland], also not being entirely covered with wood, but diversified with rocks and trees chiefly pines."

"I only wish for we're a little nearer [to San Francisco], but I don't despair of getting Tabby [the cat] out. Edward and I are going to be so happy and comfortable. Edward tells me that I shall not have much society for that [because] he has always been very particular, and means to be more so, but that he has about six choice male friends whom he means to admit to our fireside."

"I suppose they will have left you by now, but give her my love, and tell me all about her. Tom [in Scotland] seems to be much with the Lanes. They are charming people, all, and must be delightful companions. I never spoke to George Dysdale . He must be a congenial friend. I don't think you, Latty, used to admire Lane's physique so much as you do now. He certainly was perfect at nineteen but fell off very much from that."

"Your description of 'Dallas's' style of lecture<sup>25</sup> is quite what I should expect from the character of his mind and which is perhaps more visionary than thinking, more graceful than powerful, and therefore I daresay he will not

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<sup>25</sup> [E.S. Dallas, *Poetics: An Essay on Poetry*, (Smith, Elder), London, 1852]

appear to you a worthy exponent of Browning, even though he may be an appreciating [popular] one."

"We were at a large party at General Pillows the other night and I could not help wishing you were there to sketch some of the company. By the by, I was to tell you that Edward was afraid your shawls were not nice enough. When I showed him mine, he said it was tolerable but that he would have have them thicker. I shall not wear mine at my marriage, as for a little cap it would be too much drapery, but I shall put it on with my red gray brocade silk [clothing] and my white bonnet which Edward likes very much but requested I would take out the rose colored flowers and put in white." [for decorum]

"I am going to send Jane a China shawl. They are very expensive here, but every human being has one. Edward says nothing is too cool in a tropical climate. As a nightdress of China silk, viz jacket and trousers! This was his nocturnal costume in the Sandwich Islands."

"Do you think Mama will keep to her intension of visiting London? I thought the death of Mrs Poppelwell would make the project less desirable to her and there is no one now in London that she would care to visit. I hear that lodgings will be exorbitantly dear, and I cannot help thinking London will not be seen to advantage in such crowds. I only hope that if you go that you will remember my repeated warnings and, not get run over in crossing the street!"

### **Cats, Dogs, Wildlife**

"I told Robert that Frederica [Isabella's German maid] had saved her beloved kitten from the devouring elements [the fire]. She persists in her determination to take it with her [to San Francisco] but has very short-sightedly neglected a piece of advice which I have been in the habit of lecturing, viz that she should catch a mule and give pussy a ride before, by way of practice. She has called it Ida for herself, and as she will not allow it downstairs, there is always a plate of meat and a saucer of milk in the corner of the room and a small box with earth in another corner. She really has ~~brought~~ [taught] the little beast unacceptable habits. It is growing rich

and beautifully sleek and clean with a velvet coat and a bosom of immaculate whiteness. Mice are very destructive in California, so it may be a useful appendage."

"There are four dogs in or about the house. One a very courageous \_\_\_\_\_ and an interesting specimen, very like his master, Mr B who has been staying here, but who has gone for a few days to Nashville. Two black setters one with \_\_\_\_\_ jaw and a large brown half-setter, half retriever. A very friendly and pleasant mannered dog. But the finest fellow I have seen in Tennessee is "Korsath," a Newfoundland belonging to General Pillow. He is very like Mr McNab's "Goliath" both in appearance and manners, and I found more pleasure in conversing with him than with anyone there."

"By the by I had some talk with a young lawyer that evening who informed me that the slaves were the happiest peasantry in the world and also that the best society in the world was to be had in Columbia [Tennessee]. The said youth \_\_\_\_\_ at most the state of Tennessee, though I question if it would be as extensive [?]."

"I have seen some beautiful birds in the woods since it has become mild within the last two weeks or so, but it rains every few days and that makes the ground wet so that one can't often walk anywhere but on the road, but I really preferred the woods. There is a beauty even in the leafless trees, though there is no vegetation yet and even the grass looks quite withered and brown. The Blue bird, of which you have heard, is a beautiful creature. It is the size of a blackbird of whose nature it partakes. It even becomes black in winter. When spring returns it resumes its brilliant azure plumage."

[The letter continued the next day] "September 28, 1851. It has a sweet song but none of the birds sing like ours. One of the commonest and prettiest bird is the redheaded woodpecker. It is about the size of a Partridge, the upper part of the body and wings a brilliant blue-black. The under part and ends of the wings white, and the heads a brilliant crimson. They are always flying about and walking up the trees in the funniest way, and their tongue is a most marvelous contrivance for transferring its prey -- ants and other insects. It's three or four inches long and can be drawn out and in at pleasure. \_\_\_\_\_ [The tongue?] terminating in sharp, stiff, long tip

dentated on both sides, like the head of an arrow. It has a long sharp bill with which it bores the trees and having discovered its food, it then pierces it with its tongue."

"Another pretty inhabitant of the woods is the gray squirrel. They are very abundant but do not seem to be much valued for their fir. There is a bird called the cat bird whose note is precisely like the wail of an unhappy kitten and so would, too, in your heart, dear Libby."

"The Blue Jay is a beautiful creature. Its wings a beautiful light blue, and it's breast white. It is about the size of a Cuckoo but that delightful bird is unknown here."

"I feared Jane's poor heaths were scorched by the fire. They were too near the house but she hopes that one is living. And Robert's nice hyacinths are all doing well although they will not flower for a month or six weeks. I have not seen a flower in America except some very poor little shy violets and crocuses. Mrs Polk has a new gardener - English -- who is in despair at the vagaries of the climate, which makes it very unfavorable for either fruit or flowers. I am at the end of my paper so must be done. --Adieu my best ones with much love to all, Your own Belle."

### **Life on a Riverboat**

(Unfortunately there are no extant letters from Tennessee telling of the wedding. They were probably sent on to Glasgow for the rest of the family to read. Isabella and Edward were married in the St. John's Church in Ashwood [a plantation church]. They boarded a river steamer in Nashville at 10 pm on Monday morning, March 17th. The weather was fine but the couple found the scenery uninteresting: the river being wide and the flat, swampy shores covered with a seemingly never ending forest.)

Euphemia wrote, "They were married on March 14, 1851. This letter was written to her favorite brother Peter and his wife. They lived in Glasgow. Letter was, no doubt, sent to Edgar for perusal; and kept." [Peter was a bachelor.]

**(They landed in Memphis on Saturday the 23rd and stayed in the "Old Hickory", a converted steamboat, the lower deck being a wharf, and the upper a hotel. The next morning they boarded the Mississippi steamer Empire and arrived in New Orleans on the 25th of March.)**

**"On board a Mississippi steamer, the Empire, March 24, 1851. One day's sail from New Orleans. Here we are, sailing comfortably down the Mississippi, a respectable married couple, of ten day's standing. What with perpetual change of place. Being thrown entirely on each other's society, and the necessity in our situation, of laying aside all needless formality. Feeling very much as if we had been married a year."**

**"We have had a most delightful voyage hitherto, and expect to land at New Orleans tomorrow. As our time there is short, I deem it best to have my letters ready to post, so I may not have to stay in-doors more than is absolutely required. We left Nashville on Monday morning at 10 o'clock, this day week, in a small steamer for Memphis, reaching there too late to land. The weather was fine, but the voyage and uninteresting as to scenery. The banks of the Cumberland, Ohio, and Mississippi rivers been all similar in character, consisting of perfectly flat, swampy shores, covered with never-ending Forest. Varied occasionally, though scarcely enlighten, by the damp, desolate log cabins of the settlers."**

**"We landed at Memphis on Saturday morning (Mar 23rd), and took up our quarters at "Old Hickory ". The funniest hotel I ever saw in my life. It is a superannuated steam-boat. The lower deck being used as a wharf, the upper one, with its long saloon, and lady's cabin partitioned off at one end, with rows of state-rooms on each side, makes a very convenient house of entertainment for chance-comers like ourselves, waiting to be conveyed on our journey."**

**"We found that none of the larger steamers had arrived, so we had to wait till next morning (March 24): when we came on board the Empire. Soon after we started down the River. We took a walk through Memphis, but saw nothing but dust and pics."**

**“The only woman I spoke to in the hotel, told me that she was the grand-daughter of an English Earl. Claremont. Whose estate had lately been advertised for descendants. She was in great hopes of recovering her mother’s portion £200,000. She had made a run-away marriage, been disowned by her family, and her husband being dead, was trying to support herself and two children by teaching. A pair of precious rats they were; by the way! I heard the poor mother begging her son, a young monster of 11 or 12 not to stay out at night, and the little Savage would not condescend to promise. Then the girl, three or four years younger, they down on the sofa, and her mother had to coax her, for at least half an hour to get up, and go to bed. I trust the poor soul would get her inheritance. She seems to need it so much. They had the prettiest little monkey, I ever saw; caught on the Isthmus of Panama. It was not larger than a small cat, and had a long ring-tail, and a very intelligent countenance, it made a chirping noise; like a bird. It was very affectionate, and fond of being caressed, and Frederica, having taken notice of it, nothing would please the little beast; but lying coiled in her lap, like a ball of worsted.”**

**“Well...we have been calmly, quietly sailing down; ever since Friday morning. Expect to arrive tomorrow, (Tuesday) . On Friday next to sail for Chagres. The weather is clear and bright. As yet it is not very warm, but as we go South, and especially today, the effects of a milder climate are distinctly perceptible on the trees, many of which are in full leaf, and nearly all budding. Occasionally a few peach and plum trees, leafless, but covered with blossoms, diversify the scene.”**

**“To a European eye, an American River is dreary, and melancholy. Doubtless there is something grand in the idea of sailing for days, and days, on the same River, navigable for thousands of miles; but the monotonous succession of precisely the same scene, the want of distance in the landscape, the unbroken, or rarely broken line of the tree-tops, the banks either just level with the water, or more frequently entirely under it, with the drear, dismal swamp extending for miles, as far as the eye can reach. Amid the bare trunks of the trees, and around the comfortless homes of the solitary dwellers, in this unwholesome wilderness. These things fill the mind with pity, for its inhabitants, and thankfulness that you are not of them.”**

**"An American river steamer consists of three decks. The first is for cargo, and when loaded, is nearly level with the water. The second is occupied by the passengers, and consists of a long cabin, or saloon; with rows of state rooms on each side. The ladies' cabin consists of twelve of them, and is sacred to the female sex, and men who traveled with them. It is shut off by doors, which may be opened at pleasure, and are at meal-times, when everything in a petticoat must seek itself before the male rabble gets access to the table; consequently my maid Frederica, always comes with me to table, and as she is fully as much of a lady as most people she meets; I do not object to the rule at all. All around the deck, from stem to stern, is a narrow Promenade, covered over, or you may sit or walk."**

**"On the third, or upper deck, the only place from which you can see about you, are the cabins of the Captain and officers. The wheelhouse is elevated in the centre. In some boats, passengers are prohibited from going on this deck, and very few ever go here; so that we generally have it to ourselves. We often sit there reading, or looking around, and the Captain, (who is a kind good natured body, guiltless of education, but meaning well) asks us to go into his cabin, whenever we find the deck to warm or too cold. He always likes to have a chat with Edward. There also may be seen Frederica taking a stroll with her knitting in her hand and the kitten fastened to her waist by a long black string fixed to a narrow collar of beadwork around it's [sic] neck; and trotting most contentedly at her side. She has the greatest contempt for the absurdities of the Americans, and knows how to reply when they take liberties with her. For instance, a young man who had heard she was going to California, have the impudence to say he "supposed she wanted to be married!" Whereupon she drew herself up and said, "Sir... If I could speak English, I would give you an answer." Another time a lady who is traveling in this boat, asked her if she had paid her passage to this country or worked for it". A most impertinent question. Frederica gave her an indignant reply, adding the home truth, 'that a gold chain did not make a lady.' "**

**"I am very glad she can take good care of herself; sometimes amusingly manifested. For instance, when people asked her what Mr S. is, she scorns to say he is a merchant; lest he be supposed a shop-keeper. She also tells them, "He is the Danish consul in San Francisco." She is orderly and careful**

to a surprising degree, indeed I do not know what we would do without her. You would have laughed, as I did, the other day, to hear Edwards addressing her, "Frederica. We shall take Mrs S. and the cat on board, and then you and I will look after the luggage."

"He always speaks to her in German. Every-one, of course, laughs at the idea of traveling with a cat, but Frederica loves it so dearly, that I hope nothing will befall it, a nice pretty little thing it is. Our cargo is rather an unpleasant one, consisting of cattle, and pigs, in the Stern -- all the corn and cotton being stored forward. Some hundreds of game-cocks, which are placed on the upper deck, immediately over our heads, and have proved themselves anything but "roosters" as they do nothing but Crowe from night to morning and from morning to night."

"We are all rung up by a bell at 7.30 for breakfast, an earlier one rings at 6.30 for dressing. There is not super-abundance of room, in our little cabin for two to dress. We dine at one, a steam-boat dinner, the cookery, though somewhat greasy; has the advantage of being hot. It rarely is in private houses; where the kitchen is out of doors."

"I am luxuriating in potatoes which I have not tasted for months. I am beginning to like sweet potatoes. They are long-shaped, like a carrot, and is soft, and tender, like a potato mixed with sugar. Water is the only drink at table we have supper at 6. It consists of hot beef-steak, and various cold meats, hot bread of different kinds, preserves, etc. you can seldom get black tea in this country when traveling, so dear Jane gave me a little canister full, and Frederica sees to its being made for us regularly, and brought with our exclusive dish of dry toast."

"We have just stopped to take in wood, which we have to do frequently. The scenery is becoming more interesting, the houses have a better look, and the ground cleared for some distance back, and is not underwater; while there is now, and then, something approaching to undulation, and even Heights, in the outline of the woods."

**"I shall send you a small parcel. It contains a piece of our bride-cake. You will help your-self, and send the rest to Edinburgh, as I wish PHEME to forward some to Edward's nieces at Norwood."**

## **New Orleans**

**"We have arrived at New Orleans, (twenty-fifth of March). We are very comfortable in a large, half-hotel, half boarding-house, which a friend of Edward engaged for us till Friday when we sailed for Havana by the Georgia. Today I have been re-packing trunks, and shall try to write from Havana. I am perfectly happy, and contented. I have got the kindest, dearest, and best of husbands, but I often think of the friends left behind. Distance does not diminish my affection. My dearest love to you all."**

**(They left New Orleans at 8 P.M. on the steamer Georgia the morning of the 28th and sailed down the Mississippi until 4 o'clock when they entered the Gulf of Mexico. In spite of heavy seas, the Georgia arrived in Havana on the 31st March, and as the steamer Falcon did not leave for Chargres until April 5th, Edward and his bride set out to see some of the city.)**

## **Cuba**

**[Euphemia noted,] "The next letter is from Havana to her sister Eliza (Latty)."April 2, 1851."We left New Orleans, at 8 on the morning of the 28th. Our kind little friend Bryson taking leave of us with tears in his eyes. I felt really sorry to part with him, he seemed a sort of last link with home ... Well. To proceed ... We sailed down the Mississippi till about 4 o'clock. We then parted with the pilot, and got out the Gulf of Mexico."**

**"To make a long and disagreeable story short; I was sicker for the next two days than I have ever been in my life. I have but one consolation, in thinking that I was no worse than other people, there was a heavy sea, and all the females succumbed under its influence. Poor dear Edward, was indefatigable in his attentions, not only to his wife, as in duty bound; but to sundry unprotected, and unhappy women."**

**“One very nice young creature, (who is here with us) who had been repelling with horror the amatory advances of a Frenchman, as she lay in the cabin, unable to move. She was struck with his English appearance, and accepted his assistance without a struggle. It turned out that Edward is acquainted with her husband in California.”**

**“I lay in my berth all Saturday, and Sunday. Frederica being nearly as ill as I was; but on Monday morning, at 6 o’clock we came into the harbour of Havana. This gave me sufficient life to get up, and as the Falcon steamer for Chagres had not arrived, left Frederica in charge of the luggage, and came ashore along with Mrs Lyman and a Mr Jones, a returning Californian who left there with Edward in December. He is young, clever, agreeable, and lively.”**

**“The steamer that is to take us on, has never come in; so here we are still, very pleasantly domiciled in a large private boarding-house kept by a Mr and Mrs West. Americans, with whom Edward stayed formerly when here. The Georgia cannot sail till the Falcon arrives. So Frederica and the kitten retained possession of our state-room on board, but having seen as much of this place as we wish, we are getting anxious to be off; I hope we may start on Friday morning, at the latest.”**

**“Now let me tell you something about Havana. You cannot imagine a greater transition than from America -- I speak of Tennessee-- to this island town. There everything was a mixture of dilapidation, and rawness. Here the old substantial, picturesque aspect of the streets and houses captivate the eye at once; and reminds one of pictures of Spanish, and Italian towns. The Bay is very extensive, and filled with ships of all countries. I saw one from Greenock, and one from Liverpool. The streets are very narrow and dirty. The side-walks only admit of a single passenger at a time. The houses built chiefly of brick, stuccoed over, and painted white, blue, pink, yellow, they’re projecting balconies and query little turrets stuck here and there have a wonderfully picturesque effect.”**

**“They are admirably adapted to the climate, being very lofty and airy. They are built in the old Spanish style, with a court-yard in the centre and apartments opening all round. The room where I am writing serves for**

both dining and drawing-room. It is a large, long apartment on the first floor. It has one door opening on a gallery which runs along two sides of the square, and three others on the balcony. These doors are furnished with Venetian shutters; glass is almost unknown in Havana. The Windows of houses close to the street have iron, or wooden gratings instead, through which you can see ladies of an evening reclining in their rocking-chairs and enjoying the repose which seems to be their favorite occupation."

"But to return to our saloon ... It has a high, vaulted ceiling, and in the corners are fresco paintings of justice, temperance, fortitude, and prudence, with appropriate mottos in Spanish, while in the middle of the roof appears the date 1750."

"The day we came on shore, he [Edward] rested till dinner, but after dinner we set out for a drive to see some of the beauties of the town and environs; and last night we took a similar one. It resembles in form a Barouche, with all and Mr and Mrs Lyman in another. Some are very elegant, both in form and fitting up. The hood projects so as to shade you from the sun, but the whole front is open. The peculiarity, however, is in the wheels, which are very large and high -- there are only two -- based quite at the back of the carriage, and in the length of the shafts, which keeps the horse about 2 yards off in front, so that course, vehicle, and wheels appear like three detached objects."

"The driver is a black man. In a fanciful costume, consisting of a scarlet bluecoat gaily embroidered. All with gold band and Hessian boots, so that he looks somewhat like an Austrian or Hungarian officer. He rides the horse, which has its tail plaited very tight, and bent round to the left."

"The result of all their contrivances is that you never get splashed, and notwithstanding the badness of the roads and streets, are rarely jolted either. In short, it is the easiest and pleasantest of carriages. We drove out of the gate and along several of the public parades which are planted with various flowering trees and shrubs. Roses, Oleanders, a beautiful flower resembling a rose growing to a considerable height, to the trees, and many others."

**“We then divert down a country path between fields of green Indian-corn which led us to a beautiful, old-fashioned garden laid out with a variety of beds and walks and surrounded by groves and avenues of palm-trees , bamboo, mangoes, and other tropical trees. It is called the Bishop’s garden, and appears to be a place of public resort, but I could not learn anything about the Bishop. There is a ruined house which must’ve been his residence. There is also a small collection of native wild beasts, woods, and two exquisite leopards.”**

**“At 8 o’clock we went to the public square, where the public offices are situated and where the band plays every evening. We strolled about for an hour, enjoying the music. I am sure you would enjoy the free and easy mode of life here. Bonnets are never worn, either for the drive or walk. You just go out, just as you are; or you may put a veil on if you like.”**

**“The Havana ladies dress very tastefully, in white, or coloured muslin. The hair worn plain, and generally dressed with flowers, in the evening. After our evening walk, we finished up with prices at Delmonico’s.”**

**“There is a splendid old Cathedral, and monastery, quite close to this house. As it was opened last evening, we went in to see the monks at Vespers. The church is very large, and has a magnificent altar with the Virgin Mary enshrined in a temple of dark red granite. There are also a good many paintings around the walls, but not of first rate excellence. The holy-fathers, with the young candidates for the priest-hood, were all seated in the nave of the church dressed in black gowns and thin muslin cloaks, with long bands hanging over their arms. Some of the old ones had lace cuffs, like elderly ladies. They were reading the service together. Sometimes one or two together, at a time, and then all the rest would join in, like the rolling of the great wave, or the vibration of a deep, powerful instrument, monotonous, but grand. At last they all went to the altar, where three of them put on yellow robes, and they sang a Latin hymn, very beautifully. Their voices harmonizing perfectly, and suiting the place and time; the whole thing was Roman Catholic in the extreme, but remarkably interesting. We went in again tonight, but they had some musicians behind the altar who did all the singing, with accompaniment of wind instruments, and the**

effect was quite destroyed. By the by, the most interesting thing in the Chapel is Columbus's tomb. We leave Havana on Saturday morning -- the fifth -- by the Falcon for Chagres."

### **Steamer to the Isthmus**

(What followed was what Isabella described as two of the worse days of her life.) "Panama. April 14, 1851. My dearest Robert. We have got on so far most delightfully. I only wish that you could have been with us for the last three days; crossing the awful Isthmus. You would have enjoyed it so much! We left Havana on Saturday morning and had one most lovely calm day, keeping the coast of Cuba inside for some 14 miles, and only a mile or so distant."

"In the stateroom next to ours we found the family of Mr Moore, post-master at San Francisco, consisting of Mrs Moore and two delightful daughters who are returning with him to California. Mrs Moore recognized me, as having been introduced to her at Mr McLeod's house in New York. We soon became very good friends, and have kept together ever since, as well as with Edward's friend Mr Jones; as well as a young Mr Brown, attached to the Moore party. This makes it pleasant for all. Edward's savoir-faire and knowledge of Spanish render him a valuable aid. Mr Moore's health being very infirm, although much improved since he went to California."

"I must positively give you a sketch of matters as they are at this moment ... before I go any farther... We are in a large upper room, in a dilapidated Spanish house; calling itself a private boarding-house. This room, which was the sleeping chamber of the ladies, last night, was the only place Edward could hear of for us. He and the other gentleman slept elsewhere. There is a large pair of folding doors, open at each end of the room; but no Windows. The floor composed of boards, not the cleanest, and much worse for wear. The primitive rafter-roof very high. Round the walls are ranged five camp bedsteads, innocent of aught, in the shape of mattresses, and across the further end, swings a hammock of Chinese matting, placed there by Edward's commands, as an easy couch for me, after my mule ride. I am sorry to say reminding me too much of the sea, to be fully appreciated!"

**“Mr Moore is now in it looking over letters. Behind him sits his eldest daughter on the door-step, reading a newspaper, and beyond her appears the railing of the balcony, and an old Spanish church, in ruins. Mrs Moore lies on her back, on one of the said camp couches – – they look like so many ironing-tables. The young men all lounging in the balcony, the youngest lady occupied like myself. Frederica cutting up a pineapple under Edward’s direction, and mixing it with water and sugar; for a drink. The last named, but highly important person, has just come in from arranging our passage for tomorrow, per New Orleans.”**



**E.A. Suverkrop’s writing slope or “desk.” Suverkrop family collection**

**“Three steamers go, but she is the best. Having desired the luxury of a clean shirt, he [Edward] has constructed an ingenious dressing room for himself, with a couple of towels hung over a string, and suspended across a side door. We have only three chairs in the room, such queer bolt-upright, long-legged, straight-backed affairs, that everyone seems afraid of them. So they are occupied by cloaks, and shawls; but we have two tables. One table on each side, against the wall. On mine are Edward’s desk, Frederica’s work-basket, a pocket-handkerchief full of biscuits, books, Edward’s purse, a piece of soap, a tumbler, and a telescope! Edward is now battling out the**

pine-apple beverage, from a white tureen. Miss Mary writes there also, and the rest of the space is occupied by a brass candlestick, several bottles, and a host of other things. The floor is strewn with trunks, saddles, boots, male and female, and in short a variety of articles too miscellaneous for description. And the same may be said for the beds."

"If you add to this heterogeneous assemblage a constant dropping of remarks of an equally diversified nature, to say nothing of the flow of talk in adjoining apartments, you'll excuse my not being very connected; and I only write to say that we are well, happy, and hopeful."

"The Falcon is a wretched affair of a steamer, indeed, I believe those who were well felt more of its discomfort than those who were sick, of whose number was I. But after all, there is nothing one forgets so soon as the slight discomforts, and my dearest husband is such a devoted and skillful nurse. So willing, and so able to do everything for me, that it would be most ungrateful to regret my want of censorship; except as far as I grieve to give him trouble."

### **The Isthmus**

"We landed on Friday last, one month or more from our wedding day, and immediately set off on our journey up the river Changres. The Moores, ourselves, and some others formed a party of twenty-four. There never was a pleasanter journey. Our boat was a large flat-bottomed one, covered with a substantial wooden awning, with a canvas curtain which could be dropped on either side, or both, at pleasure. Under this were stored our baggage, and ourselves, and after being towed about 30 miles by a small steamer, the rest of the way was accomplished by the boat being pushed on by two Indians on each side with long poles."

"I cannot attempt to give you anything like a description of the superb and varied beauty of the river; it far surpasses all my anticipations. I shall write you all about it when I have time. The journey occupied two days. The first night we passed in the boat, and the second at Goyons, from whence, yesterday morning, we took mules for Panama. Arriving about 5 P.M. after a splendid ride through the ever verdant forest covering the lofty hills, which

intersect, and terminate the Isthmus. But if you want to form a notion of our nights rest in the boat, just sleep on trunks for one night, taking care that they are all different shapes, and sizes. If studded with large nails and fastened with straps, so much the better; taking for a pillow or a carpet bag. This you may fill with bottles, are bricks if you like. Mister Jones to whom I mentioned this idea adds that you will 'not fully appreciate the situation unless you also try the experiment of sitting on the same trunks for two days'"

"I rely upon your taking the advice, and if you will get a mule, or default of that, the rough Highland pony, and ride him up and down the steep side of Arthur's seat from 8 A.M. until 5 P.M. you will feel in your outer man quite as if you had crossed the Isthmus! But the exquisite gratification of eye, ear, and soul, you must experience by making the trip, in reality. I ought to have said that if you want to realize all my peculiar sensations, you must yourself [be] bitten all over, either by ants, or midges of extra-ordinary ferocity. I think my tormentors are ants. Thus making me pay for a delightful stroll with Edward."

### **Approaching San Francisco Bay**

(They left Panama on the 15th of April on the steamer New Orleans and arrived in San Francisco on May 3, 1851. In this following retrospective narrative, Isabella describes their arrival at San Francisco and the devastating fire later that night. It was a joint letter to all the relations.)

"California in 1851, A Woman's Impressions And Experience. It was a fresh breezy afternoon, that namely of 3 May 1851, that the steamer New Orleans from Panama to San Francisco [approached] with the compliments of some hundred and sixty passengers of all sorts and accommodations on board, too near the end of her voyage. From an early hour in the morning [the] questions [flew] "when shall we be there?" "Shall we arrived before dark?) resounded on every side. It was a Saturday, too, which was a double reason for wishing to land in good time and \_\_\_\_ ourselves amongst the assembled [who] were felicitating themselves on the prospect of the coming great Sabbath during which they might once more enjoy the privilege of Christian

worship and a day's rest from the voyage 'ere they begin to look around and choose a home in this, their far-off place of sojourn for a time."

"The passengers, one and all, are growing tired of the sea. For the last five or six days the weather has become so cold it is no longer pleasant to be much on deck. Gentlemen have discarded their gossamer suits and come out in Tartan Frers<sup>26</sup> and thick overcoats, and those ladies who have been so provident as to have them on hand, appear in Larue cloaks<sup>27</sup> and Merino [wool] drapes. The stewardess is besieged for blankets, and a fragrant odor of hot whiskey punch pervades the saloon about 5 o'clock in the evening. All the scanty literature on board as long ago been read and reread, and the prospect of land would be exhilarating were it only for its promise of setting people to work who are weary of doing nothing."

"And so, on this fine third of May, all hands appear on deck and all eyes are eagerly occupied in reconnoitering the land of their adoption. Such as are not here, we, probably prejudiced of a carpet of tobacco juice, go forward to the prow of the vessel, and there, with or without the telescope, fixed their eyes on the land now so near as to be distinctly visible even to the unassisted sight: a rocky shore, beat by the long waves and ceaseless thunder of the Pacific, troughs of lofty mountains green to the summit and spangled with wildflowers. Along those grassy sides you can discern hundreds of wild cattle grazing. Now in and there a mountain stream, whose course through to \_\_\_\_\_ [the bay?] is marked by clustering trees, willows on the lower ground, the superb redwood plying on the heights. And here and there a solitary Rancho or farm, such are its principal characteristics. Far off in the horizon an occasional sail greens [gleams?] into sight and these disappear."

"Two schools of small whales are weaving and bowling in the blue waves around us, a constant source of amusement to the juvenile occupants of the

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<sup>26</sup> [In the 19th Century, Freres Koechlen patented a system for printing and dying fabric.]

<sup>27</sup> ["Larue Velvet Cloak, --pattern No.-- 299, 6d," *The London and Paris ladies' magazine of fashion*, ed. by Mrs Edward Thomas, --Bert & Stevens, London, 1889]

deck. I am told this species is not sought after, having the facility of sinking as some \_\_\_\_ [might?] read \_\_\_\_ . It is a ~~conscientious~~ [consciousness] of immunity from the harpooned that makes these California whales ~~distort~~ [disport] themselves in such a variety of joyousness \_\_\_\_ [of] gambles – who knows?”

“Dinner is announced and we assembled for the last time with good spirits and appetites. The captain orders wine to be handed round and makes a short speech ~~in-body~~ [embodying] the bright remark that he does not expect to see all of us together again and then drinks to the passengers. There is a little whispering as to who is to return thanks for the captain’s ~~stability~~ [felicity] which is set at rest by a pencil note being passed to Sir H. H., an English baronet and gentlemen who at once arises in compliance with its request. He briefly but verily eulogizes our worldly commander, returns thanks in the name of the passengers for his attention to their comfort and proposes his health which is drunk with great applause. The skipper (Captain Wood) however has had enough of speech-making. He puts an end to the festivities by proposing to [toasting?] the ladies and ~~these-banishes~~ [then vanishes]– and, no one found to respond to this toast, the company rises, male and female and once more ascended to the deck.”

“We have made considerable way during dinner and yonder in the distance is the Golden Gate or Entrance to the Harbour, and guarded apparently by two large white rocks, which proved however considerably on this side of it. Passing these we descry [obs. spelling of descry<sup>28</sup>] the \_\_\_\_ forms of several huge seals reposing on these rocks and numerous agreaki [screaking?] birds fly screaming from their \_\_\_\_ [perches?].”

“And now we rapidly approach the entrance. The mountains off the Contra Costa and the Islands of Los Angeles and Yerba Buena rise to view, and the noble Bay of San Francisco opens its majestic length on each side as we pass through the Golden Gate. On the right, almost concealed from view by the forest of shipping in front, lies the City of San Francisco. We anchor at

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<sup>28</sup> [Google’s Ngram Viewer suggests that use of the word *descry* peaked in 1810.]

some distance from the shore and in a short time are surrounded by boats and boarded by numerous anxious expectants. There are husbands inquiring for their wives, sons for their parents, and brothers for their sisters. Many a glad tear is shed. Many a fond embrace exchanged, and boat after boat goes off peopled with light hearts and happy faces. For us there is no such meeting. Our welcome to kindred ties is far away, 10,000 miles by distance, this shall say how far by time. Just be hope, heart, and hope -- courage, and so onward!"

### San Francisco

"Our business is with the customhouse inspector. ~~Dis~~ [Yes,] Good Mr Inspector! We do not deal in contraband goods. Only a few Havana cigars, a present for a friend-- we don't smoke! He has passed them by, and with Yankee politeness is too gallant to pry into a lady's dressing case to charge duty on an extra supply of guitar strings or expose the timepiece of the bonnet box. Thanks! How easy minded \_\_\_\_\_. And now for shore."

"I have often regretted that I had no opportunity of judging of San Francisco as it was on the day of my arrival. It had been quite recovered from the effects of the fires. The last of which occurred some six months before. I am told that the streets, houses and shops would have done no discredit to New York, which certainly is no small praise for a city which in 1848 only numbered some three dozen houses. Whole streets of \_\_\_\_\_, with two iron buildings, had replaced the wooden shanties which had been destroyed by the successive fires. The principal thoroughfares had been outstandingly planked [wooden walkways]. The sandhills in the immediate vicinity \_\_\_\_\_, and a series of strong, secure wharves extended more than a mile beyond the original sea margin. It was in fact a large busy, thriving, commercial city."

### Edward's Iron Store House

"The first house I entered in San Francisco was an iron one ~~was~~ [whose] acquaintance I had made in London nearly two years before. It was then intended for our ~~residents~~, [residence], but my husband finding iron [buildings] are unsuitable material for a dwelling had converted it into a

place of storage for goods. There it stood, piled to the roof, with merchandise with its comfortable office in front and its neat little bachelor establishment behind."

"Erected on a strong wharf, water on two sides, and houses of zinc and iron on the other two, it surely must be safe from fire. So thought its owner, [and] so casually, in my short visit, thought I."

### **Fire!**

"We took up our quarters at Jones's Hotel, a commodious wooden building in a central part of the town. (San Francisco directory, 1852: Jones, David – hotel keeper, 119 California, C. Leidesdorff). My eyes ached with gazing through the telescope, and I retired early while my husband went to seek out some of his friends and learn the events of his six months absence."

"About half past 10 there was a ringing of bells and an alarm of fire. On asking where it was, I was told, "Oh, a long way off, more than a mile." This however did not quite satisfy me. I rose and dressed. When my husband returned and went up to the roof of the house [to] reconnoiter, I roused my maid and had everything re-packed and locked before joining him."

"The roof of the hotel commanded an extensive view, and at first sight it did appear as if the fire must be stopped long 'ere it reached us, several streets of brick and iron intervening. Those on fire seemed chiefly composed of wood, and the fierce and gathering blaze soared far up into the sky and illuminated the city and surrounding heights with awful brilliancy. On-ward it came, gradually but steadily gaining ground. The hoarse roar of the assembled multitude, the fearful crackling of the burning houses grew more and more distinct and near. The wind, too, had risen and was blowing in the direction of the hotel, and large flaming brands, born from the scene of the conflagration, fell on all sides."

"The host began to make preparations for flooding his house on the outside, the guests to collect their chattels and depart. Laden with our baggage, and surrounded by showers of falling sparks and burning pieces of wood, and amid a scene of tumult and confusion indescribable, we took refuge in the

**Iron warehouse. The fire was by this time raging in the immediate vicinity of the hotel."**

**"For some time we believed ourselves safe in this retreat. The wharf, it is true, was constantly taking fire from the brands alighting on it, but these casual fires were easily extinguished. And here for some time we watched the spread of the conflagration through the city. 'There goes A ...S, and there goes B ...S was ever and anon the exclamation, as one after another the massive warehouses of the most respectable and influential merchants in the place were sucked into the fiery whirlpool."**

**"At length the flames attacked a large store-ship anchored about 100 yards in front of our retreat, and at the same time gained the end of the wharf on which it stood."**

**"Those possessing property further down the wharf had cut off the communication, leaving those in the adjoining building isolated. The fire gaining rapidly from two sides in the intense heat from the burning store ship, being of itself enough to ensure the destruction of all the adjacent combustible material."**

**"It was now indeed time to fly, and fortunately the only means of escape had been got in readiness and it was high water [high tide]. A large iron lighter, used for conveying goods from vessels, was brought up to the back of the wharf, and our trunks thrown hastily in. Thus in the middle of the night, the roar of conflagration still resounding and increasing on all sides. An equally deadly danger impending over us [was] from the explosion of several stores containing gunpowder, which lay directly in our path."**

**"With the smoking glare almost blinding us, we knew not whither. I believe we were seven or eight persons in all, but I was aware of no one's individuality [but] that of my husband. And my maid was in tears, as I then fondly imagined for our misfortune. The time till we had slowly and cautiously navigated our way amid the burning wharves, and through the shipping to a distant point on the shore, seemed interminable. At length we came to land, and at 4:00 A.M. found shelter in a small boarding house and rested on the landlady's parlor sofa. So passed my first NIGHT in a 'new**

home.' Furniture, books, musical instruments, my husband's wardrobe, with the exception of the contents of two traveling trunks, all were swallowed up – – not to speak of the large and costly iron building and its valuable contents."

"The next day we walked over what had been San Francisco. The entire business part of the city, all its principal streets, were destroyed. The heaps of smoking ruins, the once strong iron buildings shriveled together like so much burned paper. The large brick stores floorless and windowless, unroofed, and emptied from attic to base and filled with smoldering rubbish. The very street pavement only here and there in charred patches. The piles of valuable property now totally useless and scattered in all directions. The skeletons of cats and dogs, and most of all the sickening sight of blackened and unrecognizable human remains, are not to be imagined. Truly it was a dark day in the annals of San Francisco. Everyone you met had lost more or less. Many had lost all, and some of the wealthiest men in the place were completely prostrated. On every side there was nothing but lamentation, mourning, and woe."

### **Finding a House**

"We determined not to take up our abode within reach of fire and after a little inquiry were fortunate enough to obtain a house in Pleasant Valley, about a mile from the center of the city and a spot which, strange to say, deserves its name. The sandy heights enclosing it are rich with trees and shrubs and gay with wildflowers, and the birds sing as sweetly as if in a Scottish Glen."

"Our house stood by itself in a large yard overrun with weeds and wild gooseberry bushes and enclosed by a paling painted white, with a gate to match opening on a broad sandy road that wound up the rising ground to the right and finally conducted you to town, or near to that part of the bay where we had taken refuge from the fire, known by the name of Rincon Point."

"Immediately in front of our dwelling rose a sand hill covered with dwarf Oak and other shrubs, amongst which a species of mimulus, with its rich

and abundant orange-colored blossoms, and the tree lupines with blue and yellow blossoms, conspicuously gay. [Euphemia wrote,] "The letter to her sister about their arrival concludes. I may add, that the maid who was engaged in New York, Frederica, who traveled the whole distance first class, [and] spent the winter in Tennessee in the home of Mister Donald McLeod, took herself off the day after the San Francisco fire, breaking her agreement, and going off to parts unknown. I do not think my mother ever heard where she went, or heard of, or heard from her again."

### "Two Transplanted Servants"

[Sometime between 1899 and 1901 Isabella wrote the monograph Two Transplanted Servants in which she recalled her family's life in the summer of 1853.]



**Isabella Ann Smith Suverkrop, June 1899, age 80**

"We had been resident for over two years in San Francisco, where my husband held a consular appointment, when one day we crossed the bay to the Contra Costa or opposite coast, hitherto seen by us only from a distance.

We landed at Oakland, then a rough beginning to what is now a thriving town. A grove of evergreen oaks extended for miles toward the open country, with the peaks of Monte Diablo in the distance. About two miles from the town, the San Leandro Creek mingled its waters with those of the bay, and on its banks we chose the sight of our future house, shaded and beautified by grand old trees, and gay with a wilderness of flowers. To be brief, our house was soon ready, the garden laid out, the well sunk, and I waited 'til Providence should send us a good female servant."

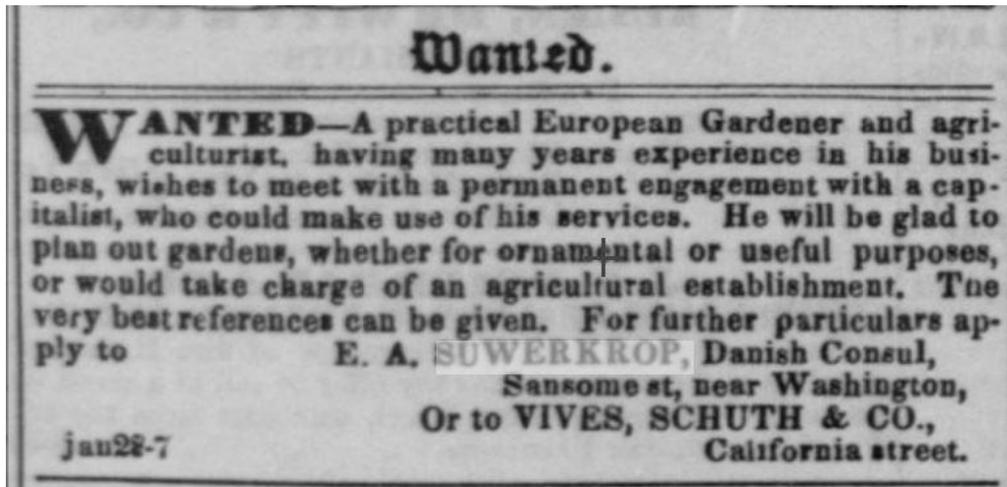
### Libily and Tom

"Providence was kind, and ere long a candidate appeared. She was a comely Yorkshire dame of middle age, not tall, but what she lacked in inches she made up in 'go.' Bright eyed and brisk as a bird, fresh-coloured, tidy as a Quakeress from the crown of her spotless cap to the tips of her neat little shoes. I took to her on the spot. She had come from Sydney with her totes, leaving behind a husband whose drinking habits had twice forced her to sell her laundry business and go to service [domestic housework]."

"All preliminaries being settled, I was taking leave of her with "Goodbye, Mrs Lee", when she stopped me. 'You'll excuse me, ma'am, one missis in a house is enough. I was never called nobbut *our Bess*, single or married, but I were christened Elizabeth, and if you please, that's my name.' Next day she took us in hand. Our little boy called her 'Libily', which continued to be her familiar designation through succeeding years. She rose with the lark, and her work seemed done as if by magic. Finding the family wash in arrears, she attacked it with might and main. While hanging her clothes in the sun, a man looked over the back gate and remarked, 'You have a fine lot of shirts there, Mistress. I guess you take in washing.' 'Then ye guess again,' she answered, 'for ye're wrong this time!' Her everyday dress was a neat print, with a white-cap and apron for morning, and a black one for afternoon, and she was always fit to be seen. 'When I were young,' she would say, 'I could bide looking at!' She could bide it still, for she has ever been a pretty woman."

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Daily Alta California, January 28, 1852

"Our man Tom was an English sailor and a more honest, kindly, faithful fellow never handled a rope. He could do a little of everything, though nothing very well, but his clumsiness was atoned for by his willing service. Besides his duties as gardener, groomer, and drawer of all the water for the horses and garden, many smaller tasks fell to his share, and he was Elizabeth's willing helper, bringing all the wood and coal for her kitchen.

One cold morning -- they were only occasional -- Tom was desired to light a fire in the parlour. He crammed the little Franklin stove so full, we were nearly roasted, and I said, 'Tom, I am sure you have been a fireman.' 'You're right, ma'am, I was a fireman on board of a P. & O. and, my! wasn't it hot in the Red Sea!'" [P.&O., a railroad?]

"These two excellent servants caught on capitally together, though so unlike. They had a little tiff now and then, but it never lasted long. He mimicked her 'thee' and 'thou' which she had learned from the 'Friends' [Religious Society of Friends, members of which are called *Friends* or *Quakers*] among whom she had lived in her youth, and which she always used to her own equals [thee, thou], never to 'the gentlefolks.' [the Suverkrops]"

**“ ‘I worked in a mill when I was a lass,’ she told me. ‘T’owd [The old] Master were a Quaker, and we always called him ‘Benjamin’. He didn’t like my marrying Jack Lee, and when I went back tot’ mill one day, he looked at me stern like, and says he, ‘What dost want, Bess?’ And says I, ‘I wants a loom.’ ‘Thee can have that one,’ says he. ‘But I’ll be in my own light,’ says I. ‘I think thee stood in thy own light when thee married that man,’ says he.”**

**“Tom was the essence of good nature, but he dearly loved to tease her. She had bought a black lace veil, and he told her she might well be proud of it, for she was the first of her family that ever wore one, a fact she never disputed. Some of her greatest folksinesses were very amusing. When excited or startled she always invoked the hangman, or as she called him ‘The Hangmant’” [the hangman]**

**“One day she went to town to remain all night with a cousin, and Tom met her at the boat next day. ‘How’s missis?’ were her first words. ‘She was just dying when I left home,’ said Tom trying to look solemn. ‘The Hangment! Art lyin?, or does owt [nothing] ail her?’ “No, Libily, nowt ails [troubles] her but a bit o’ ribbon and some pink stuff in a saucer!’ ‘Thee great lout! Thee has welly scared the heart out o’ me wi’ thy foolishness. I’s a mind to box thy ears!’”**

**“As time went on these two became more and more our trusted friends and servants. Libily’s management was very amusing. While perfectly respectful and keeping her own place, she took a motherly interest in our affairs that often showed itself in a light that was intensely funny. She baked all the bread and had usually what she called a “spice cake” on hand, swathed in fine burlap wrappings and dispensed by herself at intervals, allowing a small portion for Sunday tea in the kitchen where she ate hers with a ‘bit o’ cheese.’ “**

**“I used to complain of the thickness [meaning thinness] of her slices. ‘But missus,’ she would say, ‘I’d be shamed if company came sudden, and there was nowt to put on table.’ She never put less than 18 eggs in one of these cakes. Eggs were three dollars a dozen, but we had our own, which did not cost one penny less.”**

**"In a box from home, I had got a pair of flaked butter rollers and proceeded to make some roles and loaves for breakfast. Libily eyed my work dubiously. 'Very pretty, missus,' she remarked condescendingly, 'But if I find that the butter goes faster, you will have to drop down o' that!' I pointed out that it was a saving, as all the rough edges were smoothed away, and was thus permitted to exercise my skill unquestioned."**

**"She had no book learning except her Bible, and could not write her own name. She went seldom to church, pleading that she would rather do her work and then read her 'good book.' But a funeral was a festival to her, and she never missed one if she knew it."**

**"She had not been many more [years?] then with us when a second little son, [Robert, 1854-1915], was added to the family, the first [son] being under two years [John Peter -- 1852-1910]. Libily's talents came out in fuller force than ever. 'Johnny' was still her special darling, but Tom took the new-comer to his great sailor heart."**

**"Libily had however a 'scare' of unusual magnitude when the baby was under a week old. She [Libily] was sitting with him at the kitchen door in the soft September air, when she saw her boy go up to his Papa's horse, a gentle quiet creature, and hold out a tomato to him. To her horror she saw him take the child's hand and lift him bodily off the ground. 'The Hangman!' ejaculated Libily. She dared not lose time by calling the missus, but she laid the infant on the table and ran to the rescue. Johnny was crying a little, but as he proved, more from fright than hurt. His hand was bathed with warm water, and, except 'a bit nip,' found scatheless. I heard the story the month later from both Libily and the nurse. 'If you had seen her, ma'am, her face was as white as that there sheets!'"**

**"When Robbie was a few weeks old, Tom, after attending to his morning duties, would put on a clean jacket and apron, and take him out into the garden to see the horses. He declared that long before the baby noticed any of us [that] he knew Blanches, the white mare, and made signs of joy."**

**"Libily was as happy as a queen in an undisputed Kingdom. She considered**

the whole family as under her special protection, and the more her work grew the more she delighted in it. Some friends were dining with us, and in a pause of conversation, a voice was suddenly heard exclaiming, 'Get out, you varmint!' Presently Libily, whose peculiarities were well known, put in her head with 'I beg your pardon, sir, for insulting your dog, but I was feared he'd disturb my children!' She next addressed Master Johnny, who was talking to himself in his cot, telling him in language more forcible than elegant what would be his fate if he woke his brother, adding, 'If you will be real good I'll bring you summat nice out of the dining room.'"

"Not far from us was one of the old Roman Catholic missions called San Pablo [Rancho San Pablo?], where the fathers had cultivated a fine orchard of pear trees, whose fruit was widely sought and much admired. Libily had often expressed a wish to visit this place, which she called San Pebbles, but we never thought of correcting her 'parts of speech.' So one day I allowed her to go there with Tom and the children for an afternoon drive. When they returned, I asked her how she liked it. 'It's a fine old place, misses, and the fathers, as they call them -- but they're none o' 'em fathers -- was awful pleased with the children, and gave us a lot o' pears for next to nothing. They showed us all over, and it were wonderful clean. Though there's never a woman to do a hand's turn. But it weren't just what I expected from its name. There were plenty o' san' [sand] but never a pebble!' 'But Libily,' said I, 'that is not what it means. San Pablo means Saint Paul, just as San Francisco means St. Francis, and San Mateo means St. Matthew. This country is all sandy soil, with very few pebbles.' Libily stood amazed. 'Well,' said she, 'see what it is to live wi' scollards [with scholars]. I might a live all the dear days o' my life wi' ornary folk and never a-nowed as much as that. Please, missus, tell me again.' And [then] she retreated to the kitchen, in her own opinion a full-fledged Spanish scholar."

"Before we knew it in our quietly busy life, the boys were running all over the premises, healthy and happy with an intelligent interest in everything. They had their own pet hens and their beloved kittens. I gave Johnny regular lessons every morning, but in the afternoon I often went into the kitchen and read aloud to the two boys and Libily, who loved the stories I selected as suited to them all. She was very fond of the 'Fairchild family', a

trio of well brought-up children who were always getting into scrapes, and in whom a short period of self-satisfaction was always followed by the deepest abasement.”<sup>29</sup>

“Our own boys never got into scrapes. They were on the whole ‘good.’ Though the natural ‘contrariness’ of childhood would crop up, Libily always excused her boy. ‘He’s a loveable child, is Master John,’ she would say. ‘But Master Robin’s fair masterful sometimes. He’ll neither lead nor drive, nor follow behind!’ When Tom had any difficulty with them, he would say, ‘Come, let’s all have a good cry’ and make a face to set them laughing. When that failed he had an effectual remedy. He tied them to the end of a rope in the woodshed ‘till calm was restored.”

“Those happy years have long been mingled with the past. Libily died soon after we left the country [California], and I do not know if Tom is still alive. Our boys are grown to be men, and have tasted life with its joys and sorrows. But when memory replaces the facts, I recall with gratitude the devoted affection to myself and husband of the two I have attempted to describe, and trust that whatever may have been their earthly shortcomings they have not failed to reap the reward promised to the good and faithful servants.”

### **Sunny Bank, Their Home Across the Bay, 1854**

[Euphemia wrote,] “There is a scrap of a letter to her sister telling more about the wildflowers. By this time they were living in their own cottage, which they had built at Oakland, across the Bay from San Francisco. The letter was from their home, called Sunny Bank, and was dated July 30, 1854. She writes, ‘The hills surrounding San Francisco, are very like those on the West Coast of Scotland, but the only tree near to us, is the Ilex, or Evergreen Oak. There is no green in an English spring to equal that of the revival of the Evergreen Oak. It has a richness peculiarly its own. There are

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<sup>29</sup> [The *History of the Fairchild Family* by Mary Martha Sherwood was a series of bestselling children's books published in 1818, 1842 and 1847. They were renowned for their realistic portrayal of childhood and its humor.]

no Ash, Beech, Lime, or Plane trees. It in the mountains, and visible from here, are Pine trees, from which the red-wood used in building comes. In the valleys, near water, are plenty of magnificent sweet bays, smelling of cinnamon and cloves.”

### **Goodbye California, 1857**

[Three years later the Suverkrops left California. Bard J. Suverkrop explained:] (As far as I have seen, there is no record of exactly why EAS and family left California in 1857, but it is easy to speculate that the world-wide recession of 1857, due in large part by the failing of the gold-fields would have hit EAS hard in San Francisco. If you add to this the birth and death of the first Euphemia of brain fever -- encephalitis -- in the same year, I can well imagine that IAS would be eager to take her young family back to “civilization” in Scotland.)<sup>30</sup>

### **Back to the US, 1860**

[Isabella and Edward’s second daughter was born in 1859 in Scotland and was christened Euphemia Alberta. In the summer of 1860 Isabella and Edward returned to the United States with the child and their two sons, who had been born in California. The family settled in Washington, D.C. where recovery from the financial recession already had begun. [Bard J. Suverkrop wrote in 2016: ] (Again, I have not seen any documentation as to why the move was made back to the United States in the summer of 1860. Although Edward must have still had some business connections in England, he had spent 20 years working in Australia, Hawaii, and California. The financial crises of 1857 was not limited to California or even the United States but was part of a larger downturn that is considered the first worldwide economic crisis and would have therefore affected EAS’s ability to do business in Scotland or England.) [Edward had tried to make a success in Scotland. An entry from a patent book reads, “Edward Albert Suverkrop, of

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<sup>30</sup> Email with Bard J. Suverkrop, 2016

Leith, for reaping and mowing machines.—August 6, 1859.”]<sup>31</sup>

**[Bard J. Suverkrop:] (Given their financial situation and prospects of creating a new business from scratch in Scotland/England at 46 years of age, it makes sense that they would have returned to the United States in 1860, 10 months prior to the start of the Civil War, where the country was gearing up for war. It is not surprising the move was made to Washington D.C. where they had a number of relatives including Donald and Jane -- the sister of IAS) MacLeod. As an interesting side story, Donald MacLeod was the brother of William MacLeod the first curator of the Corcoran Gallery in Washington D.C.)**

**[Lewis’s mother-in-law, Mary Elizabeth Lyon Burham Yung Kwai, 1868-1952, researched Washington D.C. directories and found the E.A. Suverkrop name in city directories at five addresses from 1864 to 1870. Edward, who had become a U.S. citizen, first worked as a clerk in the U.S. Census Office in D.C., but from about 1866 to 1869 he worked for the Office of the U.S. Army Quartermaster-General.]**



**E.A. Suverkrop, c. 1878**

**[Bard J. Suverkrop:] (I'm sure his background in business held him in good**

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<sup>31</sup> *[Repertory of Patent Inventions, and Other Discoveries and Improvements..., v 35, p 255, No. 817 A. Macintosh, Printer. London (1860)]*

stead in both jobs. As for the minor position at the U.S. Census office, I think EAS needed the work. He seemed to have been in the right place at the right time in most of his business life, but had little to show for it. His father was a very successful businessman in London but passed-away at an unfortunate time when his finances were at a low point, so there was very little to pass on to his son Edward. Edward's venture in the Pacific, could have worked out well for him, and he was well-connected in Hawaii and could have used those connections to develop trade with California. EAS led an extremely interesting life, but not one that left him with great financial security.)

(When he returned to Washington, D.C. he satisfied himself by working for the government [census office]. This might have been because of his financial situation or the influence of IAS to have him take the safer route in his later years. I am reminded of IAS's [Isabella's] comments on the death of EAS [Edward] which are more than telling: 'The universal opinion of him was a perfect gentleman. His experiences of life & its inevitable disappointments had no effect on his sunny disposition and childlike trustfulness of character. He was too confident ever to become rich.')

### **Travel to Washington, D.C.**

[In this letter of June 18, 1860 Isabella tells the family's arrival.] "My dear Pheme. You will be glad to learn that we arrived safe and well on Thursday morning the 14th but too late to write by the steamer (which left at 6 pm the day before). We came on here last morning, leaving New York at 7 am and arriving here at about 6 in the evening."

"Donald [her brother-in-law] met us at the station and brought us here preparing me to find our poor dear Jane in bed, where I \_\_\_\_ [regret?] to say she has been for the last three weeks, only getting up for a few minutes some times, & that not everyday. She looks pale & \_\_\_\_ but \_\_\_\_ actually in pain. Her spirits are very good and \_\_\_\_ . The girls are perfectly devoted to her & taking the most tender care of her comfort as well as all the household concerns, \_\_\_\_ [and the?] labor they divide between them."

"I do not know actually what is the matter with Jane, but it is similar to

what so many ladies now a days are afflicted with. She has a great deal of pain and \_\_\_ \_\_\_ head ache, but I don't think there is any tumor. I think it is more probably \_\_\_, but the doctor has not told her precisely what it is. She tells me he is very skillful, particularly into Simpson's line<sup>32</sup>, so I trust his prescriptions may have a good effect and that she will soon be up again."

"The dear creature was so delighted to see us all and as you may believe I have been little out of her room since I came. Indeed it is the general place of \_\_\_ [rest?] and seems to me the pleasantest room in the house, made so by her \_\_\_\_\_ [sweet?] and loving presence."

"The weather has been delightful, and we live night and day with open windows and as few clothes as possible. If you were here you would find you could not exist without a good-sized 'crinoline' to keep you cool and airy. Fortunately I got one in Liverpool. I was out this evening a little the first time since I came, and it was so \_\_\_ and pleasant to see everybody either sitting at open doors and windows or walking up and down in the thinnest drapes and with uncovered heads and little children playing on the steps of the houses. I have undressed our children as much as I can, & baby looks so nice with bare neck & arms & a good bit of leg besides. She has a beautiful colo [color?] children very good [?] which I am glad of, for I was afraid with their unrestrained liberty at \_\_\_\_\_ [Edinburgh ?] they would be a little spoiled. However I don't think they are. There is a pretty little garden and shady back yard for them to play in that they are never in the house during play hours."

"I must say something of the voyage. We had no gales on the high seas, but we had decidedly unpleasant weather and quite unlike what we had looked for in June. Frequent showers of rain, heavy fogs and a constant and very disagreeable swell on the ocean. For some days and nights when off New Foundland and Nova Scotia the fog was so dense that we had to keep the steam whistle constantly going, and it had an eerie sound and suggested an idea of insecurity, for besides the risk of collision with other vessels, we

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<sup>32</sup> [Scottish obstetrician Sir James Young Simpson, 1811-1870]

stood a chance of meeting icebergs which would be ever more dangerous as they would neither take nor give warning. However from all these perils of the sea we were mercifully saved and the last two days of our voyage made up for all the rest. The sea calmed down, the sun shone brilliantly, and even I, the worst sailor on board, got up and joined the party on deck though I did not venture to \_\_\_\_ [eat?] till the very last dinner."

"Baby [Euphemia] was a little sick the first day we went to sea but after that she was up and down everywhere and as happy as the day was long. All the passengers made a great pet of her, and it was amusing to see how the young puss avoided the ladies and accepted all the attentions of the \_\_\_\_ [male] sex."

[Here Isabella refers to their economic status.] "Some of the passengers were of very high class, but they were all very agreeable to us and some of these very nice people, especially an old gentleman who with his son had the next [cabin?] to ours and who often came in to have a little chat when I was lying in bed. There was also a very interesting Italian to whom Edward took very much and a very gentlemanly and agreeable Papist priest who was one of the baby's greatest friends. If \_\_\_\_ [the maid?] came into our cabin without her, & I asked where she was, it was either \_\_\_\_ [I think?] the Captain is taking care of her" or "the priest has got her". Once her papa asked her if she was confessing her sins, and the priest answered that she had none, which I think was 'most liberal sentiments towards a heretical duckling' [baptism]."

"Our Captain was a fine pleasant fellow, quite young and handsome and the doctor also young and handsome and agreeable. When baby was on deck and the captain appeared, it was always a signal for a grand \_\_\_\_, which would end in his snatching her up and giving her about a dozen kisses. And I used to hear her roaring and laughing with the priest, he teaching her little games, and her calling out 'Do it Again!' In short she was perfectly happy and you would have laughed to hear sometimes when she \_\_\_\_ [all of] a sudden lurched exclaiming '\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_'. We had a very airy, nice cabin, and as it opened on the saloon [British: public lounge or drawing room], and that on the main deck, we could have a thorough draft of air,

and the weather being calm we could always keep our window open. Baby and I had the sofa berth under the window."

### **Settling into Washington, 1860 - 1869**

"Washington D.C., Nov. 20, 1860. My dearest Peter [Isabella's brother]. In a letter I wrote Pheme the week before last I told her what she has of course informed you, that Edward has received his appointment as a "Clerk of the 1st class." Clerks work in the room Edward is in, and Mr Case the Superintendent occupies his own case adjoining. He told E. one day lately that his work was a pattern for the office, which was very encouraging."

"Some of the clerks are given to smoking and talking politics, but this last especially \_\_\_\_\_ that invariably brings dire punishment in this free country, and therefore we intend to avoid 'opinions'."

"Our dear Jane [Isabella sister] does not I am sorry to say improve at all in health. I cannot say I see much change of any kind and she was certainly better about a month or six weeks ago than she was when I came. She drove out twice and even walked in the garden, but she has been worse since then and her mind has [been?] senile [feeble], at times very painfully. Still she has not lost strength and sits up in her room every day, and I cannot keep hoping that she may yet overcome the disease. Doctors are so often mistaken and she has so vigorous a constitution. She was glad to see the little picture you sent of Aarøchar [Arrochar, a village in Scotland] but did not like it so well as the plain old fronts [architecture?]. You said you had been fishing in the \_\_\_\_\_ and we both forgot where it was. Is it at the head of Loch Lomond?"

### **Making Do in Washington**

"I must tell you that we have taken a house or rather a wooden box and are putting it in order. It is one room wide and two deep with no \_\_\_\_\_. All small houses here are built in that way. It is not convenient but must be submitted to if you want a low rent. You enter by the front door straight into the principal apartment, so we are going to take the liberty of turning it into an entrance hall so that the mud may expend itself there on the bare

floor before it reaches the inner room, which is our dining and sitting room and which we shall make very snug with a carpet and a little stove. The kitchen opens out of it so that at all counts the dinner won't have time to cool in bringing in. And behind that is a large, rough room which will \_\_\_\_ [serve as?] a good lumber room [or] work shop \_\_\_\_ [area?] as it is not fit for a servant's sleeping room. Up stairs we have a good sized bedroom for ourselves and a smaller one for the boys each with a small closet, so you see we have plenty of room for those who can be contented with little."

"The garden however is my great hobby. It is a large piece of ground both behind and in front and though perfect wilderness will, I hope, be pretty in summer. There are apple, pear and peach trees of good size; goose and blackberry bushes, a \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ on a trellis and large strawberry bed, roses, honeysuckle, jasmine, and multitudes of other flowers and room for vegetables and plenty of drying ground. It is too late for us to do much this season but in spring we shall try to make it nice."

"In this or any country indeed the first consideration is to find home employment for boys and by giving them gardens you provide work of an interesting kind. They begin their second quarter today with their worthy teacher Miss Jewett. She is a old maid from New England and is both tried and firm with children."

"Robbie tells me he has never tasted the cane yet, Johnny had it one day for talking and laughing with another boy, on which young America [Johnny] took his cap and vowed he would not stand it! for which he was shut up in a room by himself for an hour. Johnny went to Miss. J. and asked her pardon, for which she went for him in the afternoon to take a walk with her."

"We used to do this in the long afternoon but now there is no time. It gets dark about five but the mornings are quite light at seven and the weather till today, with the exception of occasional rains lasting only a day or two at a time, has been very mild and pleasant for the season. Last week was beautiful, more like September than November. I must add a few lines to dear Meta so goodbye dearest Peter, your ever affectionate sister, Isabella Süwerkrop"

## **The Servant Problem**

[This is a continuation of the above letter, but it is addressed to Isabella's sister Euphemia:] "Dearest Meta. I have been a long time answering your kind letter but I dare say you can excuse me. I have had a great deal to occupy me though not much actually to do, yet you know [that] where there is an invalid and with children and no servant one must always be looking after them so as to keep them quiet, more especially where there are other children. missing children stuck to you. Sometimes the younger girls take Mia off my hands, but only occasionally. I miss Edward's help for there is only about an hour's daylight after he comes home and dinner is over, but Mr Case has given him a day's leave whenever he chooses, so when the house is ready we shall move all our chattels [property] from here at once."

"Labor is very high and [we] shall have to give seven or eight dollars a month to a servant, and I fear judging from the \_\_\_\_\_ [choices?] I see it will be difficult to get a good one. The blacks are saucy [and] untidy and have a perpetual crowd of hangers on about them, and the few whites to be had are the most ignorant kind. I am going to try to get a black girl who was here for a month or two and who said she would come to me at any time."

"I was glad to hear of poor Mrs Brydose [Brydoes?]. Tell her Mrs Sweeny was asking for her. She has been thought dying of consumption for fifteen years, has only one lung and yet goes on having babies in the most outrageous manner and looks fresh and pretty and well till you hear her cough. She is a niece of Miss Jenny Hall, Jane's dear friend who is living in Kentucky this winter. Now dearest I must say goodbye, write me soon and I shall send you another epistle ere long. Kind love to all the dear children and believe me ever your affectionate sister Isabella Süwerkrop."

## **A Death in Scotland**

[Six months passed. Isabella wrote:] "December 10th, 1860, 12th Street, Washington. Dearest PHEME. Your letter or rather short note from Glasgow reached me on Saturday the 8th, and I lose no time in saying how deeply distressed we all are at your painful account of dearest Meta's health and how anxiously we await further news, fervently hoping for the best. When I

read hastily your announcement of poor darling baby's death [Meta's child], I at first thought it was Met, and oh! what a shock - what a terrible feeling it was. The poor, dear sweet thing [speaking of Meta?]. I do trust in God she has been spared to her husband and children and her poor mother, for whom I feel much in being thus hurriedly called to so sad a scene. There was some comfort in the latter part of your note saying the doctor thought the symptoms \_\_\_ dictated, but it must have been the 90th day when you wrote, and that is always a critical time. As you promised to write next mail I shall look out on Saturday again."

"The arrangements here as to letters are very stupid and tiresome. There are no letter deliveries unless you make an express stipulation to that affect, and then you pay three cents on each letter, otherwise you may have a box at the office and pay an annual rent for that -- the chances are you don't get them."

### Sister Jane's Illness

[The letter continues.] "Donald ~~has~~ [had?] a ~~box~~ [pox?] and terrible a stroke has been spared him. You being there must have been a comfort, and it was kind to take the three poor little ones home with you. I am sure the girls were sorry about the little baby. Our children were quite grieved, and even Mia [Euphemia] comes out with 'Oh I am so sorry that aunt Meta's baby is dead'. We saw the birth in a Glasgow paper so were hoping all was well."

"You and \_\_\_\_\_ made a long visit in Liverpool. I was glad to hear you got home safe and sound so well after the excursion. You don't say if you have seen Dr. Bennett again, where is he this winter?"

"Our dearest Jane continues much the same. She has a great deal of pain at some parts of the day, but the ~~sub-conscious~~ [sub-cutaneous] infection [injection] still proves her best remedy. She derives no benefit whatever from any internal opiate, and as she is troubled greatly with constipation she does not like to use them, though as I said before, she has no inducement, for they do her no good. I thought, dear, that Dr. Johnstone had written a full statement of her case to Duncan and if it were possible to

do anything more for her, I should think D. would have written, which I don't think he has done."

"Donald has been writing all \_\_\_\_\_ [month for?] Dr. Smith to come and lately has taken to sending ~~his~~-him telegrams, not one of which Dr. S. has ever answered. But at last a few days ago he sent \_\_\_\_\_ [an answer] in a letter of his daughters saying he wished much to come but had not been able to get time. He is a surgeon so I don't think it likely he would know much about the case."

"The weather has been too damp and variable for dear Jane to leave her room lately. She came down to dinner on Thanksgiving day -- the last Thursday in November -- but I think has not been down since. Sometimes however when I go in I will find her sitting up and looking cheerful and well and then the next time I enter she will be prostrate and suffering and cast down. Yesterday I was there twice [and] she was pretty well, but today it has poured all day and \_\_\_\_\_ an hour ago [she] informed me she had been 'very sick' all day, which meant I fancy that she had more pain than usual."

"She wanted to see Edward and he has gone. She sent for him before to go to town for some medicine, but as he was wet when he brought it back he did not like to go into her room. Poor dear. She depends on him for these and many other little services which he is always happy and ready to perform, and it is such a comfort to be so near, only one division of the street [one street away]."

### More Problems with Servants

[The letter continues.] "We have been a fortnight today in our cottage and are very snug and contented. I made an arrangement with a servant, which is common here \_\_\_\_\_ to ~~indeed~~ have her during the day only. I had no sleeping room for her and indeed had a horror of a 'servant's room', if I may \_\_\_\_\_ [say?] of the one in Jane's house which was \_\_\_\_\_ [very?] dirty always. When she was well of course things were different, but they had either \_\_\_\_\_ or ~~severe-look~~ [several?] in five months, and these of the untidy order with only one exception since I left. Bridget, the last and only white one they have had, conducted herself so that poor Jane had to

call her up to her room and tell her not to abuse the young ladies, to which she answered that if any one belied her she must answer back!"

"So I thought if any that is a white specimen, give me a black. I have ~~not~~ [now] a very quiet young married woman, the best kind I could have for she has no followers, which the white ones have in plenty. She is a good looking brown girl and has what baby [Euphemia] calls a "nice black husband" who comes to escort her home in the \_\_\_\_\_ [evening] after his work is over. She is rather a nice cook, makes excellent bread, & has sense to do anything she is told -- washes and irons very well and quickly, and in short does all our work and has time to spare to do as \_\_\_\_\_ [a she wants?] than in a \_\_\_\_\_ where \_\_\_\_\_ we are ready to her hand [?]."

"We have a pump in the yard but as it was rather brown -- the water -- from \_\_\_\_\_ we have had to fetch it from the corner hither to. But Mary Anne [the maid] always has plenty, while in Jane's kitchen you never could get a drop either hot or cold. I hope she [Mary Ann] will continue to do well for I think we have been very fortunate. It is now near when the ducks ~~of course~~ [are?] asleep. I am sitting in one little sitting room with a good fire in the stove -- one made grate fashion." (rest of letter missing)

[Two months later:] "Washington D.C. 4th Feb. '61. Dearest PHEME, Your letter of 18th Jan. reached me two days ago, and I make haste to answer it by first steamer. I feared you must be ill from the length of time since we had a letter, and I am sorry to find it the case. I hope 'ere now you are better and that you will write me at once when you get this to tell me how you are and other things, of which more by and by."

"Dearest Jane was so distressed by your note she cried and said you must be dangerously ill, and I could hardly pacify her by telling her you were very subject to similar attacks when over fatigued."

"I am sure you must have suffered both in body and mind from your exertions and distress for dear Peter and the children. You astonish me by what you say of their getting over their grief so soon, the children I mean. Of course I thought they would be inconsolable."

**"Is the lady Bepie going to a sister of the Mr Gouilly whom I know? Those are nice girls -- at least likely to be well brought up -- that she is going with, and I hope it may be a pleasant and profitable change. You say Peter may move to Edin. How could he manage with his business?"**

**"By this time you have got all the letters telling you of Dr. Richard's visits and that he and Dr. Johnstone decided not to try Dr. Simpson's remedy [for Jane]. It appears that palliatives are the only thing that can be used in her case. The disease is unhappily beyond medical aid. She still uses the sub-cutaneous injection, but it is losing its efficiency very much and has lately had a very ~~disappreciable~~ [depreciating] effect on her nervous system, making her very susceptible to sound and confusing her mind and memory greatly."**

**"Still she has great variations. Some days she is better, but at other times she suffers so much that it is truly distressing to be in the room. I have just been down to see her and came home by starlight. She made me lie down beside her and I had half an hour's rest and chat all about you and your letter."**

### **The Children**

**[The letter continues.] "The children are now in bed, and Edward and I and the cat -- a foundling of Johnny's and his hearts' delight -- are sitting together by a cheery little fire. I am so much interested of all you say of dear Meta but I would like to know more. What was the immediate cause of her death? Poor dear little Alfie. It is touching what you say of him, and I dare say he would have been glad to go back with you. Robbie often talks of him and feels particularly for him, I suppose because he is a boy."**

**"The poor little man has been very \_\_\_\_\_ [much?] confined to the house for about a month except for a day or two. He and baby took bad coughs, however the 'hoop' never came. Robbie lost his appetite and became feverish in the evenings and lost flesh and colour so we sent for Dr. Johnstone who said it was ~~cataraet~~ [catarrh] fever of what would be called bronchitis in England. He got better by taking the doctor's prescriptions, but we had to send for him again in about a fortnight. This time he said it was**

gastric fever, and gave him bismutte [bismuth] to allay the sickness, which I suppose is always a symptom of the disease. We were very anxious about the little fellow, but after being \_\_\_\_\_ [cured he became hale?] and strong and busy at school with his kind teacher."

### **Edward's Work. More About Servants**

"My dear Edward [is] in high favor in his office and advanced to a post of trust and honor, though with no increase of salary. Our domestic arrangements have been rather disturbed by our servant going away ill. She sent a black man one morning with the news she was not coming back. Robbie was ill at the time, and I had to do without help for three days, at the end of which time I was laid up myself. I then got a temporary female who also went one Saturday, and we have had none since. This is Monday \_\_\_\_\_, but I have engaged her to come back tomorrow till I can get a proper servant."

"Jane sent me a nice elderly woman, an old acquaintance of hers -- her daughter having nursed Pheme -- and I engaged her, but in the meantime they got into straits themselves. Their cook who is a slave, having got a cold, and her master insisted on taking 'his property' (as he called her to Belle's great disgust) home to nurse."

"So they sent for 'Aunt Kitty', and she has been there ever since. And though dear Jane says it weighs on her conscience that she should have two servants and I none, yet mine will not let me take the decent old body away from them, when she [the servant] suits them so well."

"They are so dependent on an honest, careful cook, for they [the help] will neither can nor will look after them as I do. But, oh, the laziness and slovenliness and dirt of these helpers. Mary Anne did very well for a time, but by and bye she got dreadfully idle and careless [and] would not do anything after dinner but get the tea. [And she] came so late in the morning that it was a hurry scurry to get breakfast by half past eight and required looking to do every \_\_\_\_\_ [little thing?]. When she went away, I found all the pots and pans dirty-- some of them spoiled by bad usage and the new towels I had given her utterly ruined. Then she used to take away

everything she could get though I did not leave much in her power. But she actually made bread with our flour and took it home with her."

"This one I have got [the servant] \_\_\_\_\_ [has?] a rather clever [clever?] bittence [countenance?] than \_\_\_\_\_ [other?] did, but she is so dirty in her person that I actually don't like to look at her or to have her do anything in my bedroom. They have all an offensive odour, and their untidy ways are a continual heartbreak. I don't see anything of slavery here. All these servants are free. I should say their good qualities are generally that they can wash and iron well, are good cooks especially in baking bread and corn and buckwheat cakes, and those I have had have never given me a bad \_\_\_\_\_ [time?] nor refused to do anything I desired them, but then as soon as my back was turned they would leave the thing whatever it was and sit down to ruminate upon their latter end. So much for help in this free country."

"I am indeed delighted to hear of dear Susie's happiness and congratulate her with all my heart and hope she will be as happy as I am in her husband. I am quite sure that the most satisfactory marriages are not those formed in early youth, and if \_\_\_\_\_ [matters?] of taste can make life delightful, it is \_\_\_\_\_ [bound?] to be so. Their arrangements appear charming if there are no babies!"

"Now, dear Pheme, in conclusion I wish to say, tell me all the \_\_\_\_\_ story and then let us, for the short time we are to be together in the world, live as becomes those who expect to meet in better [times?] -- & there have been heavy alarms, and I have felt as if something of the horrors of \_\_\_\_\_ [hell?] and \_\_\_\_\_ [damnation?] were reserved for us, but I have never been afraid. I desire [discern?] we both desire humility doing our duty as best we may ~~their~~ [there?]\_\_\_\_\_. We shall sooner or later go home to Him. Be sure to write without delay. Your affectionate sister, Isabella Süwerkrop"

[Isabella's letter to her brother George:] "Washington June 14, 1861. My dear George, I have long wished and intended to write to you and I am afraid you think me very unkind in not doing so sooner. Yet I think you would excuse me if you knew how the time is apt to slip away in such a

family as ours and a country where servants are such an unsatisfactory article.”

### Civil War, Washington, D.C

“I intended writing you at the time of our dear Jane's death<sup>33</sup>, but soon after that \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_, and for some time, no northern mails went out at all, or if they did were so insecure that one felt as if letters might not reach their destination.”

“I don't know what amount you have heard of our state here, but there was a great pause [?] in Washington and many families left for the north. The city would have a very deserted appearance were it not for the troops about it, though a good many regiments have gone off to Virginia where the rebel forces are \_\_\_\_ [amassed?] in great numbers and where it is feared there will be some desperate works.”

“Where it will end no one can foresee. But it is evident to every thinking mind that the President has taken the only course that was open to him, for the south \_\_\_\_ that many say would never have rested content with a peaceable separation, and the idea of this fine [time?] enough being under \_\_\_\_\_ as of south. I \_\_\_\_\_ as might be \_\_\_\_\_ for under southern law, \_\_\_\_\_ perfectly appalling to think of. Even now rumours reach us from time to time \_\_\_\_ [about?] the \_\_\_\_ [severe?] bondage in which they hold the souls as well as the bodies of their fellow creatures.”

“To be an abolitionist is to be worthy of and loathe to ~~an dishonest~~ [dishonesty?] of \_\_\_\_ [cruel?] and unjust treatment. \_\_\_\_ [That?] not only of property but even of life, and it is a \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ [that?] the men of the north have taken to put down the rebellion in the first place. And they hope to put an end to the curse of Slavery through out the country.”

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<sup>33</sup> [Jane died February 25, 1861 in Washington D.C. -- The Evening Star - Washington D.C., Feb 26, 1861]

## Jane's Death

"Pheme has no doubt told you all the particulars regarding our dearest Jane's illness and death. She was for many months a great sufferer but sustained by strong faith and the most perfect confession to the will of God. She often spoke of you with affection and wished to write to you but put it off as one is apt to do in illness, and then it was too late."

"She took ~~some~~ [such] large quantities of morphia that especially during the last weeks of her life she was almost always in a drowsy, half conscious state so that frequently when I went to see her and had not long to stay I would have to come away without speaking to her. But I was there when she died and only about half an hour before [death] she knew and called me to her. You can imagine how her children mourn her loss, especially the two elder girls to whom she was a delightful friend and companion."

## Union Troops

[The letter continued.] "I often think how merciful a \_\_\_\_ [thing] it is that her illness happened before this \_\_\_\_ [war?] . She was so weak and feverous that these constant alarms and all the fiery drumming and shouting that goes on would have hastened the end. She has been taken from the evil -- of course perhaps worse \_\_\_\_ [ever?] than any of us at present foresee. But whatever happens we have our army of brave defenders in the field ready with one heart [to] fight and die if need be in the good cause."

"Edward saw in the German papers the Garibaldi Guard came in the other day, the \_\_\_\_ [group?] composed of one thousand Italians, Spaniards and Tyrolians commanded in the Italian language and all fine soldiers like \_\_\_\_ of alone had \_\_\_\_ good \_\_\_\_."

"Already there is also a Highland regiment newly arrived. Their quarters are at Georgetown College, a fine, spacious building with extensive grounds which had been given up to their use for the present. We went out to see them one evening, and the Highland physiognomy in many of the men was unmistakable, though there are of course English, Irish, and Canadians

amongst them. Returning on the omnibus a young soldier of the 12th -- another New York regiment -- began to talk to Johnny [Isabella's son] and then spoke to him, and at last Edward asked him what countryman he was, to which he replied 'I am a Scot but I have taken up arms for the Stars and Stripes.' So I told him I was Scottish also, and the laddie was quite delighted to meet a country woman and said he would come and see us and [that] the boys must come to the camp and he would take good care of them and show them everything."

"Next day coming they went to see the parade and Joe Harper, as our new friend is called, showed them all the wonders of the camp and then brought them home and had tea with us. We found him a very intelligent, nice young fellow -- one of the many thousands who have left peaceable trades and taken up arms in this righteous cause. The first time they have handled weapons of any kind."

"The 12th is one of the finest looking regiments I have seen. Their camp is not far from here and they were all out exercising last night on the grain fields just beyond us, for we are quite in the country here. It is wonderful how well drilled the volunteer regiments are already and what a fine appearance they make. All the ladies have been busy making 'havelocks',<sup>34</sup> a hood of white cotton, to cover the cap, with a deep \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_, and they are quite indispensable for soldiers in hot climates. One lady, a delightful Scots friend of mine, has made a hundred of them, and an English lady that I was called on yesterday told me she and her niece were at their fifth dozen. I have only made one -- [for] Joe, the said Joe Harper -- and he is very proud of it, poor laddie. I made it of linen as I thought it would wear longer."

"Nobody seems able to think of anything but soldiers, and of course all the little boys, white, black, and yellow have caught the infection -- going into our boys even ~~on-right~~ [at night]. After they were in bed I found two \_\_\_\_\_ of Johnny's \_\_\_\_\_ [own manufacture pointing?] due South in a threatening manner from one of their windows, and even Baby is put

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<sup>34</sup> [Havelock, pronounced HAVE-lock, is a white, cloth cover attached to a soldier's cap. It drapes over the wearer's neck and shoulders.]

through her drills and understands the word of command."

"Edward has a good situation in what is called the Census Bureau but they don't seem to be in any hurry to finish the arraignment of the Census returned and are now doing some other work to lay before Congress which meets next month. Working hours are from nine to three which with the [heat?] at \_\_\_\_ [times?] is quite long enough. We dine at half past three which is the general hour in Washington and then everybody dresses and you either go out in the cool of the evening or meet you friends in the garden or on the door step -- which is the place where you will find everybody who has not a garden."

### **Neighbors in Washington**

[The letter continued.] "We have a great many pleasant neighbors joining our fence. On one side is the property of our landlady's brother, Mr Wheat, a nice old gentleman with one son and a niece, and a beautiful house and garden on our other side, but with a lane between. [It] is a pretty place rented by an Italian gentleman with a nice wife but no family. They are very friendly and social and make a great fuss with our Baby. Mr Caulatore [prob Calatori] often threatens to take of possession of her. Then come a German couple -- Mr Poesche in Edward's office- only round the corner, also friendly and agreeable, and a delightful English family, the Alexanders. And then a perfect jewel of a Scotsman, Mr Melocke,, now keeping house in his wife's absence for a friend of ours, Mr Mitchell. All these are nearer than the Marteds [neighbors in Scotland] and they are not far away, so you see if I were given to visiting I might have enough of it."

"I see some of the girls pretty often and the boys [Jane's children]. I generally meet Donald on our marketing expeditions. I go every second day at seven in the morning and \_\_\_\_ [am able?] to manage for two days as the market is held on alternate days more than a mile from here, and I never go there, though people who require fresh meat every day do too as you cannot keep it at this season \_\_\_\_\_ [unless?] with ice. That is a great luxury we get enough to last us all day for five cents a large block of beautiful clear ice. This keeps the milk and butter cool, and you have [it] to put in the water for drinking."

**"I have Johnny in bed today with a cold -- and some house cleaning going on, but I determined I would write you and not procrastinate any longer. I must bring my letter to the post now so goodbye, dear George. Your affectionate sister Bella "**

**[Isabella wrote:] "Washington July 5th, '61. Dearest Phemie, I had yours of the 14th \_\_\_\_ [just?] two days ago, and was truly glad to hear of your being so much better yourself, though your news at the end of the letter concerning dear George has made me uneasy, & I shall be anxious 'till I hear. I do hope it was not a dangerous illness though I can imagine its nature & know the suspicion you would suffer 'till you knew."**

**[Isabella's words here suggest that her youthful cousins visited back and forth between United States and Scotland:] "I suppose a \_\_\_\_ [time?] before this reaches you, you will have dear Bella with you as she leaves this tomorrow on her very roundabout way to you, as it appears to me. Did you not know that she has to go through New York to get to Boston, & that she will likely have to stay all night in the former place enduring of course both to the inconvenience & expense. I know the latter appears to be 'no object' at present. I hope the dear child will get safe to you. You would never understand, unless you were there, all what Belle is in the 'family' and how dreadfully she will be missed. In fact I would almost as soon think of asking a mother to leave a family of children -- & what they will do without her I can't imagine..."**

### **Sister Phemie's Husband**

**"But as for D. [Donald McLeod] calling her ~~has~~ [his] companion, it is too ridiculous. I dare say his comfort may suffer for he is one of those men who neither can do anything for his family or himself, but you can imagine their relations with him when I tell you that they all have their dinner at two o'clock without him, & he comes straggling in sometimes at one hour, sometimes at another."**

**"All purser offices close at three, & most families dine at 1/2 past, but to dine without the father would appear to me \_\_\_\_\_ [the worst?] of all comfort. Yet I believe Phemie does it for the best & because she cannot**

keep him to regular hours. But it is an expensive way of living as well as an uncomfortable one. I only tell you this to show you that you must take to letters on the very subject with allowance for a vivid imagination. For he certainly is less with his family than any man I ever knew. To whom intercourse with them would be eventually beneficial, for [because] your \_\_\_\_\_ [work?] teaching girls has been his business for the last fifteen years -- & E. & I [Edward and I] often wonder he does not take a pleasure in being more [pleasure] with them & going so about with them [than with his family?]."

### **With the Troops**

[The letter continued.] "They were all down at the camp last night -- not a place I would go to without my husband -- with Aunty Elizabeth for protector. We had a very quiet 'Independence Day', & the New York regiments very \_\_\_\_\_ [noticed?] by the President early in the morning , but we did not go. I hear he made a splendid appearance, & our 12th were singled out & complimented by Gen. Scott. ~~I were all~~ [All were] allowed to go out of camp during the day and yet when we went down at 8 in the evening when the camp was brilliantly lighted up, every man was sober as a judge which speaks volumes."

"'Baby' [Euphemia] was in her carriage and was taken possession of by the soldiers, but her affections are divided between Joe Harper the Scottish laddie and a young comrade of his, Jim White. She kisses them I must confess, but as they are young laddies and perfect gentlemen in their conduct, I pass over her small flirtations."

"They all got two months pay last week, and these two & another young fellow, a German, brought me their money to keep, while many others spent theirs foolishly. Joe was on duty one whole night hunting up stragglers so he got leave out next day & came straight to us, went with Edw. & Johnny for a swim in the river, [and] came back to tea & got home at nine o'clock cheered but not inebriated."

"It has been the greatest pleasure to us to be kind to this fine young countryman. He went to church with Edw. one Sunday & is coming next

Sunday indeed as soon as he gets leave out we are sure to see him -- & I feel so much older now than I used to, so that lads of two and twenty seem boys to me."

"Belle will put you right on the question of the war. My dear Phemeie, let the South alone? Never. Not only would slavery with all its horrors be perpetuated, but the slave trade revived with its enormities. You don't know ~~what~~ [that] a Southern \_\_\_\_\_ [nation?] would be a worse repression than Russia ever was, & does it ever occur to you that this rebellion in the South is a rebellion? Just as if Ireland were to declare herself a separate state and not to be let alone. One may rather ask what are they all \_\_\_\_\_ for in England? I don't know \_\_\_\_\_ to aggravate Louis Nap. into inaction, which I think if I were he I would do out of spite."

"You ask me if any of Jane's children are like her. I think not & Fanny not at all. The shape of Phemie's head & the color of her hair are like her mother but not her eyes, features or completion. None of them have the eyes, and Fanny's hair is devilishly red. Though I daresay it will grow dark. I think pretty little Donald is growing like our Pete. He is tall & slender and has beautiful black eyes."

"Mia [Isabella's Euphemia] is sitting on the ground building 'Joe's Hut at the camp.' If you only knew that duckling you would think her society a privilege. She is so clever & sensitive and such a loving little pet. One day I was going out & she said to me, 'Don't go far away for your know I can't live if you stay long.' I bought her a hoop [article of clothing?] when the weather became \_\_\_\_\_ [warmer?] -- she looked so awkward & uncomfortable in her little frock & trousers that I actually invested 1£ 6d in a \_\_\_\_\_. She looks quite a woman in it. She is so tall she imitates all my ~~patiens~~ [motions?] & even my way of speaking. She was cutting out paper yesterday & gravely informed me this was the pattern of a travel frock, & sure enough she had made an excellent imitation. Another day she wanted a sock to darn so in a little [time] she brought it back saying, 'Mama do you like that? It is the way I generally do stockings!' The foot was all sewn together."

[About a year later Isabella wrote:] Washington D.C. August 25, 1862. My

dearest PHEME, I received your nice long letter from Sudbrook about a fortnight ago and was sorry to hear you had been suffering from neuralgia. I have since then had very good accounts of you through Bella to Phemie so I hope you have got rid of it. I suppose you are all settled at home again ere this. You must have [had] a delightful visit, some of the people you name I know about but others not, however they are all interesting with the word you say about each. I would like to send my love to Dinah the next time you see her. I was glad to hear she had got her brother back again. [Euphemia inserted here 'Dinah Mulock the authoress of John Halifax Gent' . i.e., John Halifax, Gentleman, published in 1856]

"Bella [who was visiting England] must have enjoyed the visit to Sudbrook, but it is so entirely unlike any society she ever had and is likely to have here that I fear her house will be rather stale after it, though it seems that you don't intend that she shall come home this year. Phemie is greatly excited about it and says that she will never consent to Bella's remaining away, and I think myself that she is much more really wanted at home than she can be with you."

"Phemie has improved wonderfully in many ways since Bella left, but she has been quite long enough left to herself and requires the assistance and comfort of her sister's society. She has, besides, the same idea as \_\_\_\_\_ that it is understandable for people to pay long visits away from their own country if they are destined finally to live there."

### **Their Son Injured**

[The letter continued.] "You will be sorry to hear that your boy Johnny is not very well. [explained below]. He has been very active this vacation in helping me in my hospital work and went out twice with the other ladies to Falls Church Hospital Virginia. They found him so useful that they liked to have him and it was a pleasant days excursion for him besides. (He was aged 10). On the last time he went, about a week ago a little accident took place on the road, by which Johnny and the ambulance driver were both thrown out. The boy receiving a pretty severe cut over the eyebrow and some numerous bruises. The ladies said he behave [behaved] and [in an] insidious form [and] was much more difficult to overcome. Johnny was

quite lightheaded that afternoon talking about California, John, and his pony and then declaring he was killed and must get his discharge and a pension." [concussion?]

[A month later Isabella wrote:] "Washington D.C. Sept. 14th 1862. My dearest Phemie, I received your short letter of August 22nd about a week ago through Phemie and hope soon to have a regular letter. I would have written last week but I have had a regular hospital at home. Johnny was only two days convalescent when Mia very suddenly took the same kind of sore throat. Don't be alarmed at the name Diphtheria, for so it is, but I think not a dangerous form. Robin followed, of course. He took his with a severe bilious attack and [an] ulcerated throat superverced [supervented]. This is the 8th day of Mia's confinement to bed, and her throat is still very bad especially low down where we cannot see it. We have been very anxious about the darling cherubs, but I think she is mending a little. She is the sweetest and best little thing, so easily amused and so good."

### **Back to Scotland, 1869**

[Bard J. Suverkrop wrote in 2016,] (They left Washington D.C. in 1869, when Edward was 55 years old, to return to Scotland -- I'm thinking to retire. The oldest boy, John Peter, born in 1852 would have been 17 years old and his brother, Robert, born in 1856 was 13. This would be about the age that John, and later Robert, were sent to the continent to finish their educations. The parents stayed in Scotland.)

[Isabella's mother and Isabella's sister Euphemia continued living with their brother, Robert Mackay Smith, at 4 Bellevue Crescent, Glasgow, where they were the house-managers/house-keepers. About 1878 their mother, Euphemia Mackay Smith, died at age 96. Euphemia, who then in her early sixties, remained as house manager. She died in 1880.]

["E.A. Suwerkrop's was a participant at the Seventh Ordinary General Meeting of the Royal Colonial Institute held at Pall Mall in London on May 14, 1878.] Exactly where Isabella and Edward lived in Scotland until 1884 is not known, but for through 1888 they lived in Glasgow, County Lanarkshire. The address was probably the one shown in the Glasgow Post Office

Directory of 1884-1885: "E.A. Suwerkrop, 8 Windsor Terrace, St. George's Road."]

### Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee

[The Golden Jubilee was celebrated June 20, 1887. On June 25<sup>th</sup> Isabella wrote,] "My dear Jenny. Yesterday's mail brought me your kind little note and bundle of papers for which many thanks. I have for some jubilee \_\_\_\_ [gifts?] for the bride, and this box is the very thing for them. The 'Victoria' one is for Bella. The gilded one for Eddie and Mia for \_\_\_\_\_ to put in his cap or \_\_\_\_ which ever it is! There have of course been great Jubilee doings all over the country and even in this quiet nook we had something of it -- rockets and the principal \_\_\_\_ [streets?] very prettily illuminated. Mia and I are going with neighbors of ours \_\_\_\_ old Captain \_\_, \_\_, and the lady who ....." (Pages missing)

### Aftermath, 1888 - 1939

[The 'quiet nook' might have been in Scotland, but when *Robert Mackay Smith* died in 1888, Isabella and Edward's fortunes rose dramatically; See Appendix B, *Robert Mackay Smith, 1809-1888*. Isabella and Edward's sons attended university in Scotland and on the continent. A census taken in 1891 shows Isabella, Edward, and their daughter Euphemia living together in Surrey -- a home county bordering Greater London.]

[Edward died near London in 1895. A brief death notice in the Evening Star of Washington, D.C. dated December 23, 1895 read, "At 6 Cranbury Terrace, Southampton, England, on December 8, 1895, Edward Albert Suwerkrop, aged eighty-one, formerly of the quartermaster general's office, Washington D.C."]

[In 1897 Isabella lived at Mayberry, Regent's Park, Millbrook, Southampton. She died January 9, 1903 in Shirley -- a central district of Southampton. Her estate passed to Euphemia and her older brothers. Euphemia's brother John Peter died in 1910, and he left no descendants. Her brother Robert died in 1915, and her brother Edward Albert Suverkrop, II died in 1921.

**Euphemia died in 1939. What remained of the estate passed to the descendants of Robert Suverkrop and Edward Albert Suverkrop]**

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Isabella Ann Smith Suverkrop Recalls Edward**

**[Isabella wrote this letter to the Chattanooga Press, Tennessee probably in the first part of 1897:] "Will you allow me to correct some inaccuracies in your kindly-meant notice of my late husband. I am anxious that my son's friends in Chatt. want to know what manner of man his father really was, and [not that] his life was that of an aimless wanderer. And first, I but decline fectly but [flatly that?] my father-in-law [Edward's father] ever became a British subject."<sup>35</sup>**

**"My husband's education being well advanced in good English schools, he went to Brussels for three years furthering his Classical studies. He acquired a \_\_\_\_\_ [command?] of French, [and] he then proceeded to Hamburg to perfect himself in German & the routine of office work."**

**"My [own] father, a Glasgow merchant [Peter Smith], had sent his son [also named Peter] to Hamburg for the same purpose, and a warm friendship sprang up between the two young men, living in the house of the merchant in whose office they worked for a certain portion of each day. Their intimacy led to my marriage many years later at the residence of my brother-in-law at Ashwood, Tennessee."**

**"On the death of his father [June 28, 1839], my husband then just of age fitted out a ship as you have stated and set sail for Sydney, Australia. He sold his cargo, returned, purchased another, and went out again. Times had become hard in the Colony and he took his merchandise to Honolulu. There he entered into partnership with an English firm. His subsequent voyages to**

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<sup>35</sup> That son was John Peter Suverkrop, b. 1852- d. Feb 21, 1910. The Boston Post of Mar 3, 1875 identified him as a civil engineer. In 1892 he was chief engineer for the East Tennessee Land Company. Reference: Congressional Series of United States Public Documents, v. 3103, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1893. John Peter did not marry.

the other islands of the Pacific and China were all for business purposes, and [he] was appointed Council for Denmark and the Hanseatic towns. This office he also held later on in San Francisco, but he never was the B. [British] Gov. as was his voyage in 1848."

"While there [in San Francisco] he was invited by the Gov. of Cal. to accompany him on a trip up the country in order to investigate the \_\_\_\_ [matter?] as to the Gold discovery--Capt. Sherman & Capt. Folsom were of the party, which was a large one, travelling on horse back and escorted by a party of soldiers. Capt. Sherman & my husband camped out under intricate [?] circumstances \_\_\_\_ [as noted?] by you. They did not meet again till the year of the Centennial Exhibition when they dined together in Phil. -- the last survivors of the party."

"It will be seen, my husband's birth is our only connection with England. He became a citizen of the US after \_\_\_\_ then. Our sons were all born under the Stars and Stripes [and] our daughter in Edinb. I by birth, education, and descent claim Scotland as my native land."

"May I be permitted to add a few words of \_\_\_\_\_ [clarification about my husbands?] manners. The universal opinion of him was a perfect gentleman. His experiences of life & its inevitable disappointments had no \_\_\_\_ [effect?] on his sunny disposition and childlike trustfulness of character. He was too confident ever to become rich. He was an accomplished linguist fluent in five European languages. \_\_\_\_\_ and correctly and had his facility of \_\_\_\_\_ he \_\_\_\_\_ upon paper equaled his \_\_\_\_ [facility?] of verbal description. He might have written a \_\_\_\_ book. He was a devout Communicant of the Episcopal Church, and his peaceful death was fitting end to a flawless life."

"After this [the discovery of gold in California], Mr S. undertook a commission to NY and there arranged for the building of a steamer to ply between San F. and Sac. He sailed to Mazatlán, rode across Mexico to Vera Cruz, thence travelling to New York, and subsequently to London where he received the first consignments of gold dust ever brought to England. I possess some of this virgin gold round [around] a \_\_\_\_ [locket] of my \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_ Edward \_\_\_\_\_ that year. The \_\_\_\_ [gold?] I saw a lowly

**[flowing?] from the furnaces in the mint in London and moulded into bars -- this gold of course was shipped around the horn."**

## **Appendix B**

**Robert Mackay Smith, 1809-1888**



**[Isabella's brother Robert Mackay Smith, pictured above, inherited his own father's Edinburgh-based trade business and built it into a larger fortune.<sup>36</sup> Robert's business, scientific, literary, philosophical, and artistic interests were remarkably diverse.]**

**[Euphemia] "When, by the death of his father [Peter Smith] in Glasgow, on February 5 [about 1840] Uncle Robert [Isabella's brother] prevailed on his mother [Euphemia Mackay Smith] to make her home with him, and he**

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<sup>36</sup> See Wikipedia "Robert Mackay Smith"

bought the large house at Number Four Bellevue Crescent [Edinburgh] <sup>37</sup> It was in a ~~situation~~ [position?] of the new town ~~the~~ ~~it~~ [close?] to his office in Leith, unspoilt, and little built-over at that time. Now the large houses have gone down in value and are mostly converted."<sup>38</sup>

"The beautiful view in 1845 was then [when they moved], and for some 30 or 40 years after, across the Firth of Forth to the hills of Fife with the Isle of Inch-Keith visible from the windows. To this house my grandmother removed bringing her unmarried daughters PHEME [Euphemia Mackay Smith], Isabella -- my mother -- and Eliza (Latty) [Elizabeth Christina, who married August Johan Frederick Heijman]. Her [my grandmother's] eldest daughter, Jane, had been married, before the death of her father, to Donald McLeod of Washington D.C., United States. [The McLeods later lived in Tennessee].<sup>39</sup> She [my grandmother] also kept her best furniture from the Glasgow home to furnish her own special room and those of her daughters."

"Uncle Robert was a most devoted son. He tried to take the place of his deeply mourned father in every way possible. My mother was his first consideration and duty. She had no worries, she lived to be 96, and finally without illness gently went to sleep."

"Euphemia [Isabella's sister, Euphemia Mackay Smith, 1815-1880]<sup>40</sup> was the very efficient housekeeper in the new home. Uncle Robert was a man of many wide interests besides his shipping. He traveled in Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Norway, and some of the Russian seaport towns. At the time he was happiest in telling about ~~was~~ a scientific journey to the volcanic part of Iceland with Edinburgh friends, all fellows of the Royal Society. He had many friends, and they entertained a great deal. The dinner parties were noted not only for the careful pairing and tactful assemblage of guests [at

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<sup>37</sup> Peter Smith, 1776 - 1846. Euphemia Mackay Smith, 1782, Sutherlandshire, Scotland - 1878. Birth and death dates were derived from the biography of Robert Mackay Smith written by Professor Patrick Don Swann that appeared in Proceedings, Royal Society of Edinburgh, Neill and Company, Edinburgh, (1891) vol 17, p 10-15.

<sup>38</sup> Leith is on the coast of the Firth of Forth and lies within the council area of the City of Edinburgh, Scotland.

<sup>39</sup> Other siblings: George Mackay Smith and Peter Smith

<sup>40</sup> Pronounced m'k-EYE by Don Suverkrop

table], but for the perfect selection and cooking for the feast.”

[By the mid-1880s Robert Mackay Smith had assembled a fortune that included investments in shipping, national banks, foreign and domestic railroads, brewing, and trusts in real estate, to name a few. The following is a partial accounting of his endowments that appeared in the *Robert Mackay-Smith Last Will and Testament* dated 1887:

**Ben Nevis Observatory** [It was opened in 1883, funded from private donations and managed by both the Scottish Meteorological Society and the Royal Societies of Edinburgh and London]

**College of Justice**

**Royal Edinburgh Hospital for sick children**

**Edinburgh Medical Missions**

**Poor Children of the Streets of Edinburgh**

**Palestine Exploration Fund<sup>41</sup>**

**Moravian Mission in Greenland**

**New Royal Infirmary**

**Two monuments to be erected in memory of Lord Sidney Herbert** [The Royal Herbert Hospital was built under Lord Herbert’s authority. He led War Office reforms, following the Crimea campaign, in order to reduce military mortality caused by disease.]

[Robert Mackay Smith never married. Among his beneficiaries were these: His nephew Donald Bruce McLeod; Elisabeth Scott McLeod, who probably was a niece; Robert’s brother Peter Smith, identified as a Russia merchant in Glasgow; and three or four friends and caretakers. But named before all of those was his last-surviving sister, Isabelle Ann Smith Suverkrop, and her sons John Peter Suverkrop and Robert Edward Mackay Suverkrop -- unnamed in the will was Isabella’s son in America, Edward Albert

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<sup>41</sup> [In 1875-1876 the PEF conducted a survey of Palestine that resulted in publication of a map of that region consisting of 26 sheets that become the most detailed and accurate map of Palestine published in the 19th century. Wikipedia]

**Suverkrop, II, as well as Isabella's daughter, Euphemia Suverkrop. Isabella's inheritance was substantial, and it allowed her, Edward, their daughter Euphemia, and their three sons to live well.]**



**Family Photograph, 1888**

**Left is Isabella. Third from left is her husband, Edward Albert Suverkrop. Euphemia is seated. Fifth from left is Robert. The unnamed men are sons John and Edward, II.**

## **Appendix C**

### **Parents of Edward Albert Suverkrop**

**[Edward was born to Agnes Lamke Bauerman Suverkrop, 1778 - July 26, 1827, and Johann Bruhn Suverkrop, 1766 - June 28, 1839.<sup>42</sup> John Bruhn operated a London-based import-export shipping firm. Isabella Smith**

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<sup>42</sup> [Marriage, Baptismal and Burial Registers, 1571-1874, and Monument Inscription of the Reformed Church, Austin Friars, London. William John Charles Moens (ed.), (Lymington) 1884. Records of the Reformed Dutch Church. Google Books]

**Suwerkrop wrote:] "My husband's father, John Bruhn Süverkrop, was a native of Schleswig-Holstein, then and for long after belonging to Denmark. He came to London with his wife, Lamke Bauermann -- born in Hanover under British rule -- and settled there but [he] never became a naturalized citizen [of England]. He was prosperous in business and considered a very wealthy man." [John Bruhn's great-grandson Lew Suverkrop wrote,] "Aunt Mia [Euphemia] told me that he was the last commoner to be buried within the wall of London. He emigrated from Neuenkirchen in 1793, a man of 27 years. John Bruhn Suwerkrop's house, [was] where grandfather [Edward Albert Suwerkrop I] was born on land now occupied by the Port of London Authority Building."**

**[In 1827 John Bruhn Süverkrop was called to testify before the House of Lords as an expert witness in importation of corn to England from the Continent. He stated he came to England in 1795. He was asked,] "'You are a Dane by birth, are you not?' He answered, 'I am.'" [The committee then asked,] "Have you any means of stating the extent of the corn trade from the Danish ports? He replied, 'Not from the Danish ports at all; I never was in Copenhagen or there about; I know more about Holstein; I was born there, and I have been there since.'" [Meaning he had visited Holstein since then].<sup>43</sup>**

**[Isabella:] "His [Edward's] mother died when he was twelve years old and at school in Brussels. His only sister, Anna-- Mrs. Sack -- had married several years previously. She was ten years his senior. Edward wished to study medicine and did attend some of the preliminary classes. He would have made a good physician, but his father would not hear of it -- and he was consequently condemned to a mercantile life, which he hated, and in which, consequently, it was next to impossible he would succeed."**

**"He had acquired proficiency in the French language, and had some knowledge of German. Though English being always spoken in the family, he had not, cared to speak it readily. Some years were spent, I might say, at**

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<sup>43</sup> [Report for Select Committee of the House of Lords, England, May 11, 1827. Over time, Holstein and Schleswig belonged either in part or entirely to Denmark or Germany, and in other times both were virtually independent of those nations.]

the desk, first in one merchant's office, then in another, the last that of Mr Newsome -- whose widow daughter & son-in-law received us hospitably many years later -- after which he was sent to Hamburg to perfect his German, meeting there my brother Peter, and in close everyday association becoming mutually attached. I need not repeat what I have said in an earlier part of these reminiscences regarding my first acquaintance with Edward, nor of my visit to his father in 1836, \_\_\_\_ [perhaps?] one year, I think, earlier."

"About 1838 there was, I believe, a commercial crisis and money failures. My father-in-law suffered severely but was able to maintain his position, though with difficulty. His health, however gave way, and he did not live to retrieve his fallen fortunes. He died on the 28th July, 1839 --aged 73.<sup>44</sup>

## Appendix D

### The Ship Warlock and Australia, 1842-1846

[Euphemia wrote:] "After his [Edward's] father's death, Edward felt that London was no longer the place for him. He could not engage in business on his own account, and he would not serve any of those who had looked up to his father in his prosperous days. So he collected his small patrimony, sold part of the portion of family plate that came to him, laid out his money in what he considered suitable for the Australian market, and sailed for Sydney in the following year."

(Edward wrote six extant letters to Friedrich and Anna Sack that date from this period. Edward's sister Anna, although not a good correspondent herself, faithfully kept her brother's letters. The first letter is dated Plymouth, England, February 14, 1842.)

"My dear Fred: I really feel my time pass so very pleasantly here that I am almost at a loss for time to write to any of you... Plymouth is a very nice place and certainly very hospitable --I have been made an honorary

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<sup>44</sup> (Marriage, Baptismal and Burial Registers, 1571-1874, and Monumental Inscriptions of the Dutch Reformed Church, Austin Friars, London, 1884)

member of the Royal Western Yacht Club for the time of my remaining here and have been certainly treated more like one of her Majesty's officers than a 'Poor emigrating merchant', whether it's that I have such a knowing look in my military cap and cloak, but I flatter myself I am looked at. At my friend Lindon's I have met with a sister of the Butler Mr Luring. Find girl this too – a real Dutch beauty. Tell this to Jim to mention this circumstance to Luring. The brother I shall take with me to the dockyard today, he is a Jim \_\_\_\_ he tells me that the captain has pledged his word to him that he will repay me the money when in Sydney.)

[Plymouth, England, February 17, 1842:] "I wrote you a few lines yesterday bemoaning our fate in not getting a change in wind--I am happy today that this morning the desired change took place and we are only now waiting for a pilot to take us out of this most seductive town. I have transmitted to the care of W. George Quail the two miniatures I wrote about yesterday. The one in the frame I wish you would hand over to friend James as a memento *mori*. It is the only trifle I think would be valued by him. The other one in the case you must dispose of as occasion may require, should circumstances turn out as favorably as we all hope they may, you may give it to A.S [Anna Suverkrop Sack] without her asking for it."

[In a letter to Fred Sack dated April 1842 at Plymouth, England, Edward wrote that he was setting sail for Sydney, Australia. The next letter to Sack was dated April 8, 1842, Porte Praia, Island of Santiago, Cape Verde Islands.]

[Edward wrote:] (This is the first opportunity I have had since my departure from England to communicate with you... You will no doubt feel surprised at our not being further on our voyage to Sydney but when I come to give you some idea of our mishaps you might almost wonder that we were not lost altogether. A few days after our leaving Plymouth our disasters began by getting the wind from the w + sw with such infamous gales that we could not make headway against them. For nearly ten days...we were lying too off Cape Finsterre (Cabo de Finisterre, Spain)...In fact...we have been obliged to put into this d-d hole to refit, having sprung our main mast and carried away jib boom, sail, sope [strop: line that connects rigging] , &c, &c.)

**(The ship laid over for more than two weeks at Villa de Praia, Island of St. Jago, Cape di Verdi Islands. sail, rope &, &...Not being able to get a new mast in such a place as this, the Capt. has made up his mind to cut off the part that is sprung (about 14 feet) from the main mast and rig the Warlock [a schooner<sup>45</sup>] into a brig.<sup>46</sup> –How long this will take, God knows, we have already been here a fortnight and have not yet got the mast unstepped. I should not think [Captain] Dickson will get out of this under 300 pounds – for which naturally he will come naturally upon the underwriters. [insurance coverage]. How devilish luck [that] I have nothing to do with the Warlock. I live on board so that I am at no expense. You can form no idea how glad I am I have no share in the Warlock -- ‘Waur luck’ ought to have been her name.) [Scottish *waur* translates as *worse* in English.]**

**(If these problems were not enough, a week after arriving in Porte Praya, H.M. vessel the "Vendictive" with Adml. Sir Thomas Cochrane arrived on his way for a three year voyage to China. Edward Albert and Capt. Dickson went on board to request assistance. Cochrane not only refused the articles needed: rope, sails etc. (although he surly had an ample supply) he made a further report to the British Vice Consul, W. C. Lime that the reason he refused to assist was that he felt the "Warlock" was certainly a pirate ship. Unfortunately for Sir Thomas Cochrane his insinuation did not have the desired effect, on the contrary, everyone seeing the disgraceful conduct shown by an English officer, endeavored to make them forget it by showing every possible courtesy. The "Warlock" was by this time five weeks out of England while the Vindictive had left only nine days before. Edward's friend in England, James Clark had bet the "Warlock" would reach Sydney in ninety days sailing time. While this projection had originally seemed possible, as**

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<sup>45</sup> [A schooner usually has two masts with the larger one located toward the center and the shorter toward the front.]

<sup>46</sup> [Brig. is an 18th-century abbreviation of the word brigantine. The gaff-rigged mainsail of a brigantine distinguishes it from the brig, which is principally square rigged on both masts.] [Dana Suverkrop wrote,] "A schooner has fore-and-aft sails which are set along the line of the keel instead of perpendicular to the keel--square rigged. The painting I have of the Warlock has square sails on the foremast and is gaff rigged on the main mast. It may well have been a schooner, since I imagine that sail plans were often changed to meet the requirements of the duties the ship was tasked."

we see in Edward's next letter of April 14, he was still in Porte Praia and not at the end of his problems.)



**The Warlock<sup>47</sup> in a modern frame. Suverkrop family collection**

[In this letter written from Sydney on October 18, 1842, Edward mentions loaning money to Captain Dickson:] "I have come to some word of an arrangement with Dickson of the 'Worlock' by his giving me 200 pounds in the bills [checks] drawn by his wife on her mother and [promising] the remaining in cash when he returns from his present trip to V Land [New Zealand?]. Should he however be able to sell the vessel before I send the bill home for acceptancy, he will then pay me in cash." [Edward also wrote that he awaited settlement of his father's estate so that London creditors could be paid. Money was probably short because he expressed hope that his London friends would continue sending him regular shipments of goods. But I do not want to have anything more to do with him and will take very good care that this shall be my last transaction with him. I exec to hear every day of the final settlement of J.B.S''s affairs [his father's estate], and only hope then will have sufficient t then to pay all in London – if there be

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<sup>47</sup> [Unsigned. In 2016 Kim Suverkrop wrote,] "1884 city directory for Worcester, Massachusetts, shows Robert E. M. Suverkrop advertised as Portrait Artist and Marine Painter, 13 Clifton." [Robert was a son of Isabella and Edward.]

anything over I shall \_\_\_\_\_ estimate it as a god send [and] shall therefore welcome it accordingly. In these matters we may get a good name and build a firm house upon the debris of the old ones.”

[In Edward’s letter of November 15, 1842 he wrote that the Warlock had been sold, but the money repaid to him was short by eight pounds sterling.<sup>48</sup> ]

(EAS worked out a plan where he would allow Dickson's wife to draw 230£ in bills and cash. Dickson was later on an extended voyage to some neighboring islands and was looking for a buyer for the "Warlock". The ship was sold for 3300£ of which Dickson got 2400£. Upon hearing of the sale EAS immediately put in for payment of his 230£ loan as per agreement. Dickson refused to pay anything saying he had no cash and would not say where it had gone. Upon pressing him closer a deal was worked out where he would pay 150£ for the whole debt or else Edward would have to go to court and more than likely receive nothing.)

(During the first few months he was living with a business associate by the name of Gadsden in the beautiful Sardty district named Surry Hills. There was only one problem with the location: ) (I...stand a very good chance of being found dead in bed some fine morning and a jury would most likely bring in a verdict to the following effect--Found dead in bed, supposed to have been either bitten or kicked to death by flies! Has died from excessive hemorrhage having been punctured to death by fleas or sand flies--But really without joking flies are so numerous that in our parlour we cannot see the ceiling for them, in the kitchen it is worse...as it not infrequently occurs that a few of these insects find their way into the viands---The other day thinking to have a good meal I ordered a plum pudding for Sunday and on the strength of it had a friend to dine with me, the pudding was served up and my friend was reprovng me in very severe terms for my extravagance in having as it appeared to be so rich a pudding, I was congratulating myself that our black cook had given us something spicy, when upon close inspection the apparent currants turned out to be flies! On

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<sup>48</sup> [Equivalent in 2015 to about \$850 US]

**questioning Tony, he said he 'ad made de pudden' very moist, I hab let him stand in de sun and spose de fly hab stick to 'im!' )**

**[The letter continued:] (I only wish I earned 1000£ a year and you might depend on seeing me too. Did you find yourself in my position separated from all those who are dear to you, you would feel the same as I do. Words cannot express the wretchedness of the feeling. A bachelor's life is a horrid one, and the longer I live the worse I find it out. The young ladies that come out from England are a common lot, and the coloured part of the community is not worth having. I suppose my turn will come one of these days. Mr. Gadsden is getting married to the daughter of a lieutenant in the Navy, but I don't know how it is, whether the London lassies or whether I cannot find anybody to have me, but if I stop here till I die I think the chances are ten to one that I'd marry any person that I met here.)**

**(In mid-November of 1842 Edward left Sydney and the Surry Hills to an agricultural area called Balmain. This land was just west of Sydney and could be reached in a few minutes by boat. He roomed with two gentlemen: Messrs. Herring and Woody, both from prominent London firms.)**

**[The firm Gadsden and Süverkrop refitted and refurbished the 70-ton schooner Thomas Lord at Campbell's Wharf in Sydney, but within a year the partnership was bankrupt. Gadsden's name faded, but Süverkrop continued in the shipping business. In 1844 an Australian newspaper noted that "mercantilist Süverkrop of Sydney" had visited most of the agricultural countries of Europe.<sup>49</sup> ]**

**(Unfortunately, his business at this time had not improved. The effects of a long dry spell was taking its toll on the economy and he was finding little market for his goods of wood and iron. Apparently things did not improve and Edward decided to leave Sydney and go to Hawaii, then called the Sandwich Islands.) Lew Suverkrop wrote, "I have some recollection of the stories my father told of his father's 1846-48 residence in the Sandwich Islands. I shall give them at another time."**

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<sup>49</sup> [Sydney Morning Herald, Jan 30, 1844]

## Appendix E

### Edward Albert Suverkrop in the Hawaiian Trade, 1846-1848

[Euphemia wrote:] "He then bought a schooner, transferred his belongings to her, engaged a mate and crew, and set out for Honolulu, Sandwich Islands. He had amused himself on his voyages by studying navigation, and sailed as Master of his ship, arriving without disaster. He quickly disposed of his cargo accepted an offer from an English firm to join them, sent the schooner back to Sydney, and took up his abode in that beautiful Island of which he ever after cherished so enthusiastic a memory."<sup>50</sup>

"He now found occupation which was immensely more congenial than poring over a desk, in making voyages to China on behalf of the firm to purchase the innumerable products of that industrious people, and also in cruising about among the Pacific isles. He had always been devoted to sailing in every form, and the life fitted him to perfection. As a trader, too he was tolerably successful."

[The following account was written in 1902 for The Marine Review by Edward Albert Suverkrop, II, Edward's son and editor of that journal. It followed-up an account in the previous issue that Walter J. Ballard wrote about the founder of the Japanese Navy, Katsu Awa. Ballard noted that U.S. Commodore Matthew Perry's visit to Japan in 1852 lead to the 1854 Convention of Kanagawa that initiated trade between Japan and the United States. The following story EAS II wrote jumbles time and events but is further evidence that EAS I traded between China and Hawaii.]

["Edward Albert Suverkrop, II authored "Founder of the Japanese Navy" for the Marine Review. It reads: ] "The article in the issue of June 2 [1905] under the above caption brings to my mind a yarn my father used to spin to me when I was a small kid. About 1840 he was owner and commander of a

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<sup>50</sup> [When the Kingdom of Hawaii established its custom house in 1846, the first stamped, inbound manifest was that of the schooner Mary from Hong Kong. The master, or captain of note, was Suwerkrop.]

**two-masted schooner, the Warlock. She had previously been a slaver but was captured by the British, condemned and sold. My father bought her in London and sailed to the orient -- with a suitable cargo -- where he remained, trading from Hong Kong to the Sandwich Islands and Australia."**

**"One voyage shortly after leaving Hong Kong for Honolulu with a cargo of Chinese goods he ran into a typhoon and was blown out of his course and dismasted."**

**"When the weather eased and he was able to take an observation he found he was near Japan. After rigging a jury mast he made for the nearest port and casting anchor in the offing sent a boat ashore. The boat was intercepted by one from the shore which accompanied it back to the Warlock."**

**"At that time the only European country having a treaty with Japan was Holland. My father was a good linguist and spoke Dutch as well as he did his mother tongue – English. The Japanese in the boat were all in chain armor and were armed with swords and pikes. Their head man asked my father what he wanted. 'New spars throughout, some fresh water and provisions.' 'All right,' said the Jap. 'Make out a requisition in Dutch and let me have it but don't send any boats ashore.'"**

**"My father gave him a list of what he wanted together with the sizes of the spars. A few days later the spars were sent alongside with laborers to help step the new masts. A full supply of fresh provisions and water – more than ordered was sent on board."**

**"After the masts were stepped, the standing rigging set and the running rigging rove, my father asked the head man how much he owed, 'Nothing at all,' said the Jap, 'but if you wish to keep your head on your shoulders don't come back here again.' --E. A. Suverkrop"<sup>51</sup>**

**[Euphemia's story continued:] "When on shore in his grass house, in a beautiful valley cut of town, with a sparkling waterfall close at hand that**

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<sup>51</sup> [Marine Review, Jul 13, 1905, v 32, n 2, p 19]

**furnished his morning bath, his boy, and his boy's wife to minister to his wants, and his pretty horse on which to ride to his office, he lived an ideal bachelor life. I do not think there were many ladies, but ships of war from various countries often came into port, and then there were balls, dinners, & picnics, at which he was a favored guest. For some years before leaving the Island he was Consul for Denmark and (Hamburg etc.).”<sup>52</sup>**

**[This is Edward’s letter of December 28, 1848 written from San Francisco to R.C. Wyllie in Oahu, Hawaiian Islands:] “Labour as you may suppose is awfully high--Everyone his own servant. I have been obliged to pay for labour discharging my vessel one dollar per hour per man and was thankful to the Gentlemen who condescended to help me for that trifle.”**

## **Appendix F**

### **Gold and Quicksilver Mines of California<sup>53</sup>**

**[This account is from the U.S. Congressional Record.] (“We reached San Francisco on the 20th and found that all or nearly all its male population had gone to the mines. The town which a few months before was so busy and thriving, was then almost deserted...we resumed the journey to Sutter's Fort, where we arrived on the morning of the 2nd of July. At the urgent solicitation of many gentlemen I delayed there to participate in the first public celebration of our national Anniversary at the Fort, but on the 5th resumed the journey, and proceeded Twenty-five miles up the American fork, to a point on it, now known as the Lower Mines or Mormon Diggings. The hill sides were thickly strewn with canvas tents and bush arbors; a store was erected, and several boarding shanties in operation. The day was intensely hot, yet about two hundred men were at work in the full glare of the sun, washing for gold, some with tin pans, some with close woven**

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<sup>52</sup> (In 1849 the Danish government formed a commercial treaty with the Sandwich Islands, and, along with the state of Hamburg, they appointed E.A. Süverkrop as consul representative of both.)

<sup>53</sup> (U.S. Congressional Record, August 17, 1848) [Edward Albert Suwerkrop did not author this account.]

Indian baskets, but the greater part had a rude machine, known as the Cradle... As we ascended the South Branch, of the American Fork, the Country became more broken and mountainous... Here a species of pine occurs which led to the discovery of the gold. Capt. Sutter, feeling the great want of lumber, contracted in Sept. last, with a Mr. Marshall, to build a saw mill at that place. One day Mr. Marshall when walking down the race to this deposit of mud, observed some glittering particles at its upper edge; he gathered a few, examined them and became satisfied of their value. He then went to the Fort, told Captain Sutter of his discovery, and they agreed to keep it a secret until a certain gristmill of Sutter's was finished. It however got out and spread like magic.”)

## **Appendix G**

### **E.A. Suverkrop and the Joseph Bowden Company, 1848-1849**

(During the summer month he spent in San Francisco, Edward made the acquaintance of Joseph William Bowden and discussed the possibility of starting a business together as commissioned merchants. The only thing standing in his way was his connection with the Henry Skinner Company, to clear up these dealings Edward sailed in mid-August for Oahu. He found the Islands deserted as most had already left for the goldfields of California. Because of the changing economic climate of Hawaii and perhaps also because of his age, Skinner understood Edward's desire to leave the company. While in Hawaii he looked for a replacement for himself and came upon Mr. G. F. Allen, a Hudson Bay Company agent. Mr. Allen declined the position with Skinner, and it was agreed that the company would be dissolved in the beginning of the new year, 1849.)

(In the final agreement Edward was to take ascertain amount of goods to San Francisco for sale. For his trouble he received 1/3 of the profits, commission and a \$1200 bonus free of all expenses and costs. Edward return to San Francisco an board the Julian accompanied by Allen who, after arrival and seeing the great possibilities to be had, immediately agreed to go into a partnership with EAS and Mr. Bowden under the title of the Joseph Bowden Company, commencing on 1 January, 1849, continuing for five

**years with a subscribed capital of \$15,000.)**

**(Allen's association with the company was taken with great interest because of his connections with the Hudson Bay company. Allen was insistent to leave in the spring of 1849 for Panama and on to England to explore the possibilities of the Bowden Company becoming the Hudson Bay agents for California. These ties soon created more problems than expected. Allen, an elderly Scotsman, having second thoughts, felt his position might be in jeopardy and in fear of losing his pension, bowed out of his agreement with the Bowden Company in December of 1848.)**

**(Another possibility for EAS [Edward] was the position of Danish Consulate in San Francisco. His official duties in Honolulu were, of course, given up when he left Hawaii. This new and important position unfortunately did not come about immediately, his intended departure for New York and England in Allen's place prevented his being considered for the post. He did however later represent the Danish government and was listed in the first official California census of 1852 as a Danish Counsel. The official post was however given to Mr. Joseph Frontin of 130 Clay Street.)**

**(The weather of this fall and winter [after October 25, 1847] was particularly wet, conditions were so bad that all activities were suspended in the mining areas, and the men returned to San Francisco. By late summer of 1848 many San Franciscans in times of extreme scarcity bought whatever the seller chose to ask.)**

**(Edward's own business dealings during this winter were tied in with the newly established Bowden Company. This organization was continually being augmented by new men who arrived daily in San Francisco. Each brought with him certain qualities and contacts that enabled the company to prosper. Edward brought his connections with Dr. Judd in Hawaii and also the extensive resources of the Orient. Bowden, an ex-navy man, had dealings with his former employer Mr. A. Cross of Valparaiso. Allen, although minimizing his connections with the company, was still an influential member of the group. Through him contact was made with the Albert Pelly Company of London, run by the sons of Sir Henry Pelly, one of the directors of the Hudson Bay Company and nephew of Allen's friend and**

**fellow Hudson Bay agent, George Pelly of Honolulu. The dealings were constantly bringing in goods which sold quickly and for a large profit.)**

**(The business of the commissioned merchants of San Francisco relied heavily on personal associations. Contact was made with houses in the Orient, London, the European Continent and as well as in the United States, the merchants would then act as agents, representing and protecting their interests. They ultimately had to take certain responsibility for the goods transported but the commissions received were well worth the risk. Of course with the great amount of capital being accumulated the next step in their enterprise was to retain interest in ships to transport the goods they could buy outright and sell on their own account. At least two vessels were used in this way by the Bowden Company; the Flora and the Calypso. [probably not HMS Calypso]. In February of 1849 Edward, Allen and another associate, Lee Walkins took a trip down the coast of California to the Santa Clara Mountains as far as Santa Cruz. The nature of this expedition was "speculative." Just what sort of "speculation" and any outcome is unknown.)**

## **Appendix H**

### **Flawed Investment: The Steamship Gold Hunter**

**(On May 25th the Hutchinson Company took over the Gold Hunter and it was announced that in June it would be taken off the Sacramento River and begin the run between San Francisco and Mazatlán. This did not happen in June, however, and as late as the end of July it was still making the run to Sacramento as well as making two excursions a week to the Farallon Islands.)**

**(On July 17, 1850 a Mr. Simmons joined the Hutchinson Company and on September 2nd the following notice appeared in the Sacramento Transcript: "The fine steamer Gold Hunter has been withdrawn from our river and will hereafter run between San Francisco and Acapulco, touching at Monterey, Santa Barbara, San Pedro, San Diego, San Blas and Mazatlán. She will run monthly, leaving the Bay on the 10th.)**

**(It is difficult to say whether EAS still had any interest in the Gold Hunter after the Hutchinson takeover. Fares had fallen so rapidly that by September passage to and from Sacramento was only one dollar. There is no further reference to the steamer in his correspondence. One mention of a trip to Monterey in September might indicate he took the initial voyage down the coast as far as the first stop, but no other evidence confirms an active financial interest.)**

## **Appendix I**

### **The Gold Locket**



**[The miniature portraits that were made for Isabella, Edward, and Uncle Robert Mackay Smith were mounted in lockets of California gold. The first two were made shortly after Edward accepted the Calypso's gold shipment to England. Those lockets are no longer in the Suverkrop family. The locket shown above depicts Robert Mackay Smith. It was sold in 2007 for**

**750 Euros by Old Church Auction Galleries of Durban, South Africa.<sup>54</sup> ]**

**[The auction house's description of the locket:] "American Portrait Miniature In 18K California Gold Frame. Mackay Smith/Suverkrop, c1850, framed behind glass, measures 53 X 46mm, with a glass aperture on the reverse containing a lock of hair, the 18K California gold frame has a pin and a pendant fitting, in the original velvet lined hinged case, gold weight -- glass and portrait removed -- is 27gms or 0.95oz. Provenance: The seller is a descendant of the Smith/Suwerkrop family, who moved to California in about 1848 to follow the scent of gold. A line of the family came to South Africa in about 1910."<sup>55</sup>**

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<sup>54</sup> [Equivalent in 2016 to about \$1100 US.]

<sup>55</sup> [It is unlikely this portrait was the work of an American artist. Bard J. Suverkrop estimated that Robert Mackay Smith sat for it about 1880.]