

## NOTES FROM THE LIBRARY

### PHILIP FRENEAU TO PETER FRENEAU

IN the Freneau collection of the Library, there is a letter from Philip Freneau to his younger brother Peter, who lived in Charleston, South Carolina, where he edited the *City Gazette* in a partnership with Seth Paine. The letter is dated "March 1st. 180[?]"'. The year number is partly illegible, but was probably intended for 1801, the date assigned to the letter by Leary. It was evidently written after a return from Charleston, where the poet had visited Peter for several months.<sup>1</sup> His contributions to the Philadelphia *Aurora* as "Robert Slender," which had ended on November 18, 1800, were resumed on February 19, 1801. The lapse indicates the approximate period of his absence, though he mentions four months in the letter.

The letter was evidently composed in haste, probably because either the ship to carry it, or the conveyance on which the writer was to "return this morning to Jersey" was about to leave. It is written in scrawls, quite in contrast to the graceful penmanship in most of Freneau's letters. Evidently he had been visiting his relatives in New York—John Hunn, whom his sister Margaret had married, his mother, who lived with the Hunns,<sup>2</sup> and possibly his sister Mary.<sup>3</sup> The gossip is "homey"—about his three daughters and an expected fourth child, Mr. Hunn, "Peggy" (Mrs.

Hunn), his mother and "Polly" (his sister?), and one "Linchelson" (?) who had married a Ledyard relative. Like a solicitous brother, the poet sends his respects to Peter's wife and probably, other members of her family. He wishes to be remembered to Peter's partner, Seth Paine, and his good friend Judge Aedanus Burke, who was ill, and, unfortunately, not to recover. Burke died in 1802.

The feature of the letter is a list of money received from Peter and expended by Philip to pay his debts, and perhaps some of Peter's. It is not clear just how much of the \$533 was a loan. But evidently the parts for "my debt" and "To myself"—or \$395—were a brotherly loan. It seems that more than once Peter came to his improvident brother's rescue, financing his return to the sea as a shipping captain in 1802.<sup>4</sup>

At the time Freneau wrote the letter, he was in a quandary. His third newspaper venture, *The Time-Piece* (New York) had failed in 1798. With the election of Thomas Jefferson to the Presidency in the month before, his interest in politics had waned. He wanted to write, of course, but could not make a living as either a poet or editor. He was unfitted for farming. And so, in a ship owned

<sup>1</sup> Lewis Leary, *That Rascal Freneau* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1941), pp. 315-317, 399, note 43.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 247, 317.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 332.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 320.

by Peter, he resumed his old trade in 1802, as Captain Freneau. This was the goal, "wherever or to whatever the devil shall see fit to drive me." His last voyage as a shipmaster was evidently in 1807, to the Canary Islands, Charleston, and New York.<sup>5</sup>

New York, March 1st. 180[?]

Dear Brother,

Having been here a day or two, and finding the Brig Echo, Capt. Webb, to sail for Charleston, I take the opportunity of dropping you a line by him. I left all well at home last Thursday, and the place &c. as well as could be expected after my four months absence. I have been and shall be for some time busy in repairing old fences, and making new ones, a new garden, and some other small improvements as far as I prudently can with the money you let me have.

Helen goes to school here, the other two girls are at home, but agnes [*sic*] will come here next Month for the same purpose, for a while. Nelly I find is forward with another one, which is expected in a few weeks. Thus are new cares and vexations coming on, but still they must be got through with at some date. Probably I shall have to embark on some new expedition or plan before long, wherever or to whatever the devil shall see fit to drive me: But I shall attempt nothing, if I can avoid it before I see you here, in April or May, as you promised.—Mr. Napier accepted the 300 dollar Bill of Ex-

change, which I left at the Bank—  
The statement of that and the 233 doll. are from the Manhattan Bank, with the expences due as follows—

233 dols. paid for advertising in  
your Paper  
300 Bill of Exchange

533 - - -

Paid out to Stewart, my debt,	
which was - - -	100 dols.
To Bush do. - - -	118 - - -
Your balance due	
to Hunn [?] - - -	39
To Greenleaf - - -	98
To myself - - -	157
	<hr/>
	512
To myself	20
	<hr/>
	532

So that what I have now left is 157 dollars after all these payments have been made, which I will turn to the best uses I can: Part of it I leave in Mr. Hunns hands, out of which Mamma and Polly can have occasional supplies, as they have already of some small stores to make them easy. - - -

We all hope You will not fail of coming in the spring; and Nelly will be glad of Miss Eliza's company as long as she pleases, should she come

<sup>5</sup> Mary Austin, *Philip Freneau, Poet of the Revolution* (New York, 1901), p. 204, Philip Freneau to James Madison, January 12, 1815. Leary has evidently overlooked this item, as he (p. 323) has it that Freneau ended his "career as a seaman" in 1804.

with You, and the Same here at Mr. Hunns. - - -

I return this morning to Jersey. Mr. Hunn, Peggy, Mamma and Polly all desire their love to You - - - My best respects to Mrs Freneau and Miss Eliza with her Mother and family - - - remember me also to M<sup>r</sup> Paine[?] and Judge Burke, who I hope continues on his recovery.

May I expect to have a line from you by Capt. Pelón[?]. C. C. Lintelson[?] from the Gazette[?] has spent two or three days with me at Mt. Pleasant. Tho', not acquainted with you he desired me to have his services sent to You / He married you know Helen Ledyard, and is therefore a sort of connexion - - -

Yours affectionately

Philip Freneau

PHILIP MARSH

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### ERASMUS ON PEACE

*The Complaint of Peace by Erasmus*, edited by William James Hirten. Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints.

THE function of the humanist scholar in the modern world has not yet been made clear enough. In the opinion of many he exercises no function at all, has long since abdicated his once commanding position, and has been superseded by the more demonstrative proponents of science and materialism. Seemingly he has no longer any proper status or prestige. He has crept into his little private tower, encrusted himself with the generations of silence,

and shaken his head dolefully at the least mention of contemporary civilization. Were the ivory less thick and easier of penetration, newspapers and radios, even human beings, might visit him. As it is, many wonder if the old fellow is still alive there within the walls, whether all day long he still translates, from so-called dead tongues, knowledge that will be forever an end in itself. Some believe the scholar has died.

Mr. Hirten tells us that Erasmus still lives, that through his less well-known translator of the English Renaissance, Thomas Paynell, he speaks to us today. Certainly Mr. Hirten himself speaks to us through both these great scholars. It is literally true that he has made available to the most materialistic age in the history of the world the most humanistic thought of all time upon the problems of war and peace.

*Querela Pacis, The Complaint of Peace*, was probably composed during the same year Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* was published, 1516. It did not appear, however, until the following year. The entire history of the publication along with a rationale of the work and a bibliography of previous English editions, which are incomplete and textually inaccurate, is contained in the excellent introduction to the text. There are also in this part of the book a brief history of Paynell's life, some thoughtful remarks on his style as a translator, and an application of Erasmus' principles to present times. The text itself is

presented in two versions. The original is a facsimile of the copy in the Folger Library of Paynell's translation, one of the two copies in the world. It will appeal greatly to pre-Shakespearean scholars, but we must warn them that the close spacing of the words and the wide spacing of the letters constitutes sometimes a strain on the eye. The preface is nearly illegible, perhaps because of printing difficulties with the application of ink. But the original text is otherwise accurate and reliable. Of greater appeal to the average person is the also accurate modern English version of the text which the editor presents, his own extremely careful modernization of Paynell's sixteenth-century translation.

In the preface to the book, we read: ". . . the peace of this world is rather a discord than a peace." This book should be read by all people in colleges and universities, by all ministers and public men, and—most of all—by all delegates to the conferences of the United Nations. This is a book such as one might wish the entire world would read and take to heart.

RICHARD E. AMACHER

### MODERN WRITERS AT WORK

AUTHORS' deletions may often be of considerable interest, particularly to those concerned with the craft of writing. By considering deletions and changes, one sees the author's mind at work, one sees his self-criticism func-

tioning. Manuscripts or typescripts make possible such a study of the author at work.

A recent presentation to the Rutgers Library consists mainly of contemporary authors' typescripts, many of which are autographed. Most of the typescripts are of short stories and articles. The donor of this material is a Rutgers alumnus, Robert Kriendler of the Class of 1936, whose collection includes also a few manuscript items, as well as the typescript scenario of *The Informer*, adapted by Dudley Nichols for cinema production. Among the authors represented are Lillian Hellman, Damon Runyon, Frank Sullivan, Edna Ferber, Stephen Vincent Benet, John O'Hara, Paul de Kruif, John Gunther, and Ellery Queen.

Returning to a discussion of deletions, one finds often that the cliché or outworn phrase is discarded when the author uses his blue pencil. A few deletions of this sort gleaned from the typescripts of Cronin, Ferber, and Gunther are: "heart sick," "when all is said and done," "the jumping off place," "and above all."

"My God!" is stricken out of one typescript, and one wonders whether Cronin preferred to eliminate profanity or whether the reaction of the reader was anticipated. It is possible that the periodical which was to print the story desired the change. Concerning the reasons behind some deletions one can merely speculate.

Paul de Kruif finds himself indulging in alliteration and chooses to edit

"formerly fatal" and to drop "marvelous" from the phrase "marvelous mercy." Edna Ferber avoids "at once distracted and distrait."

What seems at the first writing to be a felicitous phrase may sound much too clever and forced when one revises. Examples of such deletions in the typescripts are found when O. O. McIntyre strikes out "got his teeth into the business of living earlier" and "The pin-neat kitchen shone with the happiness of simplicity." Cronin revises and omits "I'm the uncrowned king of inebriate homes." Ellery Queen decides against including "leaving a chastened poet behind her" and "in a fluttery way."

Gunther apparently thinks he has made a statement which is overly strong and open to challenge. He deletes "and at the time there was not a single socialist or communist in the Spanish government."

And thus the authors' pencils con-

tinue to delete, to change, to rearrange. "Libertine and drunkard," "pale and breathless," "hammer out," "nothing would do but"—none of these go into print.

One of the most interesting deletions occurs at the end of a short story, and one is glad to see MacKinlay Kantor commit the following to oblivion: "The long arm of coincidence—the arm and the man—the many arms and the many men."

Which of these typescripts are original first drafts and which are later drafts one cannot be sure, but through almost all of them one observes, even in these comparatively small and superficial revisions which have been cited, that there is self-criticism at work. A study of such conscious control by contemporary writers can be interesting and profitable. Mr. Kriendler's gift of typescripts makes such a study possible.

JOHN S. BARNES