

“An inoffensive people”: Letters of Stephen Grellet on Haiti, 1816

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Stephen Grellet (1773–1855) was a French aristocrat turned Quaker missionary to the southern Republic of Haiti. In 1816, Grellet wrote two letters about his travels to his friends William Allen and George Stacey that described his visit to Haiti that year and related his thoughts on the Black republic. These letters are currently held at the Haverford College Quaker & Special Collections in Haverford, Pennsylvania.¹ They provide scholars insights not only into Grellet’s life but also the culture, politics, and environment of Haiti’s first republic. Excerpts of Grellet’s now non-extant journal were published on numerous occasions as part of larger biographical works in the late nineteenth century, but Grellet’s letters describing his Haitian trip were not included in these biographies, and they provide a unique view that his journal cannot offer. They are printed below for the first time.

Born Etienne De Grellet Du Mabillier on November 2, 1773, in Limoges, France, Grellet was a nobleman’s son and a unique product of the Age of Revolutions. His parents, Gabriel Marc Antoine De Grellet and Susanne de Senamaud, had four other children and were well-connected with Louis XVI. Grellet was deeply religious as a child and participated frequently in Catholic ceremonies. His world was rocked by the onslaught of anti-aristocratic sentiment that accompanied the French Revolution. Filled with a sense of honor and duty

Robert Swanson is a Ph.D. student at the University of Missouri. He thanks the editors, reviewers, and Bridget Swanson, who all helped with the production of this article.

¹ Stephen Grellet to William Allen, August 17, 1816, Stephen Grellet Papers, Box MC-967, Haverford College Quaker & Special Collections, Haverford, Pennsylvania (HCQ); Stephen Grellet to George Stacey, October 29, 1816, Stephen Grellet Papers, Box MC-967, HCQ. In this box is an unnumbered folder with seven items: four containing text from Grellet’s August letter, and three from his October letter. They are unbound and have no stable folder order. The full October letter is in Stephen Grellet’s hand (O1). A copy of the August letter is in the hand of Rebecca Grellet (A1) and bears on its verso a note signed by Rebecca claiming the copy is “whole.” These are the copy-texts for the transcriptions below. There is no copy of the August letter original to Stephen. Two scribes produced extracts from each letter (A2, O2 & A3, O3); and another unknown hand produced a final extract of the August letter (A4). Stephen refers to the production of extracts in both his letters, and the hand (and pagination style) of A2 and O2 is suggestive of Rebecca’s. Some of Rebecca’s letters have been preserved in other collections, for example, Grellet-Gurney Correspondence, HCQ, and the Gulielma M. Howland Collection, Folder E-He, HCQ.

to the king, he enlisted in the Royalist faction which joined with other monarchists and their European allies attempting to reassert control over France.²

Briefly captured and sentenced to death, likely by pro-republican French forces, Grellet was able to escape with his brother to Amsterdam in 1793. From Amsterdam, the brothers traveled to the Dutch colony of Demerara (modern Guyana), where Grellet first encountered chattel slavery. The brutality of slavery shocked him, especially as he witnessed whippings and other violence carried out daily against the enslaved. He was further amazed at the utter lack of religiosity among the inhabitants of the city.³ However, that dismay soon wore off as Grellet became less enamored with his faith. Grellet recalled becoming a “complete disciple of Voltaire” and adopting the belief that “There is no God!” His comfort and prosperity in Demerara were interrupted by a rumor that a French fleet was coming to seize the colony. Fearing reprisals, Grellet and his brother boarded an American vessel that landed in New York in the spring of 1795.⁴

The brothers settled on Long Island in Newtown, New York, still awaiting word from their parents in France. They sought elite company by visiting the Corsas, a family who introduced Grellet to the writings of William Penn. Twenty-two-year-old Stephen Grellet found himself drawn to the Friends’ beliefs. While exploring the religion, he came into contact with two British Quakers who were visiting the United States, Deborah Darby and Rebecca Young. These women greatly impacted Grellet and helped initiate him into the Society of Friends. Grellet described his process of conversion as “the axe of God’s power...lifted up against the root of the corrupt tree.” Grellet abandoned various actions that set him apart as an aristocrat, changing his manner of dress and speech to give a humbler appearance. He traveled to Philadelphia in the spring of 1796 to immerse himself in the Quaker community, becoming a member that fall.⁵

Grellet was completely absorbed in his new faith and began sharing Quaker views as early as 1797. Over the next twenty years, Grellet traveled throughout the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Switzerland, what is now Germany, and France. Although he often met with fellow Quakers and developed new friendships around the European world, he primarily preached to those outside of the faith. Grellet, in line with mainstream Quaker beliefs, was cautious in his approach to preaching, often waiting until he felt confident that God approved of

² Benjamin Seebohm, *Memoirs of the Life and Gospel Labours of Stephen Grellet* (Philadelphia: Henry Longstreth, 1860), 1: 1-9. This biography draws on Grellet’s diaries and other works, including those written during his time in Haiti, though it passes over the letters printed below.

³ For more on Demerara, see Brad Hoonhout, *Borderless Empire: Dutch Guiana in the Atlantic World, 1750–1800* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2020), esp. 74-110.

⁴ Grellet, *Memoirs of the Life*, 4-18.

⁵ Grellet, *Memoirs of the Life*, 19-37.

his efforts. While focusing on a religious message of inner conversion, he also targeted specific societal vices he encountered, including slavery. Grellet was appalled at the condition of the enslaved in the United States and preached vehemently on several occasions in the South against the practice.⁶

1816
My dear Friend
William Allen,
Copy.
Post au Prince 17th d'août 1816.

Presumably Grellet has forwarded me to this place
 My letter written after the hearing of the important religious concern that I had to visit the
 islands of Hayti. The tender & hearty sympathy is very grateful as also that of my dear English
 friends, of which I have just rec^d. The feeling expressions through a large number of their letters
 sent me here also by P. B. Among these welcome surprises are letters of my dear friends, Mr. Dillingham,
 Samuel Parker, Rob. Smith, J. Stacey, his dear sisters, Mr. Stetson & Mr. Christie, which I should be
 obliged to thee to acknowledge to them for me. They convey much interesting information & appear
 by lead to use the manner of speaking of the Indians to keep the chain of friendship English
 I have also rec^d. here letters of A. Masters, Presbyter, St. Louis, Pa., St. Margaret - my wife writes
 some others have come from Sydney, New York. However in my pastoral conversations I may con-
 fine myself chiefly to one subject, that is what relates to my present gospel embassy of the
 state of the people among whom I am from the place where this is done, then visit that
 one in the part of the island governed by the President. I am in Nelson's company by
 John Hancock, a member of my soc. meeting, we left N. York 10th of June, after thirty days pre-
 pare, we landed at San Carlos. We met with a very open and cordial reception from the provin-
 cial commanding officer in that place, also from the inhabitants generally and during our
 stay in that place I had several public meetings for divine worship, which were largely
 attended. Their generals and commanding officers did so uniformly - two of their reg-
 iments, with priests attended twice, one at each time. We have come from San Carlos here by
 land, a distance of 100 miles, having divers meet^{ings} on our way and uniformly meeting
 the greatest hospitality and kindness among all classes; also their genuine demonstration of
 gratitude in our having come to visit them. Many more than I expected have some knowledge
 of our society, at least so far as that we are the friends of men particularly of the oppressed -
 we have taken a very active part in promoting the abolition of slavery, first washing our
 hands in innocence, they also know that we are a distinguished people for the advocacy
 of our moral & sincerely wish that every individual in our society, did not agreeably to
 the idea that many of this people have formed that we do, however as these impressions have
 been made on them from the knowledge they had of the principles we profess, or of the vir-
 tues of some among us, their hearts are open to receive one, frequently the doctrine of
 truth is like wheat on the dry ground. They reject it not, reason not against it, but
 frequently I could, using the words of our primitive friends, say, after many a meeting
 that they have been generally convinced - they themselves make that acknowledgment.
 But there is a vast difference between conviction & conversion, yet much it to be hoped from peo-
 ple whose hearts is tender, fitly compared to wax, could they have good examples set before them,
 whereas it is very afflictive that most of those who from their profession of being the ministers of

Figure I. Letter of Stephen Grellet to William Allen, August 17, 1816 (“A1” witness), Box MC-967, HCQ. Copy by Rebecca Grellet; original unknown. Courtesy of Haverford College, Quaker & Special Collections.

On January 18, 1804, prior to the majority of Grellet’s proselyting tours, he married Rebecca Collins, the daughter of Isaac and Rachel Collins, at the Friends Meeting of New York.⁷ While she occasionally joined her husband in his travels,

⁶ Grellet, *Memoirs of the Life*, 69-328.

⁷ *Poulson’s American Daily Advertiser* 33, no. 8463 (Philadelphia: Zachary Poulson, January 24, 1804), accessed via *Early American Newspapers: Series 1, 1690–1876* (Readex/NewsBank); Grellet, *Memoirs of the Life*, 83.

more often than not, she remained behind in New York. Rebecca endured long periods of separation from her husband as he traveled across the Atlantic and European world spreading the Friends' message, though she likely relied on family, friends, and the local Quaker community for support. By 1815, Grellet hoped that he had satisfied his divine injunction to preach. Returning to New York, Grellet worked with his brother-in-law, Robert Pearsall. However, after only a year in New York, he once again felt the urge to travel and evangelize. Initially, he felt drawn to Southern Europe, but his plans quickly changed. He recalled: "For months the exercise on account of several parts of Europe, where I have not been, has been heavily on my mind; but after waiting carefully upon the Lord that he might order my ways in his counsel, I have felt that, for the present, Hayti only is the part to which I must go."⁸

Haitians' victory over French forces in 1804 stunned the Atlantic world. For a decade, the people of Haiti had caused fear and uproar as they first defied their masters and then the various European armies that were sent to reconquer them. The Spanish, French, and British in turn were defeated and evacuated the island.⁹

⁸ Grellet, *Memoirs of the Life*, 330.

⁹ For the best discussion of the Haitian Revolution see: Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004). For Haiti's impact on the Atlantic world, see: Julius S. Scott, *The Common Wind: Afro-American Currents in the Age of the Haitian Revolution* (London: Verso, 2018); Julia Gaffield, *Haitian Connections in the Atlantic World: Recognition after Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015); Marlene L. Daut, *Tropics of Haiti: Race and the Literary History of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World, 1789–1865* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015); David P. Geggus, ed., *The Impact of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2001); Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2015 [orig. pub. 1995]); Geggus, "The Caribbean in the Age of Revolution," in *The Age of Revolutions in Global Context, c. 1760–1840*, ed. David Armitage and Sanjay Subrahmanyam (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 83–88; Nick Nesbitt, "Haiti, the Monstrous Anomaly," in *The Idea of Haiti: Rethinking Crisis and Development*, ed. Millery Polyné (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 3, 8–26; Ronald Angelo Johnson, "A Revolutionary Dinner: U.S. Diplomacy toward Saint Domingue, 1798–1801," *Early American Studies* 9, no. 1 (Winter 2011): 114–141; Philippe R. Girard, "Jean-Jacques Dessalines and the Atlantic System: A Reappraisal," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 69, no. 3 (July 2012): 549–582; Robin Blackburn, "Haiti, Slavery, and the Age of the Democratic Revolution," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 63, no. 4 (Oct. 2006): 643–674; Jeremy D. Popkin, *Facing Racial Revolution: Eyewitness Accounts of the Haitian Insurrection* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 1–42; Kris Manjapra, *Black Ghost of Empire: The Long Death of Slavery and the Failure of Emancipation* (New York: Scribner, 2022), 47–67; Johnson, "Haiti's Connection to Early America: Beyond the Revolution," *History Compass* 16, no. 3 (Feb. 19, 2018); Girard, *The Slaves Who Defeated Napoleon: Toussaint Louverture and the Haitian War of Independence, 1801–1804* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2011); Carolyn Fick, "Revolutionary St. Domingue and the Emerging Atlantic: Paradigms of Sovereignty," in *The Haitian Revolution and the Early United States: Histories, Textualities, Geographies*, eds. Elizabeth Maddock Dillon and Michael J. Drexler (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 23–41; Karen Salt, *The Unfinished Revolution: Haiti, Black*

The conflict had a decisive impact on the majority of Americans, with many turning more hostile toward the revolutionaries.¹⁰ However, by 1816, some Northerners had shifted to favor the Haitian state, particularly as a place of potential profits.¹¹ Grellet would have been aware of these factors, especially as they related to the abolition movement. The abolitionists during the early 1800s had weathered serious and sustained attacks from proslavery forces across the Atlantic world in part because of the fallout of the Haitian Revolution.¹² Grellet's determination to go to Haiti was made in the context of this fierce conflict over the meaning of the Revolution and the position of the Haitians in the Atlantic world.

Grellet left New York on June 25, 1816, with his friend and fellow Quaker John Hancock. They arrived in Les Cayes, Haiti, on July 17. During his three-month stay in Haiti, Grellet spent most of his time traveling throughout the Republic of Haiti, visiting both elite and lower classes throughout the republic. The republic was formed in the chaotic years following the defeat of the French invasion force in 1804 and the declaration of Haitian independence. Jean-Jacques Dessalines, the leader of the Haitian forces after Toussaint Louverture's capture, declared himself emperor that October. His rule lasted two years before he was assassinated in 1806, leading to a fragmentation of the state into a kingdom under Henry Christophe in the north and a republic under Alexandre Pétion in the south. Throughout the next decade, both nations were in a state of civil war, both in physical and ideological terrains, constantly seeking to assert control over each other and smaller insurgent groups scattered in the mountainous regions of both states. Grellet, perhaps unknowingly, entered the Republic of Haiti at the height of Pétion's efforts to represent the republic as being "the purest remaining instantiation of the liberal Enlightenment ideals of 1789," a part of his effort to distinguish the polity from Christophe's realm and advance his government in

Sovereignty and Power in the Nineteenth-Century Atlantic World (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2019); Matt Clavin, "Race, Rebellion, and the Gothic: Inventing the Haitian Revolution," *Early American Studies* 5, no. 1 (Spring 2007): 1-29; Ashli White, "The Saint-Dominguan Refugees and American Distinctiveness in the Early Years of the Haitian Revolution," in *The World of the Haitian Revolution*, eds. David Patrick Geggus and Norman Fiering (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 248-60.

¹⁰ For two excellent surveys on this see Ashli White, *Encountering Revolution: Haiti and the Making of the Early Republic* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010); James Alexander Dun, *Dangerous Neighbors: Making the Haitian Revolution in Early America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

¹¹ Matthew Mason, *Slavery and Politics in the Early American Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 118.

¹² David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution 1770-1823* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), 81-2, 330

the paper civil war raging in Haiti. Though Grellet did not note much of this contest, he did offer remarks on the military and its influence in Haitian society.¹³

Grellet's journal contains various insights about the culture and people of the southern Republic of Haiti. It describes his meetings with Haitian officials, his preaching tours throughout the island, and even his attempts to remove what he termed "numerous books of the most demoralizing, vicious, and obscene kind; as well as many deistical works of the French philosophers."¹⁴ While his overall impression of Haitians was favorable, Grellet was critical of morals he thought stemmed from slavery and local Catholic priests. These critiques gave further moral agency and justification to his labors in the republic. The long-lasting influence of French enslavers was especially offensive to him. He angrily declared, "The evils that the French have entailed upon them, are not less galling and destructive to their minds, than were the cruelty and oppression of slavery to their bodies." He insisted that it was the French's "immoral lives and their irreligion" that continued to exert an influence on the people of Haiti. Grellet was convinced that given enough material aid and educational instruction, the Haitians would quickly become one of the most virtuous peoples in the Atlantic world.¹⁵

As Grellet wrote his letters from Haiti and New York, he perhaps hoped that how he characterized the people of Haiti would become part of a larger cosmopolitan abolitionist conception of the island. His focus on education and the need for abolitionist support, while ignoring the continued conflict between the Kingdom of Haiti and the Republic of Haiti, speaks to his desire to portray the positive aspects of the island nation. His letters show a commitment to an older understanding of human nature. While racial modernity, or belief in inherent black inferiority, was becoming stronger in white European and American societies, abolitionists like Grellet clung to beliefs that all mankind were equally children of God, endowed with natural rights, and capable of social uplift.¹⁶ These beliefs undergirded Grellet's perception of the Haitians. His first letter in particular presents a sincere plea for recognition of the goodness and potential

¹³ Johnhenry Gonzalez, *Maroon Nation: A History of Revolutionary Haiti* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), 129-157; Chelsea Stieber, *Haiti's Paper War: Post-Independence Writing, Civil War, and the Making of the Republic, 1804-1954* (New York: New York University Press, 2021), 60-127.

¹⁴ Grellet, *Memoirs of the Life*, 338

¹⁵ Grellet, *Memoirs of the Life*, 330-350.

¹⁶ James Brewer Stewart, "The Emergence of Racial Modernity and the Rise of the White North, 1790-1840," *Journal of the Early Republic* 18, no. 2 (Summer 1998): 181-217; Paul J. Polgar, *Standard-Bearers of Equality: America's First Abolition Movement* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by the University of North Carolina Press, 2019).

of Haiti as a valid state in the Atlantic world. Furthermore, the first letter contains unique insights into Grellet's views on abolitionism in relation to Haiti and the future of Haiti as a nation, as well as observations of the culture, politics, and religion of the people. His second letter echoes this humanitarian plea, though this letter is largely occupied by details of his travels and a near-death illness that led to his departure from Haiti. Included in this letter is a description of a tragic hurricane and earthquake that struck Haiti in the fall of 1816. Other insights into Grellet, the efforts of Haitian officials to aid white abolitionists, and details (though biased) about the Catholic church in Haiti can be gleaned from the two letters, providing scholars with many potential avenues of exploration.

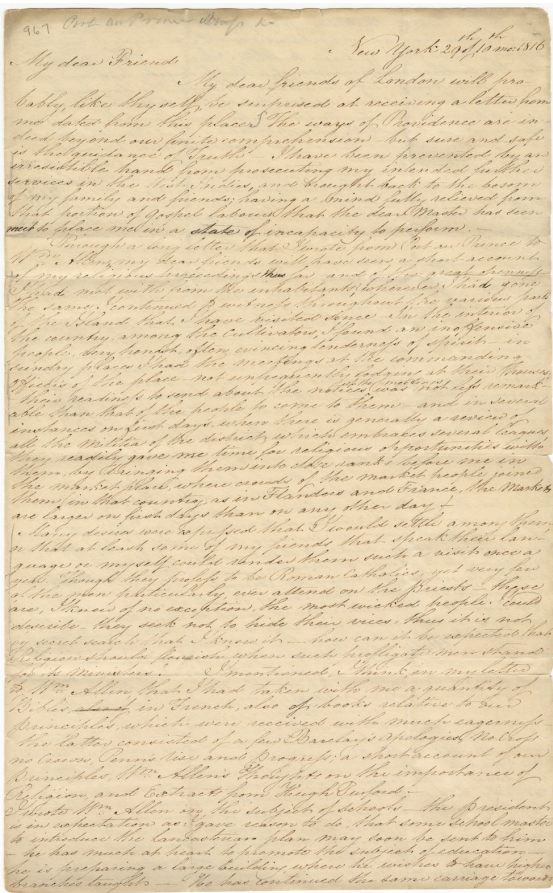


Figure II. Stephen Grellet to George Stacy, October 29, 1816 (“O1” witness), Box MC-967, HCQ. Courtesy of Haverford College, Quaker & Special Collections.

Grellet returned from Haiti in late 1816, never to travel again to the island. His journeys across the globe and his insights into various courts, nations, and peoples make him unique in the Atlantic world. His writings and travels have garnered occasional notice by scholars, but his writings on Haiti have been neglected.¹⁷ With the expansion of the literature on Haiti and its interactions with the Atlantic world, Grellet's letters open new avenues into this exciting and growing area of study.

¹⁷ William Wistar Comfort, *Stephen Grellet: 1773–1855* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1942), 96-101. This biography contains many insights; however, it is largely outdated. Comfort drew primarily from Grellet's journal and earlier biographies, again neglecting the two letters. Earlier biographies range in detail on Grellet's life. A short sixteen-page pamphlet created by the Burlington Society of Friends entitled *Stephen Grellet* (1856) was written soon after his death and includes only one sentence mentioning Grellet's trip to Haiti. Other biographies are largely reprints or vary slightly from the Seebohm biography. These include "A Modern Quaker Apostle," *The Eclectic Review* 5 (July 1863): 1-24, which entirely ignores his trip to Haiti. William Guest produced an edited volume of Seebohm's work entitled *Stephen Grellet* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1880). Frances Anne Budge pushed a series of writings on Grellet in the *Friends Quarterly Examiner*, largely mirroring Seebohm, and printed together as *A Missionary Life: Stephen Grellet* (London: James Nisbet, 1888). The most extensive treatment of Grellet's life is Robert Eugene Selleck, "I Shall Not Pass This Way Again: A Study of Stephen Grellet's Life and Thought" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1985). Submitted to Chicago's Divinity School, the thesis provides rich insight into Grellet's theology and his travels; however, as with the other writers, Selleck's treatment of the visit to Haiti is limited.

LETTERS OF STEPHEN GRELLET

Document 1: Stephen Grellet to William Allen, August 17, 1816¹

Port au Prince 17th of 8th Mo.

My dear Friend

William Allen²

Pearsall & Grellet have forwarded me to this place thy letter written after thy hearing of the important religious concern that I read to visit the inhabitants of Hayti. Thy tender brotherly sympathy is very grateful as also that of my dear English friends, of which I have just rec^d. the feeling expressions through a large packet of their letters sent me here also by P.&G. Among these welcome messages are letters of my dear fds. [friends] W^m Dillwyn, Josiah Forster Rob^t. Forster, G. Stacey, his dear Sisters, Jn^o. Kitching & Tho^s. Christy, which I should be obliged to thee to acknowledge to them for me.³ They convey much interesting information & greatly tend / to use the manner of speaking of the Indians / to keep the chain of friendship bright. I have also rec^d. here letters of L. Mertens, Brussels, F. Leo, Paris, L^s. Majolier – my wife writes some others have come from Gossner, Munich. However in my present correspondence I may confine myself chiefly to one subject, that is what relates to my present gospel embassy & the state of the people among whom I am.

¹ This transcription derives from A1. A2 begins with “Extract”; A3 lacks any salutation; A4 resembles A1 but does not contain “Copy” at the top of its first page. The transcription is diplomatic, with all exceptions noted in brackets or the notes.

² William Allen was a dedicated humanitarian and antislavery advocate in England, see David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution: 1770–1820* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975), 243-246.

³ Josiah Forster was a prominent English Friend and worked with Grellet at various points. Forster later visited Grellet in the United States in the 1850s during a tour prior to his death, see Benjamin Seebohm, ed., *Memoirs of William Forster, Vol. II* (London: Alfred W. Bennett, 1865), 355, 389. George Stacey was an English Friend and abolitionist.

From the place where this is dated, thou seest that I am in the part of the island governed by the President Alex:^r Petion. Accompanied by John Hancock, a member of my mo. Meeting, we left N. York 18th of 6th mo. and after thirty days passage, we landed at Aux Cayes. We met with a very open and cordial reception from the principal commanding officers in that place, also from the inhabitants generally and during our stay in that place I had several public meetings for divine worship which were largely attended. Their generals and commanding officers did so uniformly – two of their Romish priests attended twice, one at each time. We have come from Aux Cayes here by land, a distance of 180 miles, having divers meet^{ts} on our way and uniformly meeting with the greatest hospitality and kindness among all classes: also their genuine demonstration of joy & gratitude in our having come to visit them. Many more than I expected have some knowledge of our Society, at least, so far as this, that we are the friends of men & particularly of the oppressed – that we have taken a very active part in promoting the abolition of slavery, first washing our own hands in innocency. They also know that we are a distinguished people for the strictness of our morals, & I sincerely wish that every individual in our society, did act agreeably to the idea that many of this people have formed that we do; however as these impressions have been made on them from the knowledge they ^{have} had of the principle we profess, or of the virtues of some among us, their hearts are open to receive me, & frequently the doctrine of truth is like showers on the dry ground. They reject it not, reason not against it, but frequently I could, using the words of our primitive friends, say, after many a meeting, that they have been generally convinced – they, Themselves make that acknowledgement. But there is a vast difference between conviction & conversion, yet much is to be hoped from a people whose heart is Tender, fitly compared to wax, could they have good examples set before Them, whereas it is very afflictive that most of those who from their profession of being the ministers of God [end p. 1], and his oracles unto them, give in all their conduct & conversation all kinds of evil

example. I say most, for I do not like to condemn by the lump, not knowing them all, but from what I know or hear, lamentable indeed is the state of the Romish clergy in this is^d. [island] & generally throughout all the Spanish Indies. Every spark of virtue and especially of religion shudders at the depravity that prevails among them, & when the conduct of the Priests is such, what can be expected of the people? ... The looseness of morals is great; few are married & even from the general prevailing custom, some tender minds that would marry are prevented, lest they sh^d. appear singular: however of latter time, a number of respectable characters, especially among the chiefs, have married, & their example I hope will be followed. To that state of concubinage may be traced all moral evils & want of domestic happiness and unsubordination in the youth, for how can they be inspired with respect and obedience to their parents? It is a very important part of reformation, that I have much at heart, for I do consider, my dear friend, that it is impossible, that the pure root of religion be planted & grow on a soil that is corrupt. My spirit is in much travail before the Lord & I do hope that through ^{his} divine aid, some reformation may be brought about tho' priest craft is a great hinderance. They profess that they must live in celibacy & they throw aside all shame and covering, & their covetous spirit is such, that they publickly testify that it is not for the sheep they care, but for the wool and the fat. My heart is much grieved at their doing but yet as they render so openly manifest what they are, they fall into their own net, many eyes being opened, turn aside from them. Another circumstance which may be productive of good, tho' deeply afflictive to tender spirits is, that some of those priests, so greedy of their gain, become envious at one another, lest they sh^d. supplant one another out of their riche soil; thus they have come to blows, even in their churches. The President tries to bring some remedy to this, by confining each priest to his own appointed place, & also by making a tariff of what they may require for their works, but at the same time proclaiming liberty of religion so that none is obliged

to employ them – also they have no authority on this part of the is^d., the President alone places & removes them.

I meet with great openness in this place, w^h. is the largest of Petions dominions. It contains ab^t 20 or 2500 inhabitants. I have almost every day religious meetings in it, since my coming. The President wished that I sh^d. have made use of the Romish church to hold them in, as the most convenient building. I imparted to him some of the objections that prevented, not so much on my ac^t. as for what some of the envious priests might say; had he s^d the word none would have objected, but I told him, that hav^g. come to promote general union & harmony, I would not willingly take a single step that c^d. hurt a single individual. Thus I have mt^gs. in very commodious houses in different parts of the town w^{ch}. the inhabitants are very forward to offer for that purpose, & some try to render me all the attention that our own kind fr^{ds}. would. I have had however one mt^g. on a 1st day at the Presbytery which on ac^t. of the room & air, rendered it advisable to accommodate the crowd, also to bring about that union in the bonds of peace, among all classes. I bro^t. with me from N.Y. a number of bibles which are gratefully rec^d. & which I try to distribute particularly among the most religiously inclined in reduced circumstances that can read & by thro' whom they may be read to others. I have also bro^t a considerable number of religious tracts in french, with w^{ch} our mt^g. for sufferings supplied me among them are the Summary of our Principles, as set forth by A.Z. Benezet, and the extracts from [end p. 2] Hugh Turford w^h. I had printed in France⁴ Also a variety of other

⁴ Anthony Bezenet was a French-born abolitionist and Friend residing in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Benezet was vastly influential in the creation of the American abolition movement. See Maurice Jackson, *Let this Voice be Heard: Anthony Benezet, Father of Atlantic Abolitionism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009). Little is known about Hugh Turford, though his religious writings proved to be highly influential. A schoolteacher in Bristol, England, his most famous work, *The Grounds of a Holy Life* (London, 1702) called for deep introspection and change. Further bibliographic details for this work can be found in the English Short Title Catalogue, (<https://estc.bl.uk>), where it is known as ESTC N473867. See also Hugh Barbour, “Turford, Hugh (d. 1713), religious writer” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (September 23, 2004).

books of our principles; they are rec^d. with eagerness. The Bible Society of London, has, I find, sent bibles & testaments, by two persons. One Price residing at Jaquemel, who is endeavouring to diffuse them thro' different parts – people even going abt. to sell them at reduced prices; but few persons w^d. think of purchasing them, yet since my visit in divers places, & those that I have given, I find there is more desire in others to purchase. The other person entrusted with bibles is –Windsor, who when in London made acquaintance w^h. my dear f^d. R^d. Phillips, also with that worthy man –Stevens, to whom I sh^d. desire my Christian love.⁵ Windsor is a respectable merch^t that feels much interested in the welfare of this people & desires to encourage, as far as his ill health permits, philanthropic associations. A bible Society is now forming. The President patronizes it. He has begun the list of subscribers with 1000 dols. They are not yet organized. The Secretary of State –Insignac, a man of good understanding, has requested me to attend their first mtg., which if I am then in the place, I may probably do as this institution, on many considerations may be very beneficial to the bringing about, or at least an auxiliary towards the many reformatations that I long to see in the country, & if I can see enlisted on a right ground in this work, the principal characters among the inhabitants, much good I think will be done, both as to what relates to themselves & to the inhabitants at large. As Windsor is personally acquainted with R. Phillips, I have advised him instead of corresponding direct with the Secretaries, to do it with him, believing that especially in the beginning their case will be more particularly attended to, by hav^g. shall I say, such a Christian lawyer / he will smile at the expression / to plead their cause. They are a people worthy of it. I felt it sufficiently to induce me to visit them on the ground I am now doing, but my dear friend, no tongue can set forth the interest I now feel for them – the subject presents itself to my mind in such a way, that like a precious stone, which side soever it is turned, it is fraught with the deepest interest, for, as a ^{new} nation emerging from a state of

⁵ Richard Phillips was a Quaker printer in London.

bondage & darkness, for their sake & posterity they have a great claim on us – they are besides the offspring of that oppressed race of Africa, whose cause is espoused by so many virtuous men – the first place where Europeans first bro't slaves from Africa & the first place where the cruel yoke has been shaken off. By the conduct of this people on whom the eyes of nations are turned, the hope of the friends of humanity centers, the heart glows & is full of hope; the lot of millions yet detained in slavery, depends.

Africa, itself, may behold this rising nation with interest as, to its own situation. Thus the British & foreign B. [Bible] Society by fostering the small efforts and beginnings of this people, may become of singular use to them, & I doubt not your liberality in assisting them with prudence. But connected with this important subject of the bible is another no less worth attention, seeing that it is somewhat the basis on which the first is to stand; that is, my dear brother, the concern so nigh thy heart, education, on the plan by which every man may be able to read the bible. My reflections have led me far on this subject, since being among this people, & possibly I have never before, so fully entered into thy feelings on the importance of education, on the new system, as I have lately done. First of all we conclude that as an established or general principle ignorance leads to superstition & fanaticism, wh^h are moral evils, & the bane of a nation. Few among this people have had the op^y [opportunity] of a good education, but I am surprised at the energy & power of mind that many evince, clearness of reasoning & of sentiment wh^h not being clouded by vain philosophy, & human wisdom, can at once see & acknowledge to the truth. Many of this people w^d. have been shining characters, had they had the privileges we have enjoyed. The President who appears desirous to everything in his power to promote the welfare of his people on right ground, is making preparations for the establishm^t of schools where higher branches will be taught, but this does not answer thy nor my views. First, when I consider the people, I do not speak as a [end p. 3] politician, for I have nothing to do with that, only as far as according to my ideas,

truth leads to the best policy or politique. The strength & welfare of this people stand in unity & that unity leads in various respects to some equality, for as brethren there ought not to be any great disproportion among them, it begetting jealousy; thus the attention of Government to schools for high branches only, must to a new & rising nation do more harm than good, unless the plan of general education be cemented~~ed~~connected with it. In this I contemplate much good – 1st – associations being formed by men of riper years for the education of youth, their attention to their own conduct, & the example they give to youth may be hoped for, – thus much good already obtained.

The youth in a country where concubinage has much prevailed, wh^h. has in a great degree lessened the authority of parents, will in those well regulated schools, whilst receiv^g. useful branches of education, be trained in habits of attention & obedience, which are admirably linked to that system of education. The most virtuous inhabitants under whose care & patronage these schools w^d. be, feeling an interest in them would be led, when visiting them to try to inculcate in the mind of the youth, principles of morality & virtue, which their example enforcing, w^d. supply at least in some degree, what is lacking in the part of some of their parents. Such of the youth as should evince in those schools the dispositions & qualifications for higher branches, sh^d. know that the benefit of these higher branches are not to be for the rich only, but for every class.

But why sh^d. I, my dear William thus write on a subject thou hast explored much more fully than I ever expect to do & on the importance of which I have given only a faint idea. The use of it perhaps will be to shew thee in what light I represent the subject to such of the people as appear to feel its importance. The President sees it, & appears desirous that such schools sh^d. be established, & nothing w^d. be lacking on his part, to promote the establishment of them & at first, I should apprehend in this city under his immediate care & patronage. I wish then that you w^d. send here some qualified school masters with all the necessary apparatus for such schools. I understand thro' some of my english

correspondents that the bible society & that for education are preparing to send to the part of the is^d. under the dominion of King Henry 1st Bibles & four school masters. Now, my dear friend, my request is, on behalf of this part of the is^d. I now visit that you would extend a portion of your attention & bounty unto them. The President will accept it with all gratitude, for his study appears to be the welfare of his people. I sh^d. not do justice to him, nor to my feelings, if I did not say that I find him an example of simplicity, denying himself, frugal & temperate, but liberal to the wants of the afflicted: every one has full access to him; a man of great meekness, & in my view, shining in a virtue little known by many christians, that is forgiveness of injuries. In many instances, that man has evinced that he that overcometh himself, is greater than he that taketh a city. One instance I may single out to shew his temper. He was closely besieged by his antagonist & bro^t to great sufferings; when all hopes of escaping seemed to vanish, a body of may be three thousand of the enemy passed over to his side which induced the other to retreat. Alex^f Petion being urged by his officers to pursue him, said “Nay, the Lord forbid; it is He who has reliev^d me: to Him alone, I commit my cause.” I asked the President about the Truth of this, which not only confirming, he said, “How could I go and imbrue my hands in the blood of [end p. 4] a people whose welfare I desire?” To say that he is a humane man w^d. but express faintly what his many acts proclaim. Those who have plotted against him, he has pardoned, and by good offices, has even attached to himself. I request thee, my dear friend, to be very cautious not to expose any of these sentiments, as coming from me, for the present at least; / for when I visit the other part of the is^d. my hav^g. with candour told the truth respecting what I have seen in this, might close my way for my religious services, sh^d. the spirit of jealousy, which frequently prevails among men, reign there. I may sincerely say that I have no prejudice for or against either side; pure gospel love inflamed my heart towards all these people for whom I feel more than can be expressed. But from my manner of writing, thou mayst conclude I have at heart that thyself &

thy numerous philanthropic friends sh^d. know this part of the is^d., which owing to the disposition of the President, is but little known. He now desired that his praise sh^d. not be sounded by himself, but by his works, committing to the Lord to make him known & open towards him, the hearts of so many of those worthy characters in England whom he reveres. Among these, Clarkson & Wilberforce are not the least.⁶ I will try to encourage them to establish also a society for schools, & give them thy name to correspond with. I hope you will not wait to hear from them to take some steps to come to their assistance. As to books, even for schools, it is an object of great importance to this country that proper books sh^d. be introduced. I leave the subject for the consideration of some of you or the tract association. As a field is open, suitable translations or compositions in french may come out.

With the l^r. [letter] of my valued friend W^m. Dillwyn I have rec^d. the inclosure for Henry the 1. King of Hayti, for which I apprehend I am indebted to my f^d Tho^s. Clarkson & probably some of you my kind friends have by this time succeeded in conveying information to that great personage, of my proposed religious visit to his dominions; for wh^h I am much indebted to you.⁷ I am not yet ready to quit these parts, there being several portions of the interior of the country, that I wish to visit, yet from present prospects I may be ready to try to pass on to the other side in ab^t. six weeks. There are many difficulties in the way, many think great danger, but when the love of God constraineth us, we are offered up to all things & the blessed experience that He taught me of his power & all sufficiency center my soul in much quietness & resignation to all His requirings. The consequences I wholly leave to Him, who can be glorified by my death as by my life. However I ought to say that the great cloud that for awhile

⁶ Thomas Clarkson was a prominent British abolitionist and leader in the death of Britain's participation in the slave trade and slavery. William Wilberforce was an independent MP (Member of Parliament) and was seen by many at the time as the face of the British abolition movement.

⁷ William Dillwyn was an American-born British Quaker and abolitionist. He was taught by Anthony Benezet and played an active role in fighting against the British slave trade.

hung over my mind, when contemplating that remaining portion of my service has gradually removed, & for the present at least all fear is taken away: yet from this, conclude not I am out of danger. O! my friends, pray only, that under all circumstances, I may stand faithful to my dear Master, but was He to permit that my life sh^d. be called for as a seal to the sacrifice I offer, & to my testimony to the gospel of his grace, there is no cause for any to stumble or to be discouraged. I write it now as I have livingly felt it many a time – there w^d. be no more cause for any of my dear fds to be discouraged or call in question the Lord's dispensation, than there is in the act of the sufferings and deaths of his prophets, apostles and various servants. Which way we shall proceed towards Cape François, I cannot yet say, but my present prospect w^d. induce me to go the most direct. Some anticipate more difficulty relative to [end p. 5] our admission, seeing that we have been first on this side of the is^d. but I leave all kinds of reasoning; in the simplicity of my heart & putting forth of truth, I only desire that all our movements be directed.

Please dear William, to communicate such parts of my l^r to those of my fds who thou knowest are tenderly interested in my movements & in that cause I have espoused. I cannot write to them all, thus extracts of this, with thy judicious care will suffice w^h. my dear love to them. Among those to whom especially I request thee to communicate this long hasty scrawl are my d^r [dear] fds. W^m. Dⁿ [Dillwyn] G Stacey & the Forsters. It is very probable that if I pursue faithfully my engagements on this is^d. I may be released from visiting any others, the difficulty to go to the Windward is so yet. 20th of 8th mo. Last 1st day I had a mt^g with ab^t. four thousand soldiers: they were drawn into close ranks before the palace of the President, on the Porch of which I stood, & being elevated, enabled my voice with some ease to extend over all. The President & chief officers were about me. It is indeed the Lord's doing – to see what openness I meet among this people, & in the daily mt^gs. I have with them; however short be the notice of some, ~~however short be the notice of some~~, how quick & ready they are to

attend. The women as in our more polished nations, are the foremost in evincing their attachment, or at least, desire & goodwill for that cause dignified with honour & crowned with immortality. If some virtuous & pious family resided among them, I apprehend that a precious little company w^d. soon be formed. I have found it hard work to gather them in m^{tes}. to that state of silence & waiting on that divine power, on whom alone we desire their expectation & confidence to be placed, but thro' divine mercy, that power & presence being at seasons witnessed over us have made some acquainted with Him, to whom the gathering of nations is to be. Yesterday we dined at the President's country seat, three miles from here. I expected when he gave the invitation to be at a simple family dinner, but owing to the preparations they are making for the publication of the constitution, his chief officers from various parts came, so that we were ab^t. sixty four at the dinner table. Six generals I think were among the guests. The quiet & order prevailing were admirable, the President evidently studying that nothing should pass that could hurt me. Our society stand very high among them knowing what advocates we have been in their cause. Observing in the dining room the names of divers of the advocates of their liberty among whom are Reynolds & Wilberforce, that this of my dear friend Clarkson is not, I have endeavored to let them know what essential services he has rendered to the oppressed descendants of Africa & what engagements both he, & thee, my dear friend continue with all industry to pursue for the further enlargement of that people – also what are your labours at Sierra Leone. Colonel Sabourin has promised me to make extracts of the works of Tho^s. Clarkson on the abolition of the slave trade & to introduce them into their newspapers, whereby the interest and knowledge will diffuse to every part of the is^d. The President thinks well of it. The Co^l. is a man of good natural parts and will probably write to T^s. Clarkson; he wrote sometime ago to –Wilberforce, but has rec^d. no answer. I much wish my frds, that among the books for the instruction of youth that may be sent, some could be obtained that tend to establish young minds in virtuous

habits, portraying the evils of an immoral life & a state of concubinage and setting forth the happiness that the marriage covenant when rightly entered into, procures; and I request particularly that an [end p. 6] especial care should be had that the persons who may be sent to promote the Lancasterian schools, be of settled exemplary morality, as for want of it, they might do more harm than good.

I find it difficult to impress on the minds of this people, that all the persons, who from virtuous or philanthropic sentiments advocate the cause of humanity are not of our society, for they have an idea that every good man is a Quaker, and that none but good men are Quakers, consequently that such schoolmasters as may come, will be men of virtuous habits. I know thou wilt do thy best in this, without my mentioning it, being also aware of the difficulty of obtaining such as we would. The President will see that a suitable salary be given to such as may come, and I should want thee my beloved friend to write to him, both on this and every other subject. To set thee at ease in doing it, I may say that wast thou ten minutes in his company, thou wouldst be as, with an intimate. I also wish my friend Tho^s. Clarkson may attend to what feelings he may have respecting this country.

It is astonishing to see the order that reigns, considering their state of warfare for so many years; the cultivation of the land is advancing, and the tranquility in the interior is such, that people travel alone with large sums of money & no instance of the least molestation.

I am pleased that your meeting for sufferings has made such a suitable choice to visit Pymont &c. will they not go to Munich &c. and if so far, return though the south of France? My love to them affectionately. This message is cordially sent to thy dear, precious mother, brother Joseph of whose education with P. Bedford, it is a comfort to hear. I request thy dear Mary to have patience when reading thee this long but hasty scrawl, also in being thy scribe or messenger in communicating parts of it as thou mayst instruct her Among others however please render dear S^a. Horne a share[?]. Tell her and dear Martha that I enter into

tender sympathy with them in the very close separation of a beloved brother. The tidings were very unexpected to me.

My love freely runs towards my dear friends in & about London. They are too deeply engraven on my heart not to be remembered in these burning climes as well as in North America. My love to thy valuable partner in life and the valuable one in thy business, also to thy nephews and their aunt.

Farewell my dear brother, thy sincere friend,

S. Grellet. [end p. 7]⁸

⁸ On the verso of the final page of A1 is the following note, dated September 24, 1816: “My esteemed friend [William Allen], I received two days since a letter from my husband, enclosing one for thee, which he left unsealed for my perusal, it containing some information I had not obtained and perceiving that he preferred my sending thee a copy of it, or making some extracts from it, I have accordingly compiled, and transmit thee a copy of the whole. I suppose about this time he may be passing to the other side of the island, and consequently encompassed with perils of various kinds. May his kind friends continue to lend the aid of their sympathy! In tender affection to thy dear companion ^{for several reasons}, and precious Mary, I am thy affectionate S. [servant] Rebecca Grellet”

Document 2: Stephen Grellet to George Stacey, October 29, 1816⁹

New York 29th of 10th Mo. 1816

My dear Friend,

My dear friends of London will probably, like myself, be surprised of receiving a letter from me dated from this place. The ways of Providence are indeed beyond our finite comprehension – but sure and safe is the guidance of Truth – I have been prevented by an irresistible hand from prosecuting my intended further services in the West Indies, and brought back to the bosom of my family and friends; having a mind fully relieved from that portion of Gospel labour that the dear Master has seen meet to place me in a state of incapacity to perform.

Through a long letter that I wrote from Port au Prince to W^m Allen my dear friends will have seen a short account of my religious proceedings thus far and of the great openness I had met with from the inhabitants, wherever I had gone. The same I continued to witness throughout the various parts of the Island that I have visited since – In the interior of the country, among the cultivators, I found an inoffensive people, very honest, often evincing tenderness of spirit – in sundry places I had the meetings at the Commanding Officers' of the place – not unfrequently lodging at their houses. Their readiness to send about the notice of the Meetings was not less remarkable than that of the people to come to them – and in several instances on first days, when there is generally a service of all the Militia of the district, which embraces several leagues they readily gave me time for religious opportunities with them, by bringing them out close ranks before me in the Market place, when crowds of the Market people joined them (in that country, as in Flanders & France, the markets are longer on first days than on any other day)

⁹This transcription derives from O1. O2 begins with "Extract"; O3 lacks any salutation. The transcription is diplomatic, with all exceptions noted in brackets or the notes.

Many desires were expressed that I should settle among them; or that at least some of my friends who speak their language or myself could render them such a visit once a year. Though they profess to be Roman Catholics, yet very few of the men particularly, ever attend on the Priests – these are, I know of no exception, the most wicked people I could describe – they seek not to hide their vices, thus it is not by secret search that I know it – how can it be expected that Religion should flourish when such profligate men stand for its ministers?

I mentioned, I think, in my letter to W^m Allen that I had taken with me a quantity of Bibles ~~also of~~ in French, also of books relative to our principles, which they received with much eagerness. The latter consisted of a few Barclay's Apologies, No Cross No Crown, Penn's Rise and Progress; a short account of our Principles, W^m Allen's Thoughts on the importance of Religion, and Extracts from Hugh Turford.¹⁰

I wrote W^m Allen on the subject of schools – the president is in expectation as I gave him reason to do, that some schoolmaster to introduce the Lancasterian plan may be soon sent to him – he has much at heart to promote the subject of education – he is preparing a large building where he wishes to have higher branches taught – He has continued his same same carriage towards [end p. 1]¹¹ me to the last, so that the more perfect knowledge of him that I have had an opportunity to obtain tends to confirm what I have said of him to W^m. Allen.

The meeting for the further organization of a Bible Society had not yet been held when I left the Island, though the day for the holding of it had been appointed at two different times – but as through bodily illness I could not attend, they adjourned the meeting repeatedly in expectation that I might be able to be present at it – but it has been otherwise ordered as I am now going to state.

After my letter to dear W^m. Allen I continued at Port au Prince a few days longer having meetings daily – I then went through the country to Jaquemel,

¹⁰ These are all standard Quaker books.

¹¹ O1 lacks any original pagination.

Grand Goave, Petit Goave, Meragonane, &c, as far as Petit Trou,¹² having meeting among the divers classes of people, and came back to Port au Prince by way of Leogane – It was on the whole a fatiguing journey, some of the stages being long, and some of the roads on steep mountains among rocks – yet on some of these the country was like a garden, and covered with fine coffee trees – but in the low grounds we had to cross many deep and winding rivers – one among others we crossed 64 times; so that my feet, and even up to or above my knees being kept wet, whilst a burning sun shone over my head, laid I apprehend the foundation for the sickness that soon after made its appearance. The general practice of the country is early in the morning to take a cup of coffee without milk or any thing to eat, and only to breakfast at 11 o'clock, dining from 5 to 6 o'clock – but setting off early in the morning to have the cool of it, and timely to get through our stage before breakfast prevented our having the cup of Coffee, as several times we set off at 2 or 4 o'clock, and at other times the forepart of the day being the most suitable for meetings I had them before breakfast – some of these being held out of doors, which called for exertion, contributed to lay the foundation for a sickness.

During that journey we had divers times to acknowledge the extension of Divine protection – on coming to the side of deep waters, very unexpectedly [meeting with] people to direct us to the fording places – enabling us to arrive at Leogane just in time probably to escape being swept away by torrents – The rain on our arriving at this place beginning to fall at such a rate that the town itself was threatened with destruction – all the country round about was like a sea – whole plantations were destroyed and many lives lost – After our return to Port au Prince I often felt feverish, but apprehending it was only cold and fatigue, I did not take much thought about it – I had several meetings; the time was fixed on 7th day for the Bible meeting, expecting to set off on first day for Christophe's dominions – having provided ourselves (that is my companion and myself) with

¹² Jacmel, Grand Goâve, Petit-Goâve, Miragoane, Petit-Trou-de-Nippes.

a Boat – The captain of a American vessel was to take us on his way to America to the mouth of the Bay called St. Marc, where from we proposed through Divine assistance to make the best of our way to the town – in this way the lives or liberty of nobody but ourselves was exposed, and we also apprehended that landing at first at a place commanded by one of Christophe’s First Generals we should meet with better treatment than might be the case in outposts; but, I had a service of different kind – for on fifth day the 12th of 9th month. I had a high fever, which however did not [end p. 2] prevent my attending a meeting appointed that afternoon in which Divine help enabled me to get through the assigned work, and to obtain great relief of mind, expecting at the time it would be the last so public a meeting.

I should have, as has been the case – I took to my bed directly after the meeting, and for some days the fever so increased that my head was in the most distressful condition, so that even now the touch of it seems like having had hard blows – but I was favoured if not to keep my senses wholly, at least not to express any thing that could indicate the loss of them – On the night of the 18th to the 19th, whilst laboring under this disease, the Lord saw meet to visit the land with a hurricane and an earthquake.

The older inhabitants can only remember one comparable to this – The wind blew with such fury, and the rain fell so as to threaten general destruction – whole houses were blown away, others thrown flat down, and those that suffered least had the roof carried away – few at least escaped this – Most of the vessels were blown on shore, thrown on their sides or sunk – yet on the whole few received much damage considering their great exposure – and though many lives were lost, more escaped under the ruins than could be expected – but in the country the loss of property was great – Jaquemel & Leogane were nearly destroyed – I can hardly describe the awfulness of the scene. – I tried in vain during the night to have a dry place to lie under, with the high fever that was then on me – the roof of the house being carried away except a small corner that was observed in

the morning to remain, and which the very kind and hospitable family who entertained me, let me occupy till a new roof was put on. In a few days after that storm my fever assumed the appearance of fever and ague – but the shivering occasioned by this was so severe, and the perspiration so great (I wetted through two matrasses) that I was reduced to great weakness – cold, clammy sweats succeeding the other – my extremities were cold, and no feeling left in them, so that very little hope was left of my recovery – Nature thus sinking I could not reasonably entertain any – yet whilst in that state, I thought that if I could be put on board a ship (La Franchise) preparing to sail for this port, I should get better – but for some days such thoughts troubled me, being in my situation considered as idle ones – my stomach being however a little strengthened I was enabled to take some Bark,¹³ and on the 4th Inst., to be carried on board the ship – two days afterwards the shivering fits left me, and the fever in about a week – which I can but consider and gratefully acknowledge as a signal Divine interposition – for that kind of fever which is not unfrequent among the inhabitants of the island is very obstinate; I was told of and saw some that had continued two and three years under its affects: I also † hardly know of any step in which X I have seen more clearness than in that of going on board that ship, accompanied with a mind fully clear of further service in those burning climes – how great and condescending is Divine mercy! We had a passage of 18 days, during which I continued to recruit – I am yet feeble so that I write this at various intervals such as my appetite is good [end p. 3] I gain every day in strength.

My dear wife who with our little Rl. [Rachel] was at Burlington, heard of my illness two days only before a messenger brought her the tidings of my safe return, and it is now about two days since we were seated in our quiet habitation, with hearts far from being capable of embracing that fullness of gratitude that we are sensible we owe – for great indeed are the favours multiplied upon us.

¹³ A tea made from the bark of the mabi tree (*Colubrina elliptica*).

I have thus been a little particular, knowing what kind interest you with some other of my friends take in a poor brother – also that you may know that since the Lord has closed the way for my prosecuting apprehended prospects of service, He has liberated me, after helping bountifully to do the part of the work He did assign.

Whilst on the Island I wrote via Jamaica to several of my English friends – thou wast of the number.

I have found here the tokens of love of many of my friends, who give me much interesting information.

Perhaps ~~a few and~~ this present scrawl, by a few extracts made by thy dear sisters will supply some of my many deficiencies. – I hope that on the return of dear Luke Howard Tho^s Christy, and the other company W^m. Allen, I may have long letters from some of them, perhaps from dear Josiah Forster.

Our Burlington friends we hear today are well – George Dillwyn has returned from Baltimore yearly Meeting M Naple was well when GD left Baltimore – She has a valuable young woman for a companion.

Farewell my dear brother

Thine affectionately

Stephen Grellet [end p. 4]