

8. Pitcairn to Norfolk

3 May to 6 Jun 1856

3rd May

They all came on board, Jonathan Adams had a sick baby, he did not expect it would live, so he made a coffin for it on shore and brought it on board wrapped up in a flannel. Cap^t saw it, for took hold of it and pitched it overboard.

We made sail at 8pm, the Islanders took a last fond look at their dear little Island home and many a tear was shed, I don't think there was one that could say they were glad they were leaving it.

George Adam said to me that when we first arrived at Pitcairn, he would rather for anyone to take a sword and run him through than he would leave. As it was they had some trouble to make him come, he is a rum old fellow, they say he is very much like his father.

There are 145 adults (ed. later on George says there are 197 on board)

4th May

Several of them very seasick. They have prayers three times a day, rather too much of a good thing, I think. Mr Nobbs dines with us nearly every day and Frederic Young sometimes.

The Cap^t abuses me like a pickpocket everyday. One afternoon when the boy was trimming the lamps and getting bread for supper, Mr Gregorice asked me to play a tune on the accordion and the Girls were saying "do please Mr Kar", so that I could not resist their intentions. I played two or three tunes and when I was half way through "Cheers Boys Cheers", who should come down but the Cap^t. Oh did he abuse me, he was going to send me to my cabin and keep me there the rest of the passage and if he caught me talking to any of them again he would keep me there until I rot.

But the worst of all, one day he accused me of giving away the stores to my favourite's on the passage out, I talked to him very strong. Another time 19th July, I was down in the Hold getting a pump for the Cask of water on deck when he was singing out for "Boy George", I came up just after he began abusing me and said I must have heard him and I had the Boy below all the time. I told him I did not hear anything of it when he said "it's a lie, God damn yea, go to your cabin, you are no longer 3rd mate of this ship". Before nearly all on board, passengers and men. What language to use to an officer. The next day he called me to his cabin and had a chat and put me on duty again, since that time he has been more civil.

My work for the first week was to serve out of their stores first thing and then show them how to Holystone (ed. soft and brittle sandstone used for scouring and whitening the wooden decks of ships.), make Duffs (ed. A stiff flour pudding boiled in a cloth bag or steamed.), grind their pepper for them, cut goats and pigs up for dinner and all such things as that. Not being accustomed to work at all, they are rather lazy, half a dozen of them will stand looking on at me working like a slave.

They are very fond of their wives, I don't know what they are ashore, but on here they think of nothing else but to attend to their wants, they most certainly wear the breeches. (I.E. Wives). In their own little Island I saw three or four washing and Jemima Young was Ironing, this is the person I stopped with, I suppose that is all they have to do because the men cook or they generally do so.

Their amusement in the day times is generally in the water, they are as much at home there as they are on land, women as well as men and altogether. Sometimes they go fishing and after being out all day often return with only three or four and sometimes none at all.

The girls can walk up coconut trees as well as the man. None of them wear shoes or anything on their feet, the little children have not an article on them for running about all naked. They also swim about in the water like little ducks.

Mr Nobbs, right name no one knows, but he was so born at Yarmouth and served as Mid (ed. Midshipman) in the Chilean navy. He left the Navy and went to Valpariso (e.d. Chile) where he and another man, a Capt, got a small fishing boat of 18 tonnes under some pretext or another and ran away with her and came to Pitcairn Island (this was in the year 1829). When they arrived there, the Islanders held a consultation whether to allow them to land one not. Cap^t being very ill, they consented, Buffet and Evans went on board to bring her in and anchor her. The wind suddenly shifted and blew a heavy gale which carried them out sea and were nine days before they anchored in the bay. Having done so and taking everything out of her and landed up on the beach, Cap^t ordered her to be broken up and would not rest until he saw it down.

Mr Nobbs had nothing to say in the matter. If he had bought her with his own money, as he says in that book of his, I should think he would have all to say with matter. The Cap^t got worse and one day he threw himself off the rocks and dashed himself to pieces.

The owner of the boat search for her book could not find it anywhere and four years ago he heard what had become of her and Mr Nobbs and sent to say that he would forgive him considering where he was and how we had conducted himself.

After John Adams died, which was in 1829, Mr Nobbs was made teacher and religious instructor. He married the daughter of Christian the Mutineer and has children. His eldest Reuben Nobbs is dead, the next, William is married and has a child. The next is Jane who has been to Valpariso to receive some education and the next Francis (ed. in mirror hand – my rival) has been there also. They were very glad

to get back to the dear little Island home again. Jane always dresses in the English fashion, she looks very well in it but the others look horrid. There are 197 altogether and males and females well proportioned. Mr Nobbs told me he never knew them (ed. to be) over four either way, all the time he was on the island.

Mr Gregorice the Lieutenant in charge seems to be very happy, he is with Ellen Quintal (ed. 19) all day long (he calls her dear Nelly) talking or reading to her.

(ed. In mirror hand)

And the contrary all day laying down to sleep together sometimes his head on her lap of them until 11 at night. asleep all the time of course. I have seen five women laying on deck in Hospital and he in the center.

If you want find Mr Levic in the Dog watch or from 5 to 9, look on the Spar on the starboard side, if any person wishes to call on him, he will always find him and Martha Evans (ed. 17) (alias) Da Bard at home during these hours.

But as for poor me, I dare not speak or scarcely to look at them, if the Cap^t was to see me give one of them one of my smiles, he would be down on me like a hundred bricks, so that I was always glad to get some place out of his sight. If I was tired of reading in my own cabin, I went down to the Carpenters birth which was in the Tween decks. The Gardener and he use to live together in their birth, sometimes one or two of the Islanders would come in and sit down but it was not the place for them nor for me either, but it was the only place I had to go having no watch to keep, my time was all my own.

Now and then I played on the accordion which would attract some of the females just outside but the other side of the bulkhead, if I were to stop a minute they would call out "Mr Karr play Cheers Boys Cheers (I have played it once) Never mind play it once more, Do please Mr Karr, please do Mr Karr, play it once more. Another one would say so then and I would begin and after I finished that, I must play the Red, White and Blue.

One day whilst I was in my store room cleaning it out, Jemima Young and Dinah Evans were standing outside the door every now and then, they could speak to me. The Cap^t happened to pass and saw them standing there, thought they were we talking to me, he called me up and began there and then to abuse me in the Forecastle and lots of other things, swearing and taking Gods name in vain such as by God I will do this and that.

Another time the Boy took the bread forward without my seeing it, it was the bottom of the cask and was bad and instead of the men coming to me about it, they went to the Cap^t. He sent for me and abused me right and left before all the passengers, he said he would send me to my cabin and keep me there on that bread till I rot and several other expressions. I must say my eyes were a little moist (I was obeying orders all the time to).

The men had been aft about a month before with the same complaint. He told me then to give them that bread and let them pick out the best and give the rest of the pigs. The bread very is very bad in the ship, in some casks there is none good and in others only half fit to use.

How the dear creatures pitty me and how they dislike him, some of them, when they see him coming, will run away and hide themselves, Jemima Young in particular.

Many invitations and pressing I have had to stop with them at Norfolk and live with them always. As they say "do please Mr Karr go ashore and live with us always, and not go any more with that bad man".

Augusta (ed. Harriet Augusta Quintal 16) and Martha say they will hide me away and take my food to me every day until this ship is gone and then I must live with them always.

But I must say I should very much like it but the trio of Mother, Brother and Home are far greater than any other on Earth. And may God and his Mercy Bless and protect them (Mother & Brother) and give them a long and happy life.

I went on in this way until about a fortnight before we arrived at Norfolk. When one evening when I was passing Mr Levic he said I wonder at you Mr Karr. I said what for, he said where are you going, I told him, he said will you know what for, so I turned back and went to my cabin and from that time forwards you might generally find me sitting down by the Main Mast with three or four of my favourites around me playing the accordion and singing songs. One of them would be always looking out for the Cap^t and if they saw him coming used to cover me over so that he could not see me. Of course Augusta always used to sit beside me or I used to her and the others were they pleased. They generally went below at half past 8 or 9.

(e.d. In mirror hand)

Augusta stopped until last to have a kiss or two before going to bed and Martha too sometimes but that is kissing another man's sweetheart, although it was not the worse for that though. Mr Levic never tried it before, I put him to up to the test.

24th May The Queens Birthday

This is a great day with them at home, They dress up in their best clothes and actually do something all day but as nearly every day is alike (it is difficult to call it a holiday) but the difference is their putting on their best clothes and shoes. Fire off all the guns. They can sing as much as they can and in reality be as happy as they can make themselves.

Well on board here the day passed away until six in the evening quite the same as any other day. I thought everybody had forgotten it. But at that time the Cap^t began to open his eyes. Mr Gregorice and Mr Robinson came out of their cabins and began to prepare for the evening.

Mr Robson bought on the Poop a case of champagne which was drunk, I polished off one or two glasses and drank the Queen's health. The and Mr Gregorice were making Snap Dragons.

First performance was engaging nearly all of them on the Poop of course. I was sitting on the Skylight dodging the Capt.

(e.d. in mirror hand)

This was my first proximity to Augusta having my arm around her waist and she shielding me from the sight of the Capt.

The next was Snap Dragon at which some of them were bold and others all the other way. I had had some trouble to get Augusta and Kate Quintal (ed. not on any list) through the crowd to look at it but they would not touch it.

The next performance was firing off sky rockets, blue lights. At the whole of which they were all highly delighted.

Three English men were highly excited from the effects of the champagne. Old Buffet sang "We chased the buffalo on the banks of the Ohio". And Evans was in love with everybody and old Arthur Quintal was laughing fit to split himself all the time and spitting as he always does when laughing

A was telling me one day that another boy and himself were walking together one day when an argument arose between them where a persons thoughts came from, one said the Heart the other said the Head. At last it was decided they should go back and ask old John Adams. They asked him, the old man scratched his head and took some time to consider, when all at once he sang out (the thought came into my head that I would go to bed) so the old man solved the their argument.

6th June

We sighted Norfolk Island.

HMV Herald is here, I supposed she is to assist us disembarking and land the passengers. Her boat came alongside and took three or four but could not land them, the breakers being too heavy.

(ed. In mirror hand)

Augusta is very loving tonight I had lots of kisses and from Da Bard too.