

A SAUL SOLOMON NOTE

by Trevor W. Hearl

In a most informative article about Saul Solomon and his family, founders of the famous St Helena business firm of that name, Kraemer (1978) reports that the thrice-married Saul died on 6th December 1852, not on St Helena, but at his son-in-law's home at Portishead, Bristol, England.

Recently, I came across a rather macabre sequel to that story. I was prompted to follow it up by the existence of a tombstone with the name Saul Solomon, 1776-1852, among those stacked against the north wall of St James's Church in Jamestown, having been taken at some time from one of the town's cemeteries and listed by some of the secondary school children on a history project in 1971. The explanation came from a recently published book (Sattin, 1986). The story went as follows.

Mrs Tytler was travelling back home from India with her husband and four children on the sailing vessel *Camperdown* in 1853, when, among the passengers joining the ship at the Cape was a "Miss Solomon". As the voyage got under way, she became very agitated until she had unburdened her mind to Mrs Tytler. Her father had died in England but had wished to be buried "on his beloved St Helena", Desperately she confided that she had brought his corpse with her baggage on the ship!

"The burden was a terrible one", wrote Mrs Tytler later in her journal. "If the sailors found it out they would chuck her father overboard".

But they arrived at Jamestown and to their relief "that case" was landed safely. Her brother Nathaniel came on board and invited the Tytlers to stay as guests at his hotel. He put a carriage and pair at their disposal, and they toured the island to see the tomb of "the dreaded scourge of Europe ... through (whom) my grandfather, grandmother, and their four children, amongst them my mother, were kept prisoners for 15 years in France [...]".

But of the Solomons she said, "It was really very good of (them); I had done nothing so wonderfully kind as to merit so much goodness from them!"

Surely of the many important tasks to be undertaken for the history of St Helena, the story of Saul Solomon and his firm Solomon and Company must be one of the most interesting and vital.

References

- Kraemer, James E. "Saul Solomon (1776- 1852) French Counsl and Merchant-King of St Helena", *St Helena and Dependencies Philatelic Society Newsletter*, II(1):6-10, 1978.
- Sattin, Anthony (Ed.) *An Englishwoman in India -- The Memoirs of Harriet Tytler 1828-1858*, Oxford University Press, 1986.

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