

Letter No 43

Singapore, 10 Feb. 1837

Revere Balestier to his Aunt Harriett

My dear Aunt,

Your letters by the *Sachem* came here in quite a short passage which made a quite happy & a short time before we received by Mr. & Mrs. Travelli the box of books and letters you sent us out. Here we live on the same routine of life one day is the same with the other. Lately we have had quite a house full of visitors. So many that we were obliged to make me a bed on a couch in one of the parlors. I do not know whether my mother has given you a description of our house but it is a very large one with seven & a half acres of land attached to it, it has two parlors[sic] and a large hall or sitting room & six bedrooms. We have had a son of Mr. Tuckerman, the minister at large in Boston. He came here in the Ship *Emily Taylor* of which he was supercargo. He left here a day or two ago in the *Water Witch*, an opium vessel for China. By this vessel I send you a purse from one of the Chinese junks. Whenever they arrive here they have a sort of fair on board at which they sell all sorts of things. It is a singular sight to go on board of them & see almost all the nations of the world from the well dressed European to the half naked Malay . The Chinese New Year is just over & a grand time they have had of it. For fifteen days they and all other natives are allowed to gamble as much as they think fit and so every shop is a gambling house from the richest to the poorest. Indeed such is the universal desire to gamble that carpenters and other artisans will make things much cheaper for you to get money for this great feast & I think it is excusable in them for they are unlike the Mohamedans and other natives as they have no Sunday or any day of rest in the year besides their New Year. If you go to see them on a New Years two things they will force on you tea & sweet meats and very often arrack.

This latter, arrack, has on them but little more effect than wine on us. Indeed they will take a glass of Brandy and drink it down without its affecting them in the least.

Give my love to all our friends &

believe me

very affectionately your nephew      JWR Balestier