THE NEST OF ROBBERS

ALFRED P. JAMES

IN A LETTER in French to a friend in Europe, written from "Fort Duquesne" on December 3, 1758, Colonel Henry Bouquet described the place as having been a "nid de Corsairs qui a coûté tant de sang" (a nest of robbers which has cost so much blood). This of course is a one-sided statement reflecting merely the English point of view. The French concept of Fort Duquesne would differ very much, and even the Indians who aided the French probably did not consider themselves in the light of mere robbers. But from the history of Fort Duquesne from 1754 to 1758, it is easy to understand that the English, imperial and colonial, actually looked upon the establishment at the Forks of the Ohio as a robbers' den.

The role of Fort Duquesne as "a nest of robbers" really began after Braddock's defeat on July 9, 1755.2 This great victory of the French and Indians was followed that evening by a big celebration at the fort. On the following day Contrecœur, the commandant, visited the battlefield.3 On the same day, however, disagreement arose at the fort between the French and the Indians, and many of the Indians, laden with the spoils of the battlefield, returned home.4 Two days later it was the

1 Read at a meeting of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania on February 25, 1936. Ed.
3 James Smith, An Account of the Remarkable Occurrences in the Life and Travels of Colonel James Smith ... during His Captivity with the Indians, in the Years 1755, '56, '57, '58, & '59. (Philadelphia, 1834); Francis-J. Audet, Jean-Daniel Dumas, le héros de la Monongahéla, esquisse biographique, 57 (Montreal, 1920).
4 See Dumas to the minister, July 24, 1756, in Archives Nationales, AC, C 11, 101:321; F 3, 14:119; and Pennsylvania Colonial Records, 6:602, 604. It is stated on p. 137 of Voyage au Canada dans le nord de l'Amérique Septentrionale fait depuis l'an 1751 à 1761, par J. C. B. (edited by Henri R. Casgrain—Quebec, 1887), that 300 of the 850 Indians at Fort Duquesne went home taking 16 prisoners. The remainder of the savages, 550 in number, must have remained to go on expeditions against the English settlements.
sad duty of Father Denys Baron to inter in the cemetery of the fort the French officers and privates who had fallen on the field of battle along the Monongahela. On July 14, 1755, after the excitement of the first days had quieted down, Contrecœur made a report to Vaudreuil, the governor-general of New France.

Although some Indians returned home after the battle, others evidently remained to join with the French in attacks upon the English frontiers. Some of them were doubtless local Indians—Delawares, Shawnee, and Mingo. In slightly more than a week after the battle six or seven parties of French and Indians were dispatched against the terrified and defenseless frontiersmen.

The activities of these parties against frontier settlements in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia are easily traced from the records of those colonies. They will not be dwelt on here, since the emphasis in this account is upon Fort Duquesne as a center from which radiated both organized and sporadic attacks upon the English. In fact it might be said that from 1755 to 1758 Fort Duquesne, now Pittsburgh, was the gateway to the East rather than to the West.

Fort Duquesne must have been a lively place in the late summer and autumn of 1755. The parties sent out against the frontiers in July brought back scalps and prisoners and tales of destruction, which spread over North America and even Europe. Early in September, French and Indians to the number of fifteen hundred set out from the fort and, as in July, spread out in detachments and harried many different parts of the frontier. Other parties followed, such as that of 160 men late in September. The French at this time doubtless hoped to retain permanently the Ohio Valley. They had long realized its value in connection with transportation and communication between Quebec and New

5 John G. Shea, Relations diverses sur la bataille de la Malangueulé, introduction, p. 15 (New York, 1860). The burial certificates are included in this pamphlet.
6 Vaudreuil to the minister, August 5, 1755, in Archives Nationales, AC, F 3, 14:119; 128.
7 Dumas to the minister of the marine, July 24, 1756, in Archives Nationales, AC, C 11, 101:321.
8 Pennsylvania Gazette, November 6, 1755; Richard Peters, in Pennsylvania Colonial Records, 6:766–768; Croghan to Swaine, October 9, 1755, in Pennsylvania Colonial Records, 6:642–643.
Orleans. The authorities at Quebec also realized that the garrison at Fort Duquesne controlled a region rich in resources which would support, in the not distant future, a large population.9

These operations were carried out under Contrecoeur, who, after the Battle of Braddock’s Field, remained as commandant at Fort Duquesne. But a change in commandants was decided upon, and on November 5, Contrecoeur left the scene of his memorable exploits, never to return. His successor was Captain Dumas, who, after the death of Captain Beaujeu, had so ably commanded on the battlefield against Braddock.10

The new commandant, in spite of the favorable military situation, did not find himself in a bed of roses. News and instructions from Canada were lacking, and in addition, supplies of many kinds, particularly food supplies, were scarce. Dumas realized fully his isolation, and in his distress turned to the Illinois settlement for succor. To remedy “the most sad want of provisions,” he sent Sieur Ducharme to Major Macarty, commandant at the Illinois to bring back as much as could be secured.11 Months would be required to carry through the plan, but even more time would have been necessary to get the provisions from Canada, and winter was coming on. And the winter that followed was one of great severity. Heavy snows in the region temporarily stopped the comings and goings of Indian parties, for, unlike the Canadian Indians, those of the Ohio Valley did not use snowshoes for rapid movements in winter. Moreover, Fort Duquesne, even after improvements in 1755, was still small and weak and considered to be unable to withstand an artillery attack.12

9 Vaudreuil to the minister, October 30, 1755, in Archives Nationales, AC, C 11, 100:126.
10 Contrecoeur to the minister, November 28, 1755, in Archives Nationales, AC, C 11, 100:250; Audet, Dumas, 65–77; M. Pouchot, Memoir upon the Late War in North America, between the French and English, 1755–60, 1:73 (translated and edited by Franklin B. Hough—Roxbury, Massachusetts, 1860). Pouchot says flatly that Contrecoeur was “not sufficiently intelligent for a difficult post.”
But, though troubled by such difficulties, Dumas was untiring in his efforts to terrify and drive back the English. Early in 1756 he planned heavy attacks on the frontiersmen. Writing on January 20, he reported that the Shawnee already had from four to five hundred prisoners. And in May, abundant supplies were received from Illinois—“about thirty batteaux...ladened with pork, flour, brandy, tobacco, peas, and Indian corn.” It is interesting to note that it took 150 men three months to bring these supplies from Illinois to Fort Duquesne.

In 1756, as in other years, the early months saw high water on the rivers of the region. A freshet almost carried away the fort, which was located far down on the point. But the high water was used to transport to Niagara the artillery that had been taken from the English, some of it from the battlefield of July 9, 1755, and more of it, along with a considerable quantity of shell, shot, and bullets, from Dunbar’s abandoned camp in the mountains.

So far as Fort Duquesne itself was concerned, it remained in 1756 what it was called later by a French critic, “a place of pillage without limit.” Vaudreuil sent ammunition and three hundred Canadians to Dumas and estimated that Dumas would have at the fort from twelve hundred to fifteen hundred men, exclusive of Indians. The total forces converging upon the English frontiers of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia in 1756 were estimated at 3,250, as follows: “one thousand French, seven hundred Delawares and Chouanons [Shawnee], besides a number of Illinois, as many as three hundred French and Indians, under the care of Sieur de Villiers, about 250 Miamis and Outagnons [Ottawa], under M. de Belestre, 300 from Detroit and 700 from Michilimakinac, commanded by Chevalier de Repentigny.”

13 Dumas to Macarty, November 10, 1755, in Archives Nationales, AC, C 13, 39:1721.
14 John M’Kinney, in the Olden Time, 1:39-40 (January, 1846); Audet, Dumas, 32.
15 Montcalm to Count d’Argenson, June 12, 1756, in Pennsylvania Archives, second series, 6:352; Pouchot, Memoir, 1:60; Abstract of Despatches from Canada, in Pennsylvania Archives, second series, 6:356.
17 Wisconsin Historical Collections, 18:163.
A letter from Fort Duquesne, on March 23, 1756, announced that parties of Delawares and Shawnee had already set out against the frontiers. It was on this day that Sieur Donville set out from the fort with a detachment of fifty Indians to make attacks along the upper Potomac and, as is well known, to lose his life and instructions in that region. M. de Bellestre, who was at Fort Duquesne late in April, led a party against the forts and blockhouses of Virginia and lost a number of men on the expedition. In an attack near Fort Cumberland during the summer, Céloron de Blainville lost his life.

The celebrated expedition against Fort Granville, made by Illinois troops and Indians under the leadership of De Villiers, started from Fort Duquesne as a base of operations; and prisoners, including thirty soldiers, three women, and seven children, were brought back to Fort Duquesne on August 12. Smallpox, the terrible scourge to Indians, greatly dreaded by them, broke out in 1756 at various French posts and caused their hurried dispersal and return to their homes. Yet Dumas reported in several letters the continuation of successful raids against the frontier during the summer, and according to reports sent in to Canada, spent eight days receiving Indians with scalps taken on the frontier. And orders to new parties of French and Indians setting out against the...
frontiers continued. The orders to Sieur de Langlade and his Indians from Michilimackinac were dated as late as August 9, 1756.23

In the summer of 1756 Dumas had about 810 men in the garrison at Fort Duquesne. Since the fort was small, some construction outside was necessary. On August 8 he wrote of houses being built; late in September two hangards had been completed, and at about the same time a second forge was finished.24 As in the previous year25 there was gardening or small farming in the neighborhood of the fort, and maize, wheat, peas, beans, and other crops were sown.26

A matter of great importance was that of good relations with the incoming and outgoing Indians. Dumas, a man of strong personality and high capacity, got on very well with the Indians.27 Two open brawls were recorded, and great talent could not wholly restrain the turbulent savages of many tribes who frequented Fort Duquesne during the year. While his relations with the Delawares and the Shawnee continued excellent, Dumas himself expressed his pleasure at the migration from the region of bands of Iroquois who had caused trouble28—doubtless the Mingo, who were to continue to cause trouble for several decades to come.

With the winter of 1756-57, the services of Dumas at Fort Duquesne came to an end. Not improbably his services were needed along the St. Lawrence, though he may have been in the way of the game of fraud being carried on in New France by the notorious clique under Bigot, the intendant. The recall of Dumas and the appointment of De Ligneris was announced to the ministry by Vaudreuil on September 19.

27 Montcalm to Paulmy, Montreal, April 10, 1758, in New York Colonial Documents, 10:692.
28 Vaudreuil to Machault, August 8, 1756, in Pennsylvania Archives, second series, 6:359-363. A fight between Shingas and one of the officers at Fort Duquesne, probably in midsummer, is reported in the Pennsylvania Gazette (Philadelphia), October 21, 1756. Drunken Indians caused much trouble. See Voyage au Canada, 145.
1756. Late in September, therefore, De Ligneris left Canada for Niagara and Fort Duquesne, which he doubtless reached early in November.\textsuperscript{29}

If Bougainville can be relied upon, the new commandant at Fort Duquesne was vastly inferior to his predecessor. In his journal for the year 1757, Bougainville pointed out that at Fort Duquesne and other posts, trade with the Indians was carried on for the benefit of the king, and added, "The traffic at these posts is very burdensome for the king, who always loses, and it is carried on only in order to preserve the goodwill of the savages; but the storekeepers and the commandants take care to enrich themselves." Unfortunately for those engaged in such trade and fraud there was from this time on a serious lack of merchandise at Ohio posts, a matter that affected not only the fur trade but also Indian relations in general.\textsuperscript{30} In addition, in his journal for April, 1758, Bougainville savagely inquired, "Why have sent for the commandant at Fort Duquesne a man subject to drink and under him drunkards and imbeciles?"\textsuperscript{31}

But apart from deficiencies in administration and supplies, life at the fort differed little in 1757 from what it had been since Braddock's defeat. Gardening and small farming probably continued as usual; and in preparation for construction work, the French cut logs at the considerable distance, for those days, of nine miles from the fort. The dreaded smallpox continued to visit the garrison; in March of this year a missionary for the Indians was asked for.\textsuperscript{32}

Fort Duquesne continued, under De Ligneris, "a place of pillage without limits," that is, a place from which numerous parties of French


\textsuperscript{31} \textit{Rapport de l'archiviste de la province de Québec pour 1923—1924}, 318.

and Indians radiated eastward against the English settlements. Writing in March, 1757, De Ligneris asserted that small parties from the fort were always out against the frontiers; on April 15 he announced that ravaging parties were continuously being sent out; and in May, June, and September reports were made to Canada of incessant raids against the English posts and frontier homes. A letter of September 7, reported by Montcalm, said that De Ligneris had recently received two hundred scalps at Fort Duquesne.33

For this bloody work of raids upon frontier posts and homes, reinforcements were sent to Fort Duquesne from many directions. In April, 1757, troops were sent from Detroit, and in June, 280 French passed Niagara on the way to the fort. Early in this same month there arrived "250 French and Indians from the Illinois—Sacs, Sioux, Renards, Mascoutins and Kickapous." In the autumn four hundred reinforcements seem to have reached the fort. It may be that among them was M. Passerat de la Chapelle, who was sent to organize the means of defense and who was to remain in the region for more than a year.34 Among the curious arrivals at the fort in the autumn of 1757 were three hermits, captured in the mountains by Ottawa Indians forty or fifty leagues from the fort.35

Under the regime of De Ligneris came the beginning of English counter thrusts against Fort Duquesne. Late in 1756 a party of raiding English and Indians appears to have reached Chartier's Creek. Early in 1757 French loggers nine miles from the fort were attacked by hostile Indians, who took seventeen scalps. Operations on the frontier met with increasing resistance. On June 5 a French force on the road to

33 Journal of Bougainville, in Rapport de l'Archiviste de la province de Québec pour 1923–1924, 261, 263, 266, 279, 308; Montcalm to Paulmy, November 4, 1757, in New York Colonial Documents, 10:670.


35 Rapport de l'Archiviste de la province de Québec pour 1933–34, 308.
Fort Cumberland was attacked by a force under Lieutenant James Baker; two were killed, two wounded, and two taken prisoner. But even more ominous was the growing discontent of the Indians. If Indian and Quaker intelligence reported to Sir William Johnson on January 29, 1758, may be relied upon, the French at Fort Duquesne quarreled with a party of Twightwees, who had stopped there for provisions, and, opening fire upon them, killed all but four in the party.36

But operations against the English frontiers never ceased. Early in 1758, a party was sent out against the settlers in the region of Fort Cumberland. According to "J. C. B." author of the *Voyage au Canada*, a convoy of provisions with a reinforcement of fifty men and five hundred Indians from Michilimackinac arrived in early summer, from which five parties were sent out against the English frontiers. Probably in May, M. Passerat de la Chapelle was grievously wounded making an assault on an English fort on the Potomac River. Between March and June, prisoners or scalps to the total of 140 were brought back to Fort Duquesne.37

With the advance of Forbes's expedition in midsummer, 1758, circumstances changed. Disquieting news reached Fort Duquesne and Canada and created high alarm. De Ligneris found himself involved in quarrels with his Indian allies, and reinforcements had to be hurried up for the defense of the fort. A hundred French Indians arrived by boat in July, and M. Aubry brought 240 men with several loads of provisions from Illinois.38 On August 1, Chartier arrived with 216 Frenchmen and Indians and was dispatched west to secure Indian aid; he got

back to the fort on August 13, barely in time to participate in the repulse of Major Grant's attack on the following day. Aubry with a contingent from Illinois was still at the fort in the autumn.

Parties from Forbes's army made frequent spying expeditions in the neighborhood of Fort Duquesne. Lieutenant Allen reported fifty or sixty tents there in July, and a large number of houses were observed in the neighborhood of the fort. Christian Frederick Post, the missionary, was across the river in what is now Allegheny, during the third week in August. On September 14 came the well-known but badly managed assault of Major Grant; and for a short time thereafter there was elation and even hope at Fort Duquesne, and throughout New France. But the English were moving over the mountains and intrenching themselves at Fort Ligonier. Fort Duquesne was in no condition to withstand an assault in which artillery would be used. Something drastic had to be done and only one resource remained. This was the old policy of striking the enemy in advance, which had proved so successful against Braddock. Accordingly, at the beginning of the third week in September, Aubry was sent from Fort Duquesne with a detachment of Canadians and Indians, about six hundred strong, to reconnoiter the English intrenched or encamped at Loyal Hannon. Badly needed reinforcements also reached the fort at this time.

This enterprise of Aubry culminated in the Battle of Loyal Hannon of October 12, 1758, in which Colonel James Burd successfully defended the place against a series of on slaughts upon his troops and intrenchments.

40 Add.MSS., 21658; Olden Time, 1:99-125 (March, 1846).
41 This is an impression gained from scattered statements throughout the general correspondence.
43 Alfred P. James, "Fort Ligonier: Additional Light from Unpublished Documents," ante, 17:259-285. The condition of Fort Duquesne was reported to Canada and France. The letters of de Ligneris, cited below, indicate the nature of the reports.
44 The predecessor of the twentieth-century offensive-defensive policy.
45 Pouchot, Memoir, 1:130; Archives Nationales, AC, C 11, 103:224.
46 For a recent account of the encounter based on unpublished materials, see Lily Let Nixon, "Colonel James Burd in the Forbes Campaign," in Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, 59:124ff. (April, 1935.)
Having failed at Loyal Hannon, the French fell back upon Fort Duquesne. The dramatic descent of Colonel Bradstreet upon Fort Frontenac late in August had destroyed the stores of provisions for the western posts, and the commandant at Fort Duquesne, since the troops could not be sustained there during the winter, because of the want of food supplies and other provisions, was compelled to disperse the larger part of his garrison. Aubry with one contingent was sent in October back to Illinois. M. de Saint-Ours returned with a contingent to Montreal; and Bellestre was sent away to Detroit. A faint hope, doomed to disappointment, was that winter, now about to set in, would halt the English at Loyal Hannon and give an opportunity to gather new forces for the next year’s campaign. In anticipation of disaster, preparations were made for the evacuation and destruction of the fort. Since part of the troops were to retire by water up the Allegheny River and down the Ohio, work was done on getting batteaux ready for the event.49 With the rapid approach of Forbes’s army after the middle of November, the decisive moment was at hand. On November 24, 1758, the fort, hangards, and outlying houses were set on fire, and but thirty chimney stacks were left standing.50 Thus disappeared the first white settlement at the Forks of the Ohio. At about six o’clock in the afternoon, in the evening of November 24, the British-Americans marched down into the smoldering ruins, and Fort Duquesne as “a nest of robbers” and “a place of pillage without limit” came to an end.

The following letters, translated from the French and published here for the first time, throw valuable light on the last days of the French regime at Fort Duquesne. The originals of these letters are in the Archives Nationales, Paris, AC, F 3, 15: 225–230. The Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania has transcripts.

47 Pennsylvania Gazette (Philadelphia), September 21, 1758; Archives Nationales, AC, C 11, 103: 448.
49 Certificate of payment to a boatbuilder, in Archives Nationales, V 7, vol. 345, no. 70.
50 Captain Haslet to Dr. Allison, November 26, 1758, John Forbes, Letters of General John Forbes Relating to the Expedition against Fort Duquesne in 1758, 71, 72 (compiled by Irene Stewart—Pittsburgh, 1927).
ALFRED P. JAMES

EXTRACT OF THREE LETTERS WRITTEN TO M. LE MÎN De VAUDREUIL BY M. LINERIS, COMMANDANT AT FORT DUQUESNE.

October 18, 1758

Fort Duquesne is as yet in the possession of the King. I do not know whether we shall be able to hold it for long. I shall soon not have sufficient food, and provisions are totally wanting. It is necessary to have them nevertheless in order that the savages of the Ohio River shall continue to side with us, as they actually seem to do. I have nothing more to give them, nor even anything with which to clothe the garrison, if, as I hope, we shall pass the winter here.

After the action of the fourteenth of September, I took the step of sending down to the Illinois all the English prisoners, who consumed much food.

I have not ceased for a month to have scouting done in the neighborhood of Loyal Hannon, where the English have intrenched themselves and where they have waited, as I have been told, for the army to assemble in order to come and attack us; this place is only about twenty leagues from here. As I had almost no provisions and saw myself obliged soon to send back the men from Detroit, those from the Illinois, the garrison of Niagara and all those who are needed at Fort Le Bœuf and at Presqu’isle, I made a detachment of all the active men whom I could find in order to go to Loyal Hannon to destroy there the animals of the enemy and compel them to make a sortie.

This detachment was composed of 440 French and 130 Delawares and Shawnee; it was impossible for me to assemble more of them. I gave the command to M. Aubry, captain of the Illinois forces who had brought here the provisions that have come to us from that place; I kept at the fort those who were not in condition to march in the mountains and those who were indispensably necessary in case the enemy should come by a route different from that which our detachment was to take, and after having assured myself by a scouting expedition that there were none of the enemy at the old Fort Necessity, I sent off on the ninth of this month M. Aubry at the head of his detachment. On the twelfth at eleven o’clock in the morning, having arrived in sight of the intrenchment, he promptly made his dispositions for the attack and advanced with such intrepidity on the camp of the enemy with one party of his men, while the other killed the horses and cattle, that terror spread in the camp in such a manner that the enemy left their tents and took refuge in the retrenchment with a considerable loss. M. Aubry continued to fire on all who appeared in sight. The combat lasted four hours and ceased only because the enemy did not dare make any sortie, which fact obliged that officer to retire with his men, being too much exposed to the fire of cannon.

The enemy lost in this action about 120 men and we took 12 prisoners; on our part we lost only 3 soldiers and we had 4 Canadians and one savage wounded.

It is not necessary that I speak in praise of M. Aubry. He greatly distinguished himself, as did the officers and cadets, and all the French performed wonders.
I hope that the advantage we have had on two different occasions against the enemy will much retard if it does not stop them. The Delawares and the Shawnee have promised me that they will soon return into the war; never have I seen them better disposed; they have fought with an unusual courage and I believe that if our storehouses were full of merchandise, the Ohio tribes would serve us very valiantly.

The prisoners of M. Aubry have furnished me sufficient information to know that the English have not renounced their project for this year and they even assert that the army is assembling; some of them, however, have said that there is talk of going into winter quarters.

The enemy are making a fort at Loyal Hannon, where our detachment saw many pieces of timber prepared for that purpose; they are building a sawmill on the bank of the Allegheny River where their intrenchment is. The prisoners have not heard it said that they are planning to construct batteaux—they could well be ignorant of it. I shall make every effort by continual scouting to inform myself more particularly.

Our fort is ready to tumble down; it is rotten throughout, and I doubt that it will stand until spring, if we have floods similar to those of last winter. It is very sad for decent men to be charged with the defense of so bad a place. M. DuVerni, engineer, should have furnished you an account of it.

I have during these days assembled the officers to deliberate on the measures which we ought to take, to know if I would continue to keep all the men that I had here, or whether I would send back a part. The greatest number believed in keeping only the garrison which I had to retain and sending back the others immediately since there remained for us supplies for only eighteen days for 1200 men; it is true that we do not always have this number, but the day before the assembly 1180 rations were consumed. The savages have left here since then for their villages, intending to return in a few days.

M. de Rocheblave is setting out to go on a scouting expedition to Loyal Hannon in order to observe what the enemy are doing.

October 20, 1758.

I have sent away to Detroit about 120 Canadians with M. De Belestre to pass the winter there; they will be the nearest for returning here early in the spring; besides they can set out in the month of March to bring us provisions from Presqu’ile. I shall send a number to the Illinois from whence they will return with provisions.

M. De St. Ours is setting out for Presqu’ile where he will leave, of the number of Canadians which he has, those of whom the commandant of that post will have need for his garrison and that of Fort Le Bœuf. I shall keep here about 200 men of whom a small number are soldiers. They all demand their departure; I have promised it to most of them, fearing lest there be deserters; they have not far to go at present to go over to the enemy. Everyone demands to be relieved next year, officers and others. I hope that I shall be of that number.
October 23, 1758.

M. De Rocheblave who arrived yesterday from his scouting expedition informs me that there are many men at Loyal Hannon; according to appearances and the report which he made me, the army is assembled there, which makes me judge that the enemy have not renounced their project for this autumn. I do not see any other expedient if they continue their enterprise than to execute the orders which you have given me to blow up the fort and fall back upon Fort Machault.

The larger part of the savages are descending the Ohio in spite of the promises which they made me. Some however are preparing themselves, as I have been assured, for going to war, but I think that they will be few in number.

I have been under the indispensable necessity of sending back to Detroit M. De Belestre with the men whom I have given him as well as M. De St. Ours and the garrisons of Fort Le Bœuf, of Presqu’île and of Niagara. Otherwise I should not have had provisions to subsist for more than about ten days and none at all to make the retreat.

I am in the saddest situation that one can imagine; but I shall pull myself out of the difficulties in the best way I can. And whatever eventuality befalls me I shall always be content if I am approved by you.