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Jane Austen's Sailor Brothers: Francis and Charles in Life and Art

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I am very glad to have the opportunity to speak today about Jane Aus-ten's sailor brothers Francis and Charles. Just as "Homecoming" is the theme of this AGM, it can also be said that "Homecoming" was the theme of their lives. For these were the Austen brothers to travel the world—to the Mediterranean, the Adriatic, the Indian Ocean, the Atlantic North and South, the China Seas, the Caribbean, and the waters of South America. They were away, sometimes for years on end. With growing families, their homecomings were celebrations long awaited and memorable.

It was thanks to Jane, who kept up a regular correspondence, that despite their lengthy voyages or spells abroad, Francis and Charles never lost touch with what was going on in the family.¹ We see this, for example, in July 1809, when Mrs Austen and her daughters moved into Chawton Cottage. In this same month, Francis's first son was born. This was while he was away on an eighteen-month round journey, with India and China his far destinations. Within a week or so of the move, Jane sent him a "homecoming" verse-letter. It opens with a happy announcement: "My dearest Frank, I wish you joy / Of Mary's safety with a Boy," and then looks back to his own younger days, before describing "The many comforts" of "Our Chawton home" and their conviction "that when complete / It will all other Houses beat. . . . You'll find us very snug next year, Perhaps with Charles & Fanny near . . ." (Letter of 26 July 1809). Charles and his wife Fanny Palmer were then in Bermuda and the poem ends with this delightful fantasy of seeing them all back in England and settled around the Austen ladies in their new home at Chawton.

I also welcome this talk because it gives us an opportunity to look at Francis and Charles as individuals. I feel this is important because, in speaking of them as "the sailor brothers," we run the risk of merging their identities, of referring to them as if they were a pair, virtually one and the same per-son. It is certainly true that the brothers had much in common. Both were alike in their profession and their patriotism; and both were family men, both twice married; and there are sound reasons for regarding them, just as we do, as if they were united in their lifelong seamanship. But, in truth, of course, they were two very different men— different in character and disposition. They lived their own separate lives, shaped them in different ways, and this difference, their individuality, is one of the biographical aspects I want to emphasise today.

The other important thing to say is that the sailor brothers were the members of the family who contributed most, directly and indirectly, to the novels. Their lives and experiences provided Jane Austen with the basis for her naval characters and the sailor brothers played an important part in the writing of *Mansfield Park* and *Persuasion*, the two naval novels. Jane Austen's stock-in-trade was, as she put it, "pictures of domestic Life in Country Villages . . ." (1 April 1816). But equally, as James Edward Austen-Leigh pointed out, it was "with ships and sailors" that his aunt also "felt herself at home," and he noted her "partiality for the Navy" and "the readiness and accuracy with which she wrote about it" (15–16). We have much to thank the sailor brothers for.

Their story begins in 1786. This was the year in which Francis, a boy of almost twelve, travelled the forty or so miles from Steventon to Portsmouth to enter The Royal Naval Academy. He was followed, five years later, by Charles. Run by the Admiralty, the Academy was the Navy's official training college for officer cadets. But only a minute fraction of naval officers took the Academy route. The vast majority of youngsters, as many as 97 or 98%, went straight to a ship and received their training at sea. But this needed the patronage of a ship's Captain and the Austens had no naval connections to help them. Added to which, Mr Austen was attracted by the Academy's emphasis on formal education alongside the basic skills of seamanship—including navigation, mapping, care of the sails, ship construction, gunnery, and so on. Real expertise in these areas called for a good level of mathematics as well as practical skill. This is where the Academy-trained officers had an advantage. Their curriculum also included fencing, French, and dancing. Fencing seems obvious enough. But why French and dancing? More than social graces, these were thought to help them towards a political or diplomatic role. Serving overseas, naval officers sometimes found themselves called upon to act as envoys or representatives of the Crown—as Francis was to do in China and South America; and Charles, too, in providing naval and political support to Simon Bolivar in Venezuela's journey to freedom.

It happens that naval records are very well kept. Even to this day, we still have the Academy reports for the brothers during their time at Ports-mouth. Francis had an outstanding record. His final report at the Academy commends his "disposition" as "lively and active." At the same time, from beginning to end, it was a path to success. His reports were glowing, his conduct irreproachable, his work exemplary. This is reflected in Francis's own Memoir. This is a short autobiography which Francis composed towards the end of his life and it remains unpublished. This is what he has to say about his Academy days. As you will hear, Francis was no victim of false modesty. "Very soon after his admission into this seminary, he was distinguished by all the Masters as a youth of superior abilities, which joined a possessing appearance and a regularity in his conduct but rarely seen in so young a boy, gained him the esteem and regard of them all, and especially Mr Bayly [the Master of the Academy] who to the day of his death always treated him with the most flattering marks of attention . . ." (qtd. in Southam 26). Francis had good rea-son to feel pleased with himself. He was the outstanding student of his year and he went forward to his training at sea, a further three years, with high hopes.

On the face of it, taking the bare bones of the story, the record of his life is a record of success. His promotions came regularly—from Midshipman to Lieutenant, from Lieutenant to Commander, from Commander to Captain. He served with distinction and success in the English Channel, the North Sea, the Baltic, the Mediterranean, the Azores, and further afield. In 1806 he married Mary Gibson, to have a family of five daughters and six sons. In 1828,

following Mary Gibson's death, he made a second marriage, to Martha Lloyd. For many years, Martha Lloyd had been a companion to Mrs Austen, Jane and Cassandra at Chawton Cottage.

Blessed with good health, as those above him passed away the vacancies opened up, and Francis rose steadily in rank: to Rear-Admiral, Vice-Admiral, full Admiral in 1848. Now Sir Francis Austen, he visited the United States as Commander-in-Chief of The North American and West Indian station. I am sorry to say that in general his observations were unenthusiastic: he disliked the men's habit of spitting and "amongst the women" detected "a sort of flippant air . . . which seemed rather at variance with the retiring modesty so pleasing in the generality of English women" (qtd. in Lane 230–31). In 1863, at the age of 89, he achieved the Navy's highest rank, Admiral of the Fleet. Two years later, having outlived all his contemporaries, he reached the ultimate pinnacle as Senior Admiral of the Fleet. On 10 August 1865, Francis died. Aged 91, he was the last surviving of Jane Austen's six brothers.

But behind this chronology of success, there is another story to tell, a harsher story of a man ill-used, as he felt, and disappointed. As a child, Francis was known in the family as "Fly," a nickname that seems to catch his liveliness as a little boy. In the Chawton verse-letter, Jane Austen writes of his childhood days: his "saucy words & fiery ways" a boy "Fearless of danger, braving pain," armed with "insolence of spirit." But, alas, all too soon, "Fly" disappears from view, to be replaced by a young man for whom the formality of Francis sounds just right. And once he became an officer, Francis's ambitions were never quite fulfilled. Promotion, he felt, came too slowly; his prize-money was too small; and the great disappointment of his life was to miss Trafalgar. His ship was in Nelson's fleet. But just before the Battle, it was away in the Mediterranean, off the coast of North Africa picking up fresh food and water; and it arrived back in Spanish waters only after Trafalgar was fought and won. We know every detail of this from a long letter which Francis wrote at the time to his fiancée, Mary Gibson. It extends over this very period of nearly four weeks. From this letter, we can understand what it meant to a naval officer to miss a great victory, and at what cost to his fortune and his career. Here is part of the letter. The news of Trafalgar has just reached him. As you will hear, Francis moves very quickly from a stance of altruistic patriotism to marked dismay and complaint:

As a national benefit, I cannot but rejoice that our arms have been once again successful, but at the same time I cannot help feeling how very unfortunate we [meaning his ship, the *Canopus*] have been to be away at such a moment, and by a fatal combination of unfortunate though unavoidable events to lose all share in the glory of a day, which surpasses all which ever went before, is what I cannot think of with any degree of patience, but as I cannot write on that subject without complaining, I will drop it for the present till time and reflection have reconciled me a little more to what I know is now inevitable. (qtd. in Southam 95)

When Francis writes of losing "all share in the glory" of the "day," he has something very specific and very material in mind. These are the honors and rewards that a ship's Captain could expect, following a great victory at sea—and, of course, even at the time, Trafalgar was regarded as the great victory, unparalleled in modern times. A Captain such as Francis could look forward to a knighthood or Baronetcy, to prize-money, to a commemorative gold medal, and further rewards from the Lloyd's Patriotic Fund. These material benefits were quite apart from the boost such a victory would give to his naval career. What added to Francis's pain was the fact that he had been engaged to Mary Gibson since 1804: the delay to their marriage, which came only in 1806, was on account of his financial difficulties at this time. Trafalgar would have solved all this, and much else besides. As it was, it came as a blow, adding further to his sense of disappointment.

Francis had problems in other parts of his naval life as well. He was never popular with his crews. A devout Evangelical, he commanded what was known sarcastically in the Navy as a “praying” ship. On land too, as Irene Collins reminds us, he was known as “*the officer who kneeled*” in church (Austen-Leigh 14) (this at a time when the usual practice was to remain seated). Moreover, he was a strict, and sometimes over-harsh disciplinarian, a stickler for rules and regulations. And this was not only at sea, but also in his private life. We catch sight of this in the severity, sometimes an almost calvanistic severity, of the letters that he wrote home to his children, reminding them, sternly, of their duty to God. Altogether, he strikes us as someone who felt and suffered deeply. Along with this, he was a reserved and private man who kept his deepest feelings to himself. Perhaps all this is not surprising in a sailor who had lived through so many years of war, who had witnessed the suffering and bloodshed of the crews who served under him, and had been called upon to inflict an equal burden of suffering upon the enemy, his fellow men.

Charles comes across quite differently. Even as a Lieutenant of 19 he remained the baby of the family: “our own particular little brother,” Jane called him (21 January 1799). Like Francis, in the early years of the war he patrolled in the English Channel, the North Sea and the Mediterranean. He was involved in major engagements, such as the Battle of Camperdown in 1797, and he remained in European waters until 1804. It was then that he was posted to Bermuda, where he stayed for six and a half years, serving on the North American station, much of the time patrolling the Eastern seaboard of the United States. His duties included seizing deserters from the British Navy serving on American vessels (attracted by better pay and conditions); blocking American trade with Napoleonic Europe; and intercepting the traffic in slaves between the British West Indies and the Southern States.

It was in Bermuda that Charles met his wife-to-be, the sixteen-year-old Fanny Palmer. In 1811, he returned to England with Fanny and their two young children. It was about this time, on a visit to Godmersham, that Jane observed her brother: “dear Charles all affectionate, placid, quiet, chearful good humour” (14 October 1813); and whenever his name enters her letters, she writes of him with tenderness and solicitude.

Fanny died in 1814, aged twenty-four, leaving him with three little girls. They were cared for by Fanny’s elder sister, Harriet, who was living in London. In due course Harriet became his second wife, and they had their own family, of three sons and a daughter. Many homecomings were celebrated, for whatever the calls of home and family, Charles never lost his appetite for the sea, and was ready to take ship, almost literally at a moment’s notice.

After the war, Charles was in the wilderness. There was a surplus of naval officers, and to support his family, he was forced to take a job in the Coast Guard service, commanding districts in Devon and Cornwall. But all the time he longed for the sea, and after seven or eight years, he left the Coast Guard and moved to Alverstoke, a favourite spot for naval men, just across the Harbour from Portsmouth, and with views of the Grand Fleet out at Spit-head. One day in the spring of 1826, engaged in his favourite pastime of scanning the horizon, Charles noticed that a frigate, the *Aurora*, was about to sail. At that very moment, however, the anchor was dropped, the ship came to a standstill, and the Captain’s flag was brought down to half-mast, the Navy’s signal for a Captain’s death². Charles instantly took a small boat alongside, confirmed the sad event and travelled post-haste to London, where he reported the news to the Admiralty and there and then requested the vacant appointment. His promptitude and persistence were rewarded. On the spot, he was given the ship’s command, joined the frigate “and sailed within four days of the” former Captain’s death² — leaving behind him, one should

add, his wife Harriet and their five children, the youngest only a few weeks old. His vessel, the *Aurora*, was ordered to the Jamaica station where Charles recorded his great success “in crushing the slave trade” (O’Byrne i. 26).

Today we might wonder at Charles’s order of priorities. But there is no evidence that his wife and family felt neglected, nor that anyone criticised him for leaving his home for the sea. For one thing, his Captain’s pay was the family’s only source of income, and officers without a ship had to survive on what was called half-pay, and Jane Austen shows us what that meant in Captain Harville’s economy existence at Lyme Regis.

Charles was blessed with an easy-going nature, and a natural warmth and charm that continued until the very end of his life. In 1850, by now Rear-Admiral Austen, he was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the East Indies and China station. Amazing as it may seem to us, aged 71 he actually led the British forces in the Second Burmese War, with the capture of Rangoon two years later. However, towards the end of that same year, 1852, heading an expedition up the Irrawaddy River, Charles suffered a recurrence of cholera and, at the age of 73, died in the line of duty. His nephew, Commander George Rice, was with his uncle throughout the campaign. In letters home, George would invariably write of “the dear old Admiral,” and the “good old Admiral”; he was “without exception the kindest-hearted and most perfectly gentlemanlike man I ever knew” (qtd. in Hammond 329–32).

Like his brother, Charles was deeply religious. We know from his diaries that God was never far from his thoughts. However, unlike his brother, Charles’s God was a God of love, of compassion, and forgiveness, and by these qualities he lived his own life, both on land and sea.

Some years after the war was over, and after Jane’s death, both the sailor brothers made their homes in the vicinity of Portsmouth. Charles’s house, at Alverstoke, remains to this day, whereas Francis’s house, set in the Portsdown Hills overlooking Portsmouth, was taken down some years ago. All that remains to his memory is the most modest of gravestones, almost lost to sight, in the churchyard nearby. It bears no more than his initials and a cross, and in the church itself is a memorial tablet that announces him, heroically, but incorrectly, as “One of Nelson’s Captains.” Strictly speaking, that accolade was accorded only to those who actually served alongside Nelson at Trafalgar.

Where I think we find ourselves closest to the sailor brothers, most in touch with them, is neither in Portsmouth nor in Chawton (which was never their home) but in their sister’s novels. We know for a fact that Jane asked their permission to use the names of their ships in *Mansfield Park*; and she surely consulted them on matters of naval custom and vocabulary—“sea-language” or “tarpaulin talk,” as naval men called it— when she came to correct *Mansfield Park* for the second edition, 1816. In William Price, with all his boy-ish enthusiasm and sense of adventure, his pride in his promotion and his new uniform, I am sure we glimpse aspects of Charles as he must have appeared those many years ago, returning proudly to the family at Steventon in the 1790s, telling them of his exploits, his promotion and showing off his uniform in just the same way. Perhaps there are traces of him, too, in Wentworth at his most charming and considerate.

Francis also finds his place in the novels, most evidently in the character of Captain Harville, not only (according to his biographer-grandson, John Hubback [263]) in his carpentry,

carving, toy-making and handicraft—“he drew, he varnished, he carpentered, he glued” (P 99)— but also in Harville’s gravity and the serious tones in which he discusses matters of suffering and endurance with Anne in the final scenes of *Persuasion*. Viewed in this light, we can regard *Mansfield Park* and *Persuasion* as Jane Austen’s tribute to the sailor brothers— to their patriotism, their sense of duty, and their humanity.

Jane Austen was proud of her writing and made a point of collecting what she called “Opinions.” We know how much she valued Francis’s views, his “opinions” of both *Mansfield Park* and *Emma*, since she placed them at the very top of her lists. To her great satisfaction, Francis found Fanny “a delightful Character!” and he picked out “Aunt Norris” as one of his great favourites (MW 431), while he admired *Emma* “on account of it’s peculiar air of Nature throughout” (436), a quality for which he placed it above both *Pride and Prejudice* and *Mansfield Park*. But perhaps the most revealing opinion is Charles’s response to *Emma*.

His brother Francis was able to enjoy *Emma* comfortably at home, in the company of his wife and young family at Rose Cottage, on the outskirts of Alton. But, at this time, the spring of 1816, Charles was in the Mediterranean, making his way slowly back to England. He was in low spirits, having endured the worst indignity that a Captain can ever suffer, that of having had to abandon ship. This happened when he was chasing Greek pirates off the coast of Turkey. His ship, the *Phoenix*, was caught in a storm and, with a pilot on board, was thrown onto the rocks and disabled. Charles endured an unhappy passage home to England. We read in his diary how he was caught up in “sad & melancholy reflections”— and these were not only of the shipwreck, for he was also troubled by dreams of his young wife, Fanny, who had died only 18 months before, following the death of their fourth child, an infant barely three weeks old. Night after night he was haunted by these dreams; to quote his own words, dreams “of my lost & ever lamented Fanny and of our poor little ones!” (qtd. in Southam 255).

Jane Austen, ever-mindful of her sailor brothers, had arranged for Charles’s copy of *Emma* to reach him on the high seas; and it “arrived,” he wrote to her, “in time to a moment. I am delighted with her, more so I think than even with my favourite *Pride & Prejudice*.” *Emma*, he reported, he read “three times” on the passage home (MW 439).

The previous year, on learning that Charles, “Poor dear Fellow!,” had not received a single present on his birthday, Jane had joked about sending him all twelve of the early copies of *Emma* she had for presentation (26 November 1815). She knew that if any one of her novels could bring Charles closer to home, it was *Emma*, that incomparable portrait of village England—the English scene and the English way of life. To borrow the words of a great American writer, Herman Melville, Highbury “is not down on any map; true places never are.”³ And in that “true place” of his sister’s creation, Charles, the Captain without a ship, found his comfort and his consolation.

So, anyone who goes to Portsmouth will want to want to keep in mind its two realities: its reality as a place of history, of Nelson’s Navy and its triumphs; keeping in mind that, for all their family ties, the sailor brothers were also part of a larger brotherhood, the brotherhood of the Navy, to whose service they gave their lives. In this brotherhood, their ties were not ties of blood, but, in Nelson’s words, ties of friendship, profession and the field of battle.

Portsmouth was the place from which the sailor brothers started out on their naval lives; and it was the place to which, in the line of duty, they returned time and again; it was the place where, for many years, they made their homes; and it was here that Francis's life came to a close.

We also keep in mind Portsmouth's other reality, as one of Melville's "true places"—indeed, one of the "truest places" of Jane Austen's imagination. Living as she did at Southampton for almost three years, before the family move to Chawton in 1809, Jane Austen got to know Portsmouth well. It was her knowledge of the town—its slums, its Harbour and Dockyards—that gives such a solid setting to those chapters of *Mansfield Park*. You will remember how she describes the arrival of William and Fanny Price, as they travel by coach through the outskirts of the town, across the "Drawbridge" (376)—reminding us that Portsmouth was a fortified garrison town, walled and moated—through the Landport Gate, and down the High Street. Leaving the coach, they then turn off to one of the little side-streets, to enter, as Jane Austen tells us, the "bad air, bad smells" of the Prices' home (432).

And it was her familiarity with Naval Portsmouth that enabled Jane Austen to conduct Fanny and Henry Crawford through the Dockyard; and, later, to take Fanny along the Ramparts, in what Jane Austen describes as "a two hours saunter" in the "mild air," "bright sun" and "brisk soft wind" of a March day (409); with the wide views out across the Solent to the Isle of Wight, and the Grand Fleet anchored at Spithead. So while we celebrate the lives of Francis and Charles today, at the same time we also rejoice at the wonderful use to which their lives were put in the pages of *Mansfield Park* and *Persuasion*.

And of course we have to recognise that the picture of naval life Jane Austen gives us is highly sanitized, or, to use Joanna Trollope's word, "decorous." She brings us nothing of its horrors—of men limbless in battle, of decks running with blood, of men drowning, diseased, of the carnage that fever could wreak in the West Indies, of the sheer brutality of punishment at sea, with sailors literally flogged to death, and the constant round of drunkenness and foul language. The only faint echo of this harsh reality is mediated through Mr. Price, the former Lieutenant of Marines, with his oaths, grog on his breath, and his talk of the rope's end.

Nor are we witness to great battles and heroism. Alone amongst naval novelists—and nowadays we have the example of Patrick O'Brian constantly before us—Jane Austen holds our attention on sailors on dry land. Among them, William Price is the only one returning to active duty at sea. And her focus is not on great events but private lives. We are reminded of this, if we need reminding, in the very last words of *Persuasion*, when the narrator tells us, with a gentle undercurrent of quiet amusement, that Anne Elliot "gloried in being a sailor's wife," belonging, as she does, to a "profession . . . more distinguished in its domestic virtues than in its national importance" (252). So perfectly does Jane Austen handle these "domestic virtues" that the absence of the Navy's "national importance"—with its glamor, excitement, and heroism—is scarcely felt, if at all.

There were only two occasions when Jane Austen took a false step. One certain, one debatable. The undoubted mistakes occurred in the Portsmouth episode in the first edition of *Mansfield Park*, in the passage where Mr. Price describes the movement of William's vessel, the Thrush, from the inner harbour out to her berth at Spithead. Unfortunately, Jane Austen did not use the correct nautical vocabulary; nor did she get some details of the local scene quite right. So when John Murray agreed to publish the second edition of *Mansfield Park*, she had

the opportunity to make the necessary corrections. Almost certainly, it was the sailor brother who pointed out what was wrong and set her right.

The debatable mistake comes in *Persuasion*, in what happens immediately after Louisa Musgrove's famous fall from the steps of the Cobb. While Wentworth is distraught, overwhelmed by events, "staggering against the wall for his support" (109), it is left to Anne to take command of the situation and call for a surgeon. This is a curious scene and it takes some re-reading to visualize the precise chain of events: how exactly Louisa jumps, and how she misses Wentworth's outstretched hands. But the main question surrounds Wentworth's incapacity to act, his failure to take charge of the situation. Is it in character for someone who has been successful as an officer in the Navy for almost twenty years; a Captain, no less, who has survived enemy fire, to be so aghast, and rendered so incapable, at an accident so trivial as this? Jane Austen's main purpose in the scene is clear enough: to provide a living proof of Anne's capacity and coolness, and for Wentworth not only to witness this but to undergo a change of heart towards her. But this is only achieved at some cost to the credibility of Wentworth's naval character. Whatever your judgement may be on this question, it certainly gave rise to some lively discussion at the Jane Austen Society's own annual conference, held only a week ago at Lyme Regis itself, and after everyone had had a chance to look at the various steps on the Cobb that Jane Austen may have had in mind. I have to report that it was a lively discussion upon which no conclusion was reached.

Turning now to my final point. Within these two naval novels, Jane Austen traces the progress of an important social and historical change in English society. William Price, and the larger cast of sailors in *Persuasion*, bring with them a breath of fresh air, new and invigorating energies; whereas, by contrast, there are signs that the country gentry, the traditional ruling class, is heading for bankruptcy, both moral and financial. We remember the stir that William Price makes on his arrival at *Mansfield Park* and the envy he awakens in Henry Crawford (keeping in mind that with his estate in Norfolk, Crawford is as much of the landed gentry as Sir Thomas Bertram): William, showing "the proof of good principles, professional knowledge, energy, courage, and cheerfulness— every thing that could deserve or promise well"; Crawford, in response, "longed to have been at sea, and seen and done and suffered as much. . . . The glory of heroism, of usefulness, of exertion, of endurance, made his own habits of selfish indulgence appear in shameful contrast; and he wished he had been a William Price . . ." (236).

At the end of the novel, Jane Austen has William safely launched on his future as an officer; Sam, his younger brother, is following in his footsteps; and, on the very last page of *Mansfield Park*, Sir Thomas Bertram acknowledges what we can call the "Price" experience: "the advantages of early hard-ship and discipline, and the consciousness of being born to struggle and endure" (473). Something akin to the Victorian work ethic, this was a stern lesson that Jane Austen had observed for herself in the lives of the sailor brothers.

What is hinted at in *Mansfield Park* is made explicit in *Persuasion*. Improvidence drives Sir Walter Elliot from the ancient family home and estate; the Navy, in the person of Admiral Croft, takes over; and Anne, for all her family loyalty, "could not but in conscience feel that they were gone who deserved not to stay, and that Kellynch-hall had passed into better hands than its owners" (125). It is no surprise to learn, on the novel's final page, that Anne "gloried in being a sailor's wife" (252). This is the voice of Jane Austen. Our intuition is confirmed by the testimony of a close friend, Ann Barrett, a young woman who came to live at Alton and

knew Jane Austen in later years, at the very time that she was writing *Persuasion*. She talked with her about that most private of subjects, her own writing. Mrs Barrett's testimony is on record: "Anne Elliot was herself; her enthusiasm for the navy, and her perfect unselfishness, reflect her completely" (Chapman 171–74). "Her enthusiasm for the navy" would be natural enough. After all, it was the Navy that laid the foundations of Britain's success in the war with France; exactly as Anne says, early in the novel, it was the Navy "who have done so much for us" (P 19). This would have been the sentiment of any patriot at this time. But we know that Jane Austen was not merely a patriot; she was a patriot with brothers in the service. As her nephew, James Edward Austen-Leigh, explains in the *Memoir*, "with ships and sailors she felt herself at home, or at least could always trust to a brotherly critic to keep her right" (15–16). So we have much for which to thank those "brotherly" critics, the sailor brothers Francis and Charles, nothing less than the priceless legacy that comes down to us in the pages of *Mansfield Park* and *Persuasion*.

Notes

¹ Unfortunately, very few of these letters have survived: only six letters to Francis and one to Charles. However, we know that while they were abroad or at sea, they were in regular correspondence with Jane and on the evidence of Charles's diaries it is possible to calculate that Jane was writing to each of them on a monthly basis (see Southam 55–56).

² Manuscript addition to Hubback prepared for the unpublished second edition for insertion page 274.

³ Melville's words for the island of Kokovoko, Queequeg's home, at the opening to chapter 12 of *Moby Dick*.

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