

MISC. Letters

MAY 20 1849

Valparaiso, Chile

Valparaiso, Chile, May 20th 1849.

I. Lee Smith Esq.

Dear Sir,

I arrived at this port the 14th per Ship Sutton and having taken in our Supplies of water provisions &c I hope before tomorrow night to be once more upon the briny deep. We left New York as you will probably recollect January 1st. Our passage though seemingly long is not so compared to some others. We were fifty five days to Rio de Janeiro, where we remained two weeks under going repairs, this port we reached in sixty three days. All Vessels coming around the Horn have made long passages. The weather has been unusually rough, notwithstanding I have heard of no disasters. The Brooklyn was reported lost off the Horn but I think there can be no truth in this as there is no news of the kind at the Reading Room. Some of our passengers felt disposed to grumble at the length of the passage and the fare wishing they had come across the Isthmus, but since arriving here they think differently. We have fared better than most vessels. By all accounts they are suffering exceedingly at the Isthmus owing to the difficulty of obtaining a conveyance from Panama to San Francisco. The U.S. Ship Dale reports the Oregon and California laid up at San Francisco, deserted. As much truth is placed in the reports of there being gold in California, here as in New York. The excitement is as great. It is unnecessary for me to recount the stories in circulation. You must have read them in the New York papers long before this. More than three thousand Chilians have left this port. Vessels are constantly arriving and departing. Ships are scarce, Sailors difficult to get even at \$80 per month payable at the end of the voyage and freight high. (page 25, 1pb.,)

Our Captain has given some of the passengers \$100 each for their State rooms with the intention of taking a few more passengers at \$250. We have receive some little freight at \$25 per ton which is more than in New York. The people here seem to be crazy. The town at present is American like in its appearance. Go where you will you are sure of falling in with Americans, and turn which way you may you hear the men women and children crying, Americano, muchas ore in California. A day or two ago I was introduced to Lieutenant Muse of the Dale. He says that the gold is as plentiful as it is represented to be enough for all who wish to come to dig after it. Goods of all kinds with the exception of flour was paying immense profits. Lots of ground are being sold for \$5, 10, 15 and even as \$20,000! People who a short time ago were comparatively poor can now count their hundreds of thousands. A young gentleman of his acquaintance who has been knocking around the town of San Francisco for some time doing little or nothing finds himself at the week end three or four hundred dollars and know not how he has made the money. The Dale has on board it is reported over a million. Her crew were paid off in gold \$15 to the ounce. H.B.K. Ship Calypso from San Francisco left this port with \$2,750,000 worth of the precious metal and merchants in this place have received over a million and a half returns for goods sold. There is an Alcalde or Judge at San Francisco, but Judge Lynch holds power Supreme in and about the gold diggings. He manages to keep very good order. No one dares to behave amiss or think of robbing his neighbour of his gold as it lies exposed to dry upon rags at the door of a tent while perhaps the owner is gone half a mile for his dinner because he knows if seen he will surely be shot. For minor offenses a certain number of lashes (page 26, 1pb.) are given and then twenty four

allowed the culprit to get beyond certain limits, within which  
if found is shot down like a dog or hung upon the first tree.  
Commodore Jones it is said has prohibited foreigners from going  
to the gold diggings. I do not know how, Chilians and others will  
like this but certainly Americans should be allowed greater priv-  
ileges. I think an assortment of paints green particularly will  
sell to advantage. The amount of shipping at San Francisco will  
be large and will need paint as well as the houses of the town. I  
trust to be able to return you a satisfactory account sales of  
what goods you have committed to my care, soon after my arrival.  
The following are prices in bond of some few things in your line,  
Linseed oil \$1 3 8 per gallon wanted paint, white lead \$6.50 @  
\$7.00 per qt full. Sp of Turpentine. 75¢ gall, dull, tar \$5.00  
per bbl. Saleable. Wax 45.00 per qt full. I can not ascertain how  
the market is in relation to glass. I obtain the above from the  
prices current. I wish you to remember me to Mr. Harsell and his  
family. Enclosed is a letter for my mother which you will please  
retain until called for but please be so good to inform her that  
you have received it. I cannot inform you where she is at the  
present time.

Yours truly

Thos Whaley

Valparaiso, Chile, May 20th 1849.

J. Lee Smith Esq.

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present time.

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Thos Whaley

Valparaiso, Sunday May 20th 1849.  
(page 22, 1pb.)

Dear Mother,

I have written you a very long letter consisting of twenty four pages giving a full description of the voyage from Rio in a journal form and containing maps of the voyage, all of which I intended to Send across the Isthmus but owing to the postage being Several dollars and my being out of funds I am compelled to deprive you of the pleasure which the perusal would afford you, and Send them by the U.S. Ship Dale which leaves this port in a few days So that you will be Sure to receive them though not quite so soon. I however s<sup>ent</sup> you a portion of this letter, and might send you the whole of it were it written upon paper like this. I would have copied it but it would have taken a great deal of time and given me much trouble. The portion I send you, dated from this city, contains the most important news. I will hower (however) give you in a few lines a detailed account. We left Rio March 12th. In a week's times we were off the River de la Plata. Here we wer So unfortunate as to lose a fellow passenger by the giving away of the Stern Boat. We were beating off the Faulkland Islands a long time encountering heavy Storms. We were more than a month beating around Cape Horn which we made twice, April 9th & 14th. The 25th we considered our-Selves entirely out of danger and fairly around the Cape. From the time we were off the La Plata till the 1st of May it was nearly a continual succession of gales, The 5th we took a fair wind which carried us nearly into Valparaiso. The rest you have in full. Some of us were disposed to complain of the length of the voyage and the thousand difficulties we had to contend with, but Since arriving here we have so much reason to feel thankful. Those who have taken the Isthmus route must have Suffered a great deal. Should John &



Henry make (page 23 lpb.) up their minds to come before me they had better consider well which route to take. I would not advise them to come around the Horn providing they can come across the Isthmus Safely and with certainty. The Horn is much to be dreaded, I never wish to go around it again, but as I said before I am not Sorry, hearing what I do here concerning the Isthmus, to have come this way. Probably the communication across the Isthmus will in a few months be regularly established and there will be no difficulty in going from Panama to San Francisco. I have ascertained today at the reading- room that no news concerning the Brooklyn has been received at this port. So that ther is no truth in the rumor of her foundering off the Cape. At first it was reported the Oxford was lost, but there is no truth in this respect either. We were to have gone to Sea today but when the Captain came to consider that it would not meet with his father's approval if were he here, he decided upon not going before tomorrow morning. We are all ready plenty of water and fresh provisions. Among the latter are two Oxen, Six Sheep, as many pigs & 30 turkeys, and over a hundred chickens. We owe all this not so much to the generosity of the Captain as to Salt beef and pork being dearer. I am hearty (heartily) glad of this, and bid farewell to "Old Horse". I have eaten enough of it to last me all my life. Caleb Lym the poet passenger per Ship Tarolinta to this port, cuts a dash and tries to make himself conspicuous wherever he goes. He has left the Tarolinta and has gone to Spend a few days at Santiago & then to join Some other Ship from this port from San Francisco. Jerome the Sailor acts more like a fool than a man. He has been Spoiled. I wrote you a long letter from Rio giving you a full account of the voyage which I hope you have received. I directed it to Mr. G. Wardles (page 23, lpb. , read crosswise) requesting him to keep until called for.

There were also letters for Anson, Thompson, Roberts and Washington Smith. Least you have not received mine I will renumerate what it contained of the most importance. I wished you to tell Uncle Henry to send baggage waggons Suitable for Stages, they will be in great demand in California , also to obtain for me the Agency of the Graefenbourg Co. I did not see the old gentleman when I called , that may be the reason I did not get it. To induce Harsell to invest Something in the California Speculation, and to tell him to influence a consignment of guns, Swords, pistols &c from Blunt & Syme- to See George Tappen about Sending locks, hinges &c. To tell Henry to endeavor to obtain a consignment of trunks, mule harness, Saddles &c To send me prices of cast and wrought iron locks & the Memorandum of locks you have, you will find this in the workstand drawer among the papers. To send all letters and paper across the Isthmus. To obtain for me Freemonts report, an atlas, a copy book of letters &c. This last you need not send me. You will perceive that I have one. Upon arriving at San Francisco I intend to write to the gentlemen whose names I mentioned in my last and offer them every inducement to consign goods to me. I must not leave a Stone unturned. I believe there is now an opportunity of my making a fortune provided I conduct myself properly and this I have resolved to do. I made my mind up to this before I left New York and I trust I shall be able to keep it and return home a better man in every respect. mostly young men are going to California. They are free from restraint and lead a very dissipated life. Few of them will amass wealth and the probability is they will never return home. It is midnight I must Stop writing and wish you all farewell. Your affectionate Son . Thos. Whaley

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537 (Pg 22 h. 6) (not for journal) Valparaiso, Sunday May 20th 1849.

Dear Brother,

I have written you a very long letter consisting of twenty four pages giving a full description of the voyage from Rio in a journal form and containing maps of the voyage, all of which I intended to send across the Isthmus but owing to the postage being several dollars and my being out of funds I am compelled to deprive you of the pleasure which the perusal would afford you, and send them by the H.S. ship Hale which leaves this port in a few days so that you will be sure to receive them though not quite so soon. I however send you a portion of this letter, and might send you the whole of it were it written upon paper like this. I would have <sup>(copied)</sup> copied it but it would have taken a great deal of time and given me much trouble. The portion I send you, stated from this city, contains the most important news. I will <sup>(however)</sup> give you in a few lines a detailed account. We left Rio March 12th. In a week's time we were off the River de la Plata. Here we were so unfortunate as to lose a fellow passenger by the going away of the stern boat. We were beating off the Falkland Islands a long time encountering heavy storms. We were more than a month beating around Cape Horn which we made twice, April 25th & 14th. The 25th we considered our selves entirely out of danger and passed around the Cape. From the time we were off the La Plata till



May 20, 1849 (not in Journal)

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1034  
(26)

May 21, 1849 (not for Journal)

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(M. H. H. H.)

1028  
(about 8)

May 20, 1849 (not for journal)

Lyons - To see George Tappan about sending  
locks, hinges &c. - To tell Henry to endeavor  
to obtain a consignment of trunks, mule  
harness, saddles &c To send me prices of  
cast and wrought iron locks of the memoran-  
dum of locks you have, you will find this  
in the workstand drawer among other papers.  
To send all letters and paper across the  
Isthmus. To obtain for me Fremont's report,  
an atlas, a copy book of letters &c. This last  
you need not send me. You will perceive  
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is now an opportunity of my making a fortune  
provided I conduct ~~it~~ myself properly and  
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up to this before I left New York and I  
trust I shall be able to keep it and return  
home a better man in every respect.

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They are free from restraint and lead a very  
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