

May 1949

A Letter From Richard Henry Dana

James Humphry, III

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.colby.edu/cq>

Recommended Citation

Colby Library Quarterly, series 2, no.10, May 1949, p.171-172

This Back Matter is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ Colby. It has been accepted for inclusion in Colby Quarterly by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Colby. For more information, please contact mfkelly@colby.edu.

Colby Library Quarterly 171

“WORDS ONCE SPOKEN BY ANNE. . . .”

CONCERNING the holy state of leisure, let it be said that herein lies the soul's true joy. . . .

To thy friends appear not to be busy, for this is sin. . . .

Withhold thy presence from social functions, for this is vanity and death to the spirit. . . .

Before thy door maintain a lion, that the hours of thy day may not suffer interruption. . . .

Order thy life . . . that at the end it may be said of thee “He found zest in life. . . .”

From *Letters of Annie Oakes Huntington*
(Portland, The Anthoensen Press, 1947, page 99),
a copy of which was recently presented to the Colby College Library.



A LETTER FROM RICHARD HENRY DANA

By JAMES HUMPHRY, III

THE February issue of the *Library Quarterly* announced the acquisition of an autograph letter of Richard Henry Dana—a letter that accompanied the first edition of Dana's *Two Years Before the Mast* presented to us by Mr. Philo C. Calhoun. The letter reads as follows:

115 Jewry St. [London]
Saturday [186-]

My dear Colonel

Mrs. Dana is indignant that I hesitated about the kind offer of a drive to Kew with yourself and Mrs. Adams tomorrow afternoon. I did so from a notion of *duty* to see the Zoological Gardens, for which we have a Sunday ticket.

But, on reflection, we both think a drive with Col. and Mrs. Adams

172 Colby Library Quarterly

into the country will be more agreeable. So, if you are still of a mind for the drive, we will be in at 3 o'clock tomorrow; and if you change your plan, we will go elsewhere, if you do not come for us.

Yours very truly
R. H. Dana jr]

Col. C. F. Adams jr

In announcing the acquisition of this letter, this *Quarterly* asked whether the recipient, Colonel C. F. Adams, Jr., was Charles Francis Adams, Secretary of the Navy in President Hoover's cabinet and great-grandson of John Quincy Adams. The answer is no. It is now clear that the letter was written to Charles Francis Adams (1835-1915), who studied law, after he graduated from Harvard, in the office of Richard Henry Dana, Sr., and who during the Civil War served for five years in the militia. He was a Colonel when the war ended, but was mustered out in June 1865 with the rank of a Brigadier-General. After this, he spent eleven months in Europe (1865-1866), and it was during his stay in London that he received the letter from Dana.

The author of *Two Years Before the Mast* was some twenty years Adams' senior. The fact that he addressed Adams as Colonel instead of Brigadier-General is probably explained by the fact that the news of the latter's promotion (just a few months before the two men met in London) had not yet reached England.

Dana and Adams, in spite of the difference in their ages, had much in common. Both were Americans, both were Harvard graduates, both were lawyers, and both were authors of repute. In later years, the writer of the letter now at Colby was the subject of an excellent two-volume biography written by the recipient of the letter. In 1900 Adams completed a life of his father, the distinguished statesman, Charles Francis Adams (1807-1886), the son of John Quincy Adams (1767-1848), sixth president of the United States, and grandson of John Adams (1735-1826), the second president.