LIFE AND TIMES

OF

AARON BURR,

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL IN THE ARMY OF THE REVOLUTION,
UNITED STATES SENATOR, VICE-PRESIDENT OF
THE UNITED STATES, ETC.

BY

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ENLARGED EDITION.

WITH NUMEROUS APPENDICES, CONTAINING NEW AND INTERESTING INFORMATION.

VOL. I.



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the call. But on an afternoon, just before he left us, he said to me, "My son, I must see Burr before I leave the city. I went through the woods with him under Arnold. I stood by his side on the Plains of Abram, and I have not seen him since the morning on which Montgomery fell. It was a heavy snow-storm. Montgomery had fallen. The British troops were advancing towards the dead body; and little Burr was hastening from the fire of the enemy, up to his knees in snow, with Montgomery's body on his shoulders! Do you wonder I wish to see him?"

I conducted my father to Col. Burr's office, and we subsequently spent part of an evening together at my house in Beekman street. My father was a volunteer chaplain under Arnold, and, being friends at college, he and Burr were much together during that fearful campaign.

G. Spring.

The Rev. Dr. Van Pelt informed me that Burr, on his death-bed, said that he was close to General Montgomery when he fell, and declared that if he had been in command, he would have gone on and taken Quebec.

V.

ARNOLD'S EXPEDITION TO QUEBEC IN 1775.

WE have some further light upon this perilous and romantic expedition in the diary of a private, named James Melwin, which has been published for private circulation by a club of this city. The most interesting passages of this diary are the tollowing:

Cambridge, September 13, 1775.

This day being Wednesday, marched from Cambridge, in Capt. Dearborn's* company, destined for Quebec, and were to embark at Newburyport for Kennebec river. We lodged in Medford.

Sept. 14. Received one month's pay, and marched to Lynn; lodged at Porter's tavern.

Sept. 16. Marched to Newburyport; the company were quartered in a rope-walk.

Sept. 17. Sunday—the detachment went to meeting.

Sept. 18. P. M.—Embarked on board a schooner of seventy-five tons; the whole were embarked in eleven vessels.

Sept. 19. About 10 o'clock sailed out of the harbor, and stood on and off, waiting for one of the vessels which got aground, and not getting off, the men were put on board the other vessels, and we sailed in the afternoon, with a fair wind and pleasant weather; at night it grew thick and foggy, with rain, thunder, and lightning, and blowed fresh.

Sept. 20. In the morning, foggy and wet; lay to part of the night; at daybreak two of our fleet were in sight, and we made sail and stood in for the shore. Blowed fresh—we made Seguin.

Sept. 23. Arrived at Fort Western. One James McCormick shot Sergeant Bishop.

Sept. 25. McCormick was found guilty.

Sept. 26. He was brought to the gallows and reprieved.

Sept. 27. Got our provisions into batteaux, and went about four miles.

Sept. 28. Proceeded up the river and found the water shoal, which caused a rapid current, and we were obliged often to get out and wade, pulling the boat after us.

Sept. 30. Arrived at Fort Halifax, where was the first carrying place; the land here is better than that near the sea. We carried over our batteaux and provisions; the carrying place is opposite the fort.

^{*} Afterward Major-General and Secretary of War.

OCTOBER, 1775.

Oct'r 4. Went up to Bumazees Ripples, and came to Norrigewalk. The carriage-place is about a mile in length. We had oxen to haul over our provision. Our batteaux were caulked. We were now to take our leave of houses and settlements, of which we saw no more, except one Indian wigwam, till we came among the French, in Canada.

Oct'r 9. Arrived at the great carrying-place, where was a log house built for the sick.

Oct'r 10. Mr. Spring,* our chaplain, went to prayers; we went to the first pond, four miles from the river; it blowed hard, and one of the men was killed by the falling of a tree.

Oct'r 11. Crossed the first pond about three-quarters of a mile over; here is plenty of fine trout.

Oct'r 12. There was a log house built on the first carryingplace, between the first and second ponds.

Oct'r 13. Crossed the carrying-place from this pond to another; the carrying-place is about one mile over.

Oct'r 14. Crossed the pond about half a mile over, and got over the carrying-place about one and a half mile in length; the woods are cedar and hemlock.

Oct'r 16. Crossed the third pond, about one and a half miles over. We got over the fourth carrying-place, four and a half miles in length; part of the way over a boggy swamp, overgrown with white moss and bushes, which seemed half withered; found it difficult getting over our batteaux and barrels, sinking knee deep in moss and mud. We launched our batteaux into a small creek which enters the Dead river.

Oct'r 17. Went eighteen miles up the Dead river.

Oct'r 18. Overtook Col. Green† and his party about twenty-five miles up Dead river; had orders to put ourselves in a defensive condition.

Oct'r 19. Had orders to march, and went about five miles.

^{*} Father of the Rev. Gardner Spring, D. D., Pastor of the Brick Church.

[†] The hero of Red Bank, who, with his command, were afterward surerised and murdered by a party of Refugees, near Pine's Bridge, West shester county, May 13, 1784.

Oct'r 20. Rained all last night and this day.

Oct'r 21. Marched through hideous woods and mountains for the most part, but sometimes on the banks of the river, which is very rapid.

Oct'r 23. Captain Handshill and sixty men went forward with ten days' provision; about forty sick and weak men went back with only two or three days' provision. The river here is narrow and excessive rapid.

Oct'r 27. Crossed the second carrying-place, three-quarters of a mile, then crossed second pond, then third carrying-place and third pond, then fourth carrying-place and fourth pond, and encamped.

Oct'r 28. Came down Chadeur river in a birch canoe, and went to fetch back a batteau to carry the men across a river, but could not overtake them. The company were ten miles, wading knee deep among alders, &c., the greatest part of the way, and came to a river which had overflown the land. We stopped some time not knowing what to do, and at last were obliged to wade through it, the ground giving way under us at every step. We got on a little knoll of land and went ten miles, where we were obliged to stay, night coming on, and we were all cold and wet; one man fainted in the water with fatigue and cold, but was helped along. We had to wade into the water and chop down trees, fetch the wood out of the water after dark to make a fire to dry ourselves; however, at last we got a fire, and after eating a mouthful of pork, laid ourselves down to sleep round the fire, the water surrounding us close to our heads; if it had rained hard it would have overflown the place we were in. Capt. Goodrich's company had only three-quarters of a pound of pork, each man, and a barrel of flour among the whole. They ordered the batteau to proceed down the river with the flour, and when they came to the place above-mentioned, waded through. They came to the knoll of land before mentioned, and made a fire to dry themselves, being a most perished. After some time they marched, and found the difficulty increasing, being informed they must return the way they came; being night, they camped on the dryest spot they could find.

Oct'r 29. Being Sunday; crossed a river after much fatigue and loss of time, in a birch canoe, and then waded to another river, about forty rods from the first, which we crossed last night. I lay at a bark house, and this morning went in the canoe to ferry over the people over the two rivers above mentioned, leaving my provision behind, as did Captain Dearborn and the three other officers. After we got over these rivers, Captain Dearborn, steering by a bad compass, went wrong about two miles, the company following, and we went back again, then went two or three miles to a little bark house, where I had left my provision, and on coming there found that our provision was stolen by Captain Morgan's* company. Goodrich's company came to the lower end of Chadeur pond expecting to find their batteau with the flour, but were disappointed.

Oct'r 30. I set out in a birch bark canoe with Captain Dearborn and Captain Ayres. We proceeded to the lower end of the pond, where Captain Dearborn left the canoe, and Captain Ayres and I proceeded down Chadeur river, about three miles, and came to a riply place, which was very dangerous, the rocks standing up all over the river. Here a batteau was stove, with four men, and one man drowned, named George Innis. I got safe down this place, and from bad to worse; proceeded till night, and encamped with the company. Goodrich's company set out early, though on empty stomachs, and marched about ten miles in hopes to overtake their batteau with the flour, but coming to a small creek, they found an advertisement set up, informing them that their batteau was stove and the flour lost, and the men with difficulty having saved their lives. This was melancholy news to them, having eaten scarcely anything for several days, and having waded through ice and water, and were a great way from any inhabitants, and knew not how far it was. They agreed to part, and the heartiest to push forward as fast as they could.

Oct'r 31. This day I took my pack and went by land, al.

^{*} The hero of the "Cowpens."

the way, to inhabitants. I was not well, having the flux We went twenty-one miles. Goodrich's company marched three miles and were overtaken by Captain Smith, who informed them that Captain Goodrich had left two quarters of a dog for them. They stopped and sent for the meat, but the men returned without finding it; however, some of them killed another dog* which belonged to us, which probably saved some of their lives. Captain Ward's company killed another dog.

NOVEMBER, 1775.

Nov'r 1. Continued unwell; this day I eat the last of my provision; I kept with the company, and we went twenty miles.

Nov'r 2. Traveled four miles; I shot a small bird called a sedee, and a squirrel, which I lived upon this day. About noon we met some Frenchmen with cattle for our army, and some meal in a canoe. I had a small piece of meat and bread given me; yesterday my messmates gave away victuals to strangers but refused me, though they knew I had mine stolen from me. This evening, to our great joy, we arrived at the first French house, where was provisions ready for us. The first victuals I got was some boiled rice, which I bought of the Indians, giving one shilling and four pence for about a pint and a half. Here we were joined by about seventy or eighty Indians, all finely ornamented in their way with broaches, bracelets, and other trinkets, and their faces painted. I had gone barefoot these two or three days, and wore my feet sore.

Nov'r 5. Sunday—marched about twelve miles. Our Colonel went forward and got beef killed for us every ten or twelve miles, and served us potatoes instead of bread. I stood

^{*} This dog belonged to Captain Dearborn, and was a great favorite. My dog was very large and a great favorite. I gave him up to several of Captain Goodrich's company. They carried him to their company, and killed and divided him among those who were suffering most severely with hunger. They are every part of him, not excepting his entrails."—Letter Gen. Dearborn to the Rev. William Allen.

sentry over one Flood, who was whipped for stealing Captain Dearborn's pocket book. This was at St. Mary's.

Nov'r 6. Marched twenty miles; very bad traveling, as it was all the way to Quebec. Twelve miles was through woods, in the night, mid leg in mud and snow. I traveled the whole day without eating, and could not get any house to lay in, but lodged in a barn all night.

Nov'r 7. Marched fifteen miles; snowed all day. My money being gone I could get nothing to eat till night, when

there was an ox killed.

Nov'r 8. Marched six miles and came to Point Levi, on the

river St. Lawrence, opposite Quebec.

Nov'r 9. Our people took a prisoner, who was a midshipman.* Continued at Point Levi; kept guard along the river side, making scaling ladders and collecting canoes to cross the river; the enemy having broken all the boats they could find.

Nov'r 13. In the evening crossed St. Lawrence at the mill above Point Levi, and landed at Wolfe's cove. I went back twice to fetch over the people, and stayed till day. The town was alarmed by our Colonel firing at a boat on the river. We went to Major Caldwell's house, about two miles from the city, where we were quartered; a whole company having only one small room.

Nov'r 14. One of our sentries was taken by the enemy, which alarmed us; we expected they were come to give us battle, and the whole detachment marched within musket

* "The boat soon struck the bank, and a midshipman, a lad named McKenzie, brother to the captain of the frigate, sprang ashore. The tide ebbing at the time, the boat's crew were ordered to shove off, and to go higher up to a deeper landing-place. While obeying this order they discovered the Americans on the bank above, and immediately pulled off shore, leaving their officer to his fate. Morgan, frustrated in the design he had formed to surprise and capture the boat's crew, now opened a fire upon them. The midshipman, comprehending at once his situation, plunged into the river, in the hope to regain his boat; but being deserted by the boat's crew, who pulled out still further from the reach of danger, and noticing the balls which now struck the water around him in fearful proximity to his head, he turned toward the shore, and otherwise signified his villingness to surrender."—Life of Gen. Morgan, p. 79.

shot of the walls, but saw none to oppose us; but when we were turned to go back they fired several cannon shots at us

without doing any damage.

Nov'r 19. I was employed all the fore part of last night in butclering for the army, and about four in the morning got on our march and went to Point aux Trembles, about twenty-six miles above Quebec. We kept guard at the river Caroche.

DECEMBER, 1775.

Dec'r 5. The detachment marched on their way to Quebec. We were quartered in a nunnery, near the town, but it was wanted for a hospital, and we went over the river St. Charles, where we continued.

Dec'r 10. Sunday.—Busy making scaling ladders, &c.

Dec'r 25. Had orders to give our opinion whether to scale or not.

Dec'r 26. Turned out to storm the town, but it was too light.

Dee'r 31. Sunday.—About four in the morning, were mustered in order to storm the town; it snowed and stormed and was very dark. Our company had not timely notice of the attack, which occasioned us to be too late, for when the firing began we had a mile and a half to march. We made all possible haste, and met Colonel Arnold going back wounded. I was on guard in St. Roque that night, and went forward with the main body, and was not with the company. The company went beyond Palace Gate, the enemy firing briskly at them from the walls, and killed two or three. The enemy sallied out, and they surrendered, as did all the detachment, except some few who made their escape. We were put into a monastery, among the friars; at night we had some biscuit distributed among us.

JANUARY, 1776.—PRISONER IN QUEBEC.

Jan'y 1. We had a straw bed between two, and a blanket,

each man, served to us. We had some porter given us. Snowed in the morning.

Jan'y 3. We were ordered to give a list of our names, age, where we were born, and what regiment we belonged to. Snowed in the morning.

Jan'y 4. All the old countrymen were called into an other room and examined. Snowed in the morning.

Jan'y 5. They were called for again, and made to take

arms for the king until the 31st May.

Jan'y 9. Very dark weather and snowed. Some more taken with the small pox, and we expect it will be a general disorder, for we are very thick, nasty, and lousy. Our living is salt pork, biscuit, rice, and butter, and a sufficiency allowed if we were not checked in our weight, by one Dewey, who is appointed our quartermaster-sergeant, to deal out our provision; and instead of being our friend, proves our greatest enemy, defrauding us of great part of our provision. We have not above three ounces of pork a day, and not half-pint of rice and two biscuits aday.

Jan'y 10. Fair, but excessive cold. I went to the hospital,

having the small pox.

Jan'y 18. Cloudy and cold; several taken with the small pox; went to the hospital; some of our men's clothes brought into town from our army, but none for our company. I am now got almost well, having had the small pox lightly. A Frenchman being at the point of death, the nuns came and read over him, afterward the priest came in, then they fetched in a table, covered with a white cloth, and lighted two wax candles, about three feet long, and set them on the table. The priest put on a white robe over his other garments, and the nuns kneeled down, and the priest stood and read a sentence, and then the nuns a sentence, and so they went on some time; then the priest prayed by himself; then the nuns, and then the priest again; then they read altogether a spell, and finally the priest alone; then the priest stroked the man's face, and then they took away their candles and tables, &c., and the man died.

Jan'y 20. Dewey complained of fifteen of our men who

had agreed to fight their way out; two of them were put in irons.

Jan'y 21. Cloudy and cold; cleared in the afternoon. We were ordered to make a return of all the tradesmen among us. About this time two of our company, who were listed into the king's service, made their escape out of town. This day I came out of the hospital.

Jan'y 31. The time seems very long; no employment. Nothing heard or seen but playing at cards, swearing, and some playing away all their allowance of victuals; some employ themselves in making wooden spoons, little boxes, &c.; cloudy.

FEBRUARY, 1776.

Feb'y 10. An excessive bad snow storm; some sentries froze dead.

Feb'y 15. Clear weather. One of our men named Parrot, put in irons for calling one of the emigrants a tory. Our army opened a battery.

Feb'y 16. All the old countrymen brought into prison

again, because six of them deserted last night.

Feb'y 24. Various reports concerning us; some say we shall be sent to England and sold as slaves to some island; others say that we shall be sent to Boston and exchanged; others say that we shall certainly be hanged; but we are in hopes that our people will release us by taking the town.

March, 1776.

March 1.—Clear and cold; one Brown put in irons for answering one of the sentries who abused him.

March 13.—We were removed to the goal, near St. John's gate, which is bomb-proof. Here we have the liberty of a yard of about a quarter of an acre.

March 17. Sunday, pleasant weather. The guard set over as are old Frenchmen and boys, who are very saucy, telling

as we shall be hanged; pointing their bayonets at us; threatening to shoot us for opening a window, or any such trifle.

March 21. Clear and cold. The French guard of boys and old men are very saucy—threatening us daily.

March 26. Last night one of our men escaped out of goal and got clear. About this time a plan was laid for our enlargement, and we prepared to break out and make our escape, by seizing the guard. Clear and cold.

March 31. Sunday. Snowed; our scheme found out; the sentry hearing some noise in the cellar, search was made, and some suspicion raised which might have passed off had not one of our men, John Hall, discovered the whole affair, and all the sergeants and corporals were put in irons.

APRIL, 1776.

April 1. Fair weather. This morning the guard turned out and fired some time before the goal; then the alarm bell rang, and the cannon on the walls were fired in order to draw our army near the walls that they might cut them off with grape shot. This day we were almost all in irons.

April 3. Canonading on both sides. Our army are erecting a battery at Point Levi. Cloudy, and rained in the afternoon.

April 14. Sunday. Major McKenzie came in and took Captain Morgan's company out of irons. Clear in the morning; cloudy almost all day.

April 15. This day the Yorkers' time was out, and they wanted to go home, but were compelled to stay.

April 17. Had a week's allowance of fresh beef, which had been killed three or four months, of which they boasted much, telling us it was more than our army could get. Windy and cold.

April 22 The time seems long; all in irons; though most of us pull them off at night. I never lay but two nights with them on.

April 28. Some of our officers tried to make their escape, but were discovered and put in irons. Fair weather.

MAY, 1776.

May 6. Pleasant. About sunrise the town was alarmed, and three ships came up, landed some troops, and sailed up the river. The troops marched out at noon, and our army retreated, leaving a few sick men behind them, who were brought into town.*

May 7. Gen. Carleton came in and ordered our irons to be

taken off. Pleasant day.

May 10. Two riflemen were taken out of goal; we don't know on what terms. Same day, two Jersey dumpling eaters were brought in; they were found among the bushes, not having tried to make their escape, being too heavy laden with dumplings and pork, a knapsack full of dumplings, and a quantity of flour. Fair in the morning; rained at night.

May 27. Ten ships arrived with troops.

JUNE, 1776.

June 1. The Brunswickers arrived; said to be six thousand.
 June 4. A royal salute fired, being the king's birth-day.
 Cloudy.

June 5. Pleasant weather. Gov. Carleton came in to us and offered to send us home on condition not to bear arms again.

June 8. Fair weather. Hear that there are three thousand of our men at Sartigan.

June 9. Fair weather. Sunday. Hear that they landed three thousand men, and our army defeated them.

June 10. Fair weather. Hear that two thousand of our men were surrounded and taken.

June 13. Fair weather. Hear they have taken two hun-

• General Thomas, who was appointed to succeed Montgomery, arrived early in May; but Carleton having received reinforcements under Burgoyne, the Americans were obliged to make a hasty retreat, leaving their stores and sick behind. The latter were kindly treated, and finally sent home.—Lossing's Field Book of the Revolution, vol. i. p. 202.

dred of our men, who are to be sent to Halifax. Heard that our men had sunk the Commodore.

June 17. Fair weather. Hear that our army have killed and taken four thousand Dutchmen.

June 19. A thunder storm, with hail stones as big as 2 oz. balls; a young woman was killed by the lightning.

June 23. Sunday. Fair weather. Hear that our men drove the king's troops.

June 24. Fair. Hear that our army have retreated out of Canada.

June 25. Fair weather. Hear that they have brought three hundred Jersey blues, prisoners, to town.

June 29. Fair weather. Hear that peace is proclaimed; also, that they have killed four thousand of our men and taken ten thousand, and that General Washington is killed.

June 30. Sunday. We hear there is a French fleet come in at Philadelphia, of seventy sail. Two ships came up to Quebec.

JULY, 1776.

July 4. Fair weather. We hear that they are waiting for some officers that they have taken, to come here, and then we shall be exchanged. Two prisoners brought in. Thunder at night.

July 5. Rainy morn; clear afternoon. One of our men was so indiscreet as to pull out one of the iron bars, in sight of the sentry. When he was relieved he fetched the officer of the guard and showed him what had been done, and search being made, some more were found out, which caused much suspicion of us all. The prisoners brought in last night in form us that the Indians scalped many of our soldiers, some of them alive; but that General Carleton, to his great honor, has refused to pay these murdering fiends for any more scalps, but will pay them the same reward for every prisoner.

July 6. Fair weather. Saw three ships working in. The man who pulled out the grate was informed of, so that we

hope it will have no ill effect.

July 7. Sunday. Some showers in the morning. The man who pulled out the grate beat the man who informed of him, and he complained to the Provost. We hear that they have sent an express to the Governor, informing him we have made another attempt to break out; we have also a report that our officers had attempted to set the place they were confined in on fire. This, as well as many more reports, are not worth belief.

July 11. Fine morning; rained in the afternoon and night. Hear that Col. McLane is taken, and two thousand of their men, crossing the lake, and that there is a French fleet coming here. We also hear that the German troops are to return home.

July 12. Rained almost all day. Hear that we are to sail for New York in less than ten days.

July 14. Sunday. Fair weather. We hear we are to embark to-morrow.

July 15. Fair and moderate. Hear the Governor is expected in town soon, and then it will be known what will be done with us.

July 17. Showery cold. We have bread served to us, instead of our allowance of butter.

July 18. Fair and temperate. Hear that Col. McLane is come to town, and that the Governor is expected every minute.

July 19. Cloudy and cold; the weather is so cold that the Canadians do not expect a good crop of corn. It is so cold as to wear a great coat. We hear that Col. McLane says we shall not be sent home.

July 20. Fair weather. Connor, one of the prisoners who came into goal last, was taken and put in some place of confinement, and, as we suppose, put in irons for talking impertinently to the Captain of the Provost guard.

July 21. Rainy weather, with thunder. Hear that we are to go home very soon; heard from our officers, who gave us encouragement. We have also a report that the French, Spaniards and Prussians are at war with Great Britain, and that there is a large fleet in the bay of St. Lawrence.

July 22. Fair weather. Saw a ship sail out. This aftermoon the Governor arrived from the army, and was saluted with fifteen guns. This gives us hope that we shall be sent home.

July 23. Cloudy morning; fair all day. One of our company is out of his right mind.

July 24. Rainy weather for part of the day. We hear we are to be sent to Montreal and exchanged.

July 25. Fair. Hear we are not to go home.

July 26. Some rain. We hear that the Governor has sent to let our officers know that within three days he will appoint a day when to send us home. Saw a brig and a ship come in.

July 27. Fair weather. We hear that the Governor has let our officers know that he will send us home on the 4th or 5th of August. This day we saw the French priest going to visit a sick person. He was attended by about twenty people, as follows: first a man goes ringing a little hand bell, then two men or boys, carrying two lanterns, with lighted candles on poles, about ten feet long; then comes the priest, under a canopy, supported by two men; it is like the teaster of a bed. The priest is dressed in white linen robes over his black clothes, and things as heavy as boards tied to his knees, and hang dangling and knocking against his shins. They have crosses on these two things. After the priest follow the friends and children of the sick person, and any others that happen to be going that way who think they are doing good to join in with the rest. Every one that hears the bell is obliged to kneel down while they pass by. The priest has a great cross upon his breast, and a string of wooden beads hanging by his side. The people all have these beads when they go to church, to help them remember their prayers. They also use the same ceremony when they go to a burying, and have choristers singing before the corpse.

July 28. Fair weather. This day, Mr. Murray, barrack master, came in and told us we were to sail in a week. We now begin to believe there is something in it, though we have had so many different reports that we can scarce believe any thing we hear. We are all to have a shirt a piece given us.

July 29. Rainy weather. Sias, the man who is out of his senses, grows worse, talking of killing some of the people, &c. July 31. Fair weather. We hear a report that our army has reëntered Canada and retaken Fort St. Johns. We have been seven months in prison to-day.

AUGUST, 1776.

August 2. Fair weather. The news to-day is, that our people have wounded the German General mortally, and taken five hundred prisoners at Lake Champlain. We have it confirmed that we are to go on board the vessel on Sunday next.

August 3. Fair weather. Hear that our sick men, at the hospital, are to go on board this evening. We expect to go to-morrow morning.

August 4. Sunday. Fair weather.

August 5. Fair weather. This afternoon we have each of us a shirt given to us, and thirty-five of our men were sent on board, after signing the paper.

VI.

FROM THE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN AARON BURR AND HIS WIFE.

MRS. BURR TO AARON BURR.—Albany, March 25, 1783. "Some think absence tends to increase affection; the greater part that it wears it away. I believe neither, but that it only tends to prove how far the heart is capable of loving; or