

T. Kendall to J. Pratt, 26 June 1813

Earl Spencer — Funchal 26 June 1813 —

Revd & Dear Sir,

We arrived here on the 21st instant: a pleasant breeze has wafted us hither, & I am happy to say that my family is well.

When I last wrote to you, the case of a prisoner then lying sick in the Hospital was mentioned. You will see from the enclosed Note to his Wife which I request may be forwarded to her, that the time of his departure was near at hand. This man was apparently brought by affliction to a sense of his situation as to spiritual things. I will state a few particulars respecting him which came within my own observation as correctly as I can recollect them. The first time I noticed him was in consequence of application being made to me for a Testament for the use of him and his afflicted companions. I presented to him one bearing the mark of the British and Foreign Bible Society which he made his constant companion until the hour of his death. He often read part of it to his fellow prisoners as he sat up on his bed, and when he was not able to do it himself others kindly did this office for him. On various occasions, he laid open his grief, deeply lamenting that he had ever been led to forsake that religion which had been his refuge and support in happier days, or that in adversity he had so far forgotten the only true remedy for human woe, as to engage in any improper way with the view of making up these heavy losses which he had sustained in his property. My dear friend's Tract upon the Day of Adversity administered (instrumentally) much comfort to his afflicted

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mind, & I trust assisted him in obtaining correct views of the way of salvation.

"This is, Sir, said he, the Day of Adversity, but what a mercy it is that I am here; God does not deal with us in Wrath according to what we deserve. There is yet a Saviour to look up to for pardon and salvation." He did not murmur against his prosecutors as many do, he seemed to submit to the decision of the Law without complaint. [f] He was grateful for the least act of civility that was shewn him, and I am told by M^r Yates that he has been consistent in his behaviour for a long time. He sent for me several times during his illness, and on the day preceding his death, he took me by the hand, spoke with much affection, was sensible of his approaching dissolution, told those around him that he had been a great sinner but he was not afraid to die. He attempted to sing but he was too weak, he was cheerful [sic] (altho' not in transport) to the last moment of his recollection. According to my imperfect views this poor man died a penitent & he appeared to derive his support from above. He was a member of the Church of Scotland.

Several of the Prisoners here can neither read nor write. I have supplied six or eight with spelling books; they have teachers amongst themselves.

We have had Divine Service on board for two Sundays past but it is to be lamented that there are no Chaplains appointed by Government, who would have more time to attend to the duties of their Office, & more leisure to administer instruction and consolation to ignorant, afflicted prisoners, than can possibly fall to

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the share of a Captain whose attention is almost incessantly occupied in the fulfilment of other important duties.

If I possessed sufficient influence with members of the established Church to which I have the honor and happiness to belong who take delight in encouraging missionary exertions, and also with my brethren of other denominations having the same object in view I should strongly recommend to their notice a clause in Dr Buchanan's Sermon preached before the Society. For while I feel myself bound to express my thankfulness for the kind attention which has hitherto been paid to me and my family by the Ships Company, Guard[s] [f] Prisoners & c^a yet in a religious point of view, even the effects of this kindness long continued might prove very distressing. Many of the Ships Company's Officers will for instance caress my children, and they delight to do them such kind offices as may please them. But then, they are not aware, that the latitude which is given to expression, may be attended with serious injury to the infant mind. As they say they mean no harm; so their sea language, as it is called, is deemed inoffensive and, in spurring men on to their duty almost necessary. That men who have been accustomed to be called upon in this manner, would not otherwise think their officers in good earnest. Hence, expressions, not proper to be named, and the most dreadful which can be conceived or uttered from day to day & from hour to hour, pervade alas! the whole conversation which takes place amongst this useful body of men, it therefore would be very desirable if suitable means of conveyance could be procured by the

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religious world for the people they send out, especially where there are women & children, where they would not be exposed to such language as they are taught to fear. While on shore the Christian can retire with his family and shelter them in a great measure from the pernicious conversation of thoughtless men, but there is very little retirement in a Ship.

I and my family have been on Shore, the prospect is delightful! the clouds rest beautifully upon the Hills! There is plenty of fruit to be bought, but the time of the Vintage is not yet. We expect to leave Madiera [sic] in three or four days. The people on Shore have had a grand illumination in honor of one of the Saints. The lights from the houses which are every where scattered on the sides of the surrounding hills had a fine effect. [f] My little pupils have had a few days holliday; I open my school again tomorrow.

The Youth Richard Stockwell who was recommended to me by our Bristol friends is happy & well.

M^r Yates is in good health, but I think he is unhappy, he comes to see me almost every Sabbath Day.

Pray remember me, in my gratitude & affection, to the Rev^d B. Woodd, to the Committee & to our other friends. I intend to write you also from Rio Janiero if we touch there and am Rev^d & Dear Sir,

Yours very faithfully

Tho Kendall