

[From Samuel to his Mother]

New York, Sunday, 23rd June 1833

Adorable Mother:

I have been writing to everybody today, but I keep the sweetest, the dearest task to the last. I firmly believe that no person can know the full value of a Mother's love until far away. Never till then can he appreciate the gush of feelings which crowd the heart when that sacred name rises in the memory, and never, oh never until then can they know its deep tenderness, its unutterable worth. These remarks are not mere rhapsody or imagination; alas, alas, the shower of tears which for my life I could not avoid shedding the other day when I found among my papers a lock of your venerable hair. I thought I had lost it and many a fruitless search it had cost me. Finding it unexpectedly as I did, I could not help weeping like a child.

This brings another thing into my mind. What would I give to have your picture!<sup>1</sup> The bare possibility that we might lose you, without having such a remembrance, I confess unnerves me. It must be done, my dear, dear Mother. We must have you with your sweet looks and sweet maternal aspect. The time will come when any one of us would give uncounted gold for such a treasured memento.

It will rejoice you to know that I have, in this land, attained to a situation not only highly honorable, but which will enable me to do something for the family. My trials, dearest Mother, were many and bitter after I left Matthew's, but the fact is, a good genius has always attended me ever since. I recollect I had good friends in every town I was in.

After I left Matthew's and steered my course for Derry without a cent in my pocket, I thought it looked blue enough, but before I left that city, I had made some of the best friends I had hitherto. Generous and noble William M. Arthur, who used me like a brother of his, and whose partner and himself laid, as it were, their very best at my feet. And Mr. McAfee, one of the most truly magnificent fellows in Ireland, treated me not merely as a companion but as a bosom friend and confident, in every sense of the word, besides many other agreeable acquaintances who were glad to extend their hospitality to me on account of what they had heard of me in the *Ulster Magazine* and Historic Society. Then Liverpool which I entered as I had Derry, an outcast. I made acquaintances with good and kind people who would serve me and have served me in ways they would not do for many. Even now, were I in that city I could make off a handsome and independent livelihood. Valentine Ward<sup>2</sup> is a name among the preachers I shall ever cherish.

And now look at me, in New York in a New World without a letter, and not only that, but ground to earth by a most astonishing and irretrievable misfortune. Now I am not only well off, but have every prospect of doing much better and mingling in a large, most gifted and respectable society where even poor I am respected. I confess it is wonderful. I am in no way elated, however. I have been in too many scrapes not to know the deep value of preserving a good situation when I

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<sup>1</sup> - By "picture" Samuel must mean a painted or drawn portrait, since the earliest photographic process (daguerreotypes) was not first produced until several years after 1833. No portrait of Catherine (Daly) Lanktree is known to exist.

<sup>2</sup> - A Methodist chronicler (1781-1835) whose work published closest before Samuel departed for America was "A miniature of Methodism, or, A brief account of the history, doctrines, discipline and character of the Methodists" (5<sup>th</sup> Edition, 1829). <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.hxjh29;view=1up;seq=13>.

get it and therefore put with many inconveniences which I would otherwise resist, until I am so fixed as to be independent of any ill blast of fortune again.

I recollect with pain the misery I endured on board ship in consequence of Caleb not having a sufficiency of provision. His stock was absolutely unfit for a summer excursion let alone across the Atlantic. I shall never forget the pain I suffered once when the whole ship was roused by an infamous accusation made against him of stealing eggs, and that, by a scamp from Newton Aurds,<sup>3</sup> of the name of Herdman who used to keep the Highlander in Anne Street. He accused him of the theft in the most offensive manner before the Captain; then to my confusion, every one came forth with a bad tale in their mouth. One said he had not brought more than 5 pounds of bacon with him. The Captain, however, was my friend warmly throughout the whole affair and silenced the slanderers though it had a painful effect ever afterwards. I am still in hopes he (Caleb) may do well in this country, but as yet, there is no prospect of it. In Liverpool before we left, he was offered a good school, but he was so America-mad that he would not hear of it. I only hope that I will not have to pay his passage back again. I wish very much that he would do well, as being my only relative here<sup>4</sup> I feel quite attached to him but he certainly has many unpleasant habits, especially of bristling when spoken to. We agree very well. It would be a hard case if we didn't.

The most striking difference a stranger feels in New York is the habit of boarding. Every person in a lodging house has a separate room to sleep in, while all take their meals in a common. This, though it causes cheapness and good living in general, is a wretched system and is miserably inconvenient to those not accustomed to it. Yet in the very first hotels it is the same. They are much earlier in their habits than at home. Our hours are Breakfast 7 o'clock, Dinner, 3; tea at 7, and Supper at 10, which is considered very fashionable, the general hours being 6, 12 and 6, without supper. I pay 5 Dollars a week for all, besides 3 Dollars for Caleb. Clothes are most horridly dear. A plain suit of black I got cost 50 Dollars, and shirts are so barbarously high that I intend, the first trusty hand I get, to send you out 5 Pounds to make half a dozen for me. The ladies here dress wonderfully gay, and are in general, pretty, though reserved.<sup>5</sup>

The heat and cold are each extreme. At present, one o'clock on Sunday night, I am sitting in my shirt, the windows all open, and in a profuse perspiration. Were it not for the cool night air, I at least would die of heat, from which nothing is a protection. The very rivers are lukewarm.

I had ordered for you from a carpenter a little article to send you as a present as soon as I heard of the present opportunity but it will not be ready in time. I beg you will accept the Atlantic souvenir which I send along with this and which I intended for dear Arabella until your own comes, then give it to her.

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<sup>3</sup> - Probably a transcription error. "Newtownards," Northern Ireland, just east of Belfast is probably what was written. Newtownards was Matthew Lanktree Sr.'s home base.

<sup>4</sup> - This is a revealing passage. Five Lanktree/Langtree children died in the United States. Samuel and Caleb arrived in 1832; James Hope arrived in 1831; Joshua arrived ca. 1843-44. That leaves Arabella, who married in Ireland in 1831 and died in Arkansas in 1866; her eldest child was born in Arkansas in 1839. Her precise year of arrival, between 1831 and 1839, is as yet unknown.

<sup>5</sup> - Samuel married in 1834.

I forget to tell Jos. [Joshua] in my letter to him, to send me a full, true and particular account of the opening of the present box at home, and the various exclamations about it. I think I see the little girls jumping and capering, and the joy you will have.

What has become of poor Thomas?<sup>6</sup> I have likewise a handsome present for him but my box will hold no more, so he must wait until I write again, which will be soon. It would give me uncommon pleasure to hear from him all about his plans. In this country I have no doubt he would do well and attain his profession.<sup>7</sup> All that is necessary to become a counselor here is to serve three years in a lawyer's office, stand an examination and that the oath. I know a young man from Dublin, who with less talent and less means every way, will be called to the bar next term. What a prospect for my poor Tom. I am intensely anxious to hear about him.

For all as much as I have written, I am afraid I shall forget something. Do Mother, see about sending me all those papers I have mentioned, I have no room at present for any more than to assure you of my unfading, everlasting love.

Samuel Daly

(I have been christened Daly<sup>8</sup>)

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<sup>6</sup> - Thomas eventually immigrated to Australia, date not in the record.

<sup>7</sup> - Attorney (or, in Australia, Solicitor or Barrister)?

<sup>8</sup> - The significance of this revelation is obscure. We know Samuel as "Samuel Daly Langtree"; did he only add the "Daly" when christened, in honor of his mother?