

A letter from John Hunter to Mr Stockdale in January 1794 replies to rather severe criticism levelled at his published journal in the November *Monthly Review* of new publications. A letter of February 1802, written to Lady Howe shortly after his return to England upon resigning from the Governorship of New South Wales, justifies his conduct in writing for distribution among his friends an account of his situation in that Colony in order to remove some of the odium which had been cast upon his reputation by the manner of his return. Lord Howe and Sir Joseph Banks had not approved of his action and the letter seeks to explain to Lady Howe the pressures which forced him to act with such imprudence.

Hunter is also represented in the Sir Joseph Banks papers. In an undated letter he discusses with Banks some pearls which he is sending, stating that he hoped shortly to get some at least as large as his thumb. William Paterson, who was for a time Lieutenant-Governor of New South Wales, was chiefly noted for his botanical research and this he discusses in three letters to Sir Joseph Banks. Two are written from India in 1784 and one from Cape of Good Hope, mentioning shipments of specimens. He says 'Your letter . . . inspired fresh botanical courage in me, so much so that my exertions in the sun brought on a disease in my Liver'.

A rather more illuminating collection is a series of letters from Captain William Bligh to Sir Joseph Banks when he was waiting for his appointment as Governor. One written in January 1805 describes his present duty as Captain of the *Warrior* which was taking part in the French blockade; another dated 7 March is mainly concerned with alleviating an uncomfortable situation with his Lieutenants whom he wants removed, but also contains a fascinating piece of self-analysis:

I have been bred up in such a state of watchfulness and care and under such a high sense of professional duty, that perhaps I may be too particular in the execution of it; but I could not exist if I thought we were not equal to anything, and I have thought from the natural feelings of my mind that my moral character was as high as any mans. Instances of my doing good and rendering service are numerous since my youth to this moment, but I defy the world to produce one *act* of malevolence or injustice & all but four, Officers in the Ship, & the whole ships company declare the late charges infamous & illfounded.—But we have such a set of low Men crept into the Service that to govern a ship is not an easy matter altho a Captain's responsibility is as great or greater than ever; and a great charge he has if he at all looks forward to what it is possible public duty may demand of him,—to this I am always prepared to succeed, and hitherto I have never failed.