

hollowed out "Oh non, c'est impossible, nous sommes en Guerre!"

Babs sends a kiss to Grand M. and Grand P. He can walk along famously now.

Goodbye dear dear Mother. I long to hear from you again.

BOUYOUK DÉRÉ, *June 14th 1801.*

MY VERY DEAR FATHER,

You can have no idea of the pleasure your letter and my Mother's from Athens gave us; You know I was always against the Formatori, and I remember you did not admire the idea of them; so I feel the greatest comfort at your approbation of their work. After having been at such an expence it is certainly very pleasing to hear things are done in so superior and masterly a stile; I really now do not feel to grudge them. Your letter put Elgin into the greatest glee, he was quite charmed at your entering so heartily into his cause; your visit would undoubtedly renovate the Artists and make them work with fresh spirit—Elgin is going immediately to set about getting the proper Firman for Minerva's Temple. I shall write you word if it succeeds.

But now my Dearest Father prepare to hear with *extasy* what I am going to tell you! Captain Briggs, Commander of the *Salamine* Brigg has at this moment on board, one piece of Porphyry¹ 4 foot and a half long, & 3 foot and $\frac{1}{2}$ round.

¹ Porphyry.—The term Porphyry is used in a more general sense nowadays. But originally, and under the designation *Imperial* Porphyry it was applied to a magnificent purple stone, found in only one place on earth, viz. in the *Gebel Dukhan*, or Hills of Smoke, which are situated in a remote part of the Egyptian desert.

It was one of the most highly prized ornamental Stones, and the great distance which it had to be brought over parched deserts and perilous seas must have sent its price up, beyond the reach of all, save the rulers of the Earth. The quarries were worked until about the fifth century, A.D.—*Travels in the Upper Egyptian Deserts.*



William Hamilton Nisbet of Dirleton and Belhaven.

(From a miniature by Henry Bone, R.A., after the painting by Battoni.)

Another, 7 foot and a half long, & $3\frac{1}{2}$ round.
 And another—Open Your Eyes!
 Eight feet long, & seven feet round!!!
 'Pon honor, fact, Dear Sir!

But as no human success is perfect, the *Salamine* Brig being so deep in the water, has been under the cruel necessity—after many fruitless attempts with the aid of the great sheers of the Arsenal—to abandon the idea of taking a fifth piece, being a Column of Twelve foot long and about two foot diameter. This is now in the Dock Yard waiting some other conveyance.

What say you to this, Dearest Dad?

I hope this letter will not be lost, as I shall forget the dimensions, which I wrote down on purpose to send you. But do not think I am so elated with my success as to forget your piece of grey granite, or a piece of the red Oriental Granite, the latter I know not where to find, but I will enquire.

Elgin is going to send off tonight, I have not time to write to my Mother, and indeed I have nothing new to say as I sent a long letter to her the 10th of June and directed it to the care of Lord Minto. I shall do the same with this, as I think he will take care of them.

Hamilton is going to Egypt in the Brig which is to sail, the first fair wind. The Captain will be a great loss for he is a smart pleasant young Beau and an admirer of Caroline. Elgin desires his best love. He will soon write to you, but begs you will excuse him tonight as he is most completely faged; he has been working like a slave for these three days past. All is going on quite comfortably without any Discompostures.

Your dutiful and most affectionate Daughter,
 M. ELGIN.

June 14th 1801.

2 o'clock in ye morning of ye 15th of June.