

THEODORE PORTER:

1845

LETTERS OF INTRODUCTION, Bills, Railway
schedules.

Theodore W. Porter to Thomas Whaley
Washington Institute, New York City
addressed : Mr. Thomas W. Whaley, Rome Italy

February 27th, 1845

Dear Thomas,

I have to thank you very heartily for the highly gratifying letter with which you favoured me from Paris, under date of the 13th of November, 1844. I had been anticipating an epistle from you for some months previous, and when it came to hand it met with a cordial welcome. Let me assure you, however, that I had never charged you with "negligence", as you surmise; for I well knew the hindrances you must have encountered in writing to others than your own immediate family. The letter pleased me much on many accounts:- its long and closely filled pages; the exceeding neatness & taste in its execution; the evidence it furnished of careful observation in your travels; the correct reflections you made on what you saw; and the proofs it exhibited of affection felt for myself and the other members of our family.-The letter was considered pro hono publico, and was read either by, or, to each one of us. I showed it to several of the boys, as a specimen of neat and tasteful penmanship, which it would be well for them to imitate. And it gave me pleasure also to be able to speak of it in respects referred to, in a conversation with your Mother, a day or two since:- for you may possibly fancy how happy Parents are made when they hear deserved praise bestowed on their children. --But, my dear Thomas, how strangely you are circumstanced in this 1845 ! how unlike what could have been anticipated two or three years ago, - especially, when on your sick bed at your uncle's ! how utterly different from the fortunes and chances that have be-

fallen your brothers ! - Well , I am glad of it;-so far, at least: and I shall continue to rejoice, if, as I hope, you are not only not injured, but positively benefited by your sojourn in foreign lands. It requires a good deal of moral and intellectual Stamina in an individual to be improved by travels abroad; and you are full young to risk the ordeal. Yet the instructions you have received have been of such a kind, and so long in their instilling, that you have perhaps more maturity and solidity of character than many of your age; and I cannot but hope and anticipate that with good common sense, a fair amount of education, a respectable share of intelligence, and, more than all, a high tone of moral principle, you will pass through the trial unscathed, and return to your friends really improved in every good thing.- The opportunities you enjoy are not many usual for young men, and we shall have the right to look for correspondent improvement in him who experiences them. Let us not be disappointed in your case. Gain in all useful knowledge. Accomplish yourself in everything that shall make you agreeable and interesting in social life. Polish manners and mind together. And above all, "keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life".- Should ^{he} a kind Providence spare you to return to us again;- as I pray/may, let us find you in all respects what we shall love and respect: especially a kind, and dutiful son to your Mother in her widowhood and advancing age. Thus you may look for the blessing of Heaven on your after life; for so God has promised in his holy word. -- To the request you made, that I would give you letters of introduction to any persons in Italy, with whom I might be acquainted, I

readily acceded, and have already endeavored to do what you would wish:- at least it was all I was able to do. About a month or six weeks since, I sent a message through a particular and intimate friend of mine, in this city, to his brother - in- law, now in Italy, to search you out immediately on your arrival there and make your acquaintance? Ere this he must have received the letter, and I know he will be happy for my sake as well as his own to become known to you. He needs acquaintances and friends in Italy as well as you do, and it will prove a mutual pleasure and benefit I doubt not. He is a Mr. Anthony Van Wyck, of Fishkill, Dutchess County in our State. His family is one of respectability and standing, and he himself is a gentleman of education and high moral worth. I have known him for several years, and recommend him to you as one worthy in all things of your affection and respect. He is visiting the south of Europe for health alone, as most of his family have deceased with pulmonary complaints. Whether you will find him in Rome or Naples, I cannot certainly say;-probably the former: but he will be on the look-out for you on your arrival in either city, as you may be for him.-- I have been querying with myself whether I should attempt to relate any "news" properly so called, in my letter: but the thought strikes me that the letters from your family will give you everything of interest; and that my relation of the different items would prove a repetition. I may however, tell you of the general health of a----family,- though my Mother has recently been very ill. She is mu(ch) improved within a week past, & we trust will soon be entirely well. The Institute retains its identity still in its internal arrangement; but, alas! as to its external, they are sadly changed. In

the rage for "improvement" in this part of the City, our land-
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We all write in the most earnest wishes for your welfare and happiness. My Mother sends you her kindest regards: my Brother & his wife join with her; and you will not doubt the sincerity of my love. Eliza, and Mr. Cornwall, & Mr Taylor, and these boys

who know you desire their affectionate remembrance to you.-I
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Washington Ins titute, New York, February 27th, 1845.

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I have to thank you very heartily for the highly
gratifying letter with which you honoured me from Paris, under date
the 13th of December, 1844. I had been anticipating an epistle from you
for some months previous, and when it came to hand it met me
a cordial welcome. Let me assure you, however, that I had never
changed you with "negligence," as you surmise; for I well know the
hindrances you must have encountered in writing to others than
your own immediate family. The letter received me much on many
accounts: its low and elegant paper, the successive readings &
taste in its execution, the evidence it furnished of original observation
in your travels, the sagacious reflection you made on what you saw;
and the, really it exhibited of affection felt, in myself and the other
members of our family. The letter was considered, very long, valuable, and
was read either by, or to, each one of us. I signed it to several of the
boys, as a specimen of neat and tasteful penmanship, which it must
be well for them to imitate and it gave me pleasure and to hold
to speaking of it in the nearest relation to, is a conversation with you
yesterday, a day or two since: for you may possibly fancy your happy
Parents, are made wiser by the year discerned, very valuable on their
own. -- But, my dear Thomas, how strange is your circumstance in
this 1845! how unlike what would have been anticipated two or three years
ago! -- especially in relation to you. I have at your elbow! I am utterly
different from the fortune and chances that have befallen you both
and I! -- Well, I am glad of it: -- so, in at least one respect it is well
to rejoice, if, as I hope, you are not only not injured, but positively
benefited by your sojourn in foreign lands. It requires a good deal,

moral and intellectual stamina is an individual to be improved
by travel abroad; and you are well young to risk the ordeal. Yet
the instruction you have received here has of real value, and so
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lidity of character than many of your age; and I cannot but hope and
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good things. - The opportunities you enjoy are not very usual for
young men, and we shall have the right to look for corresponding
improvement in wisdom and experience. Let us not be disappoint-
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your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of
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