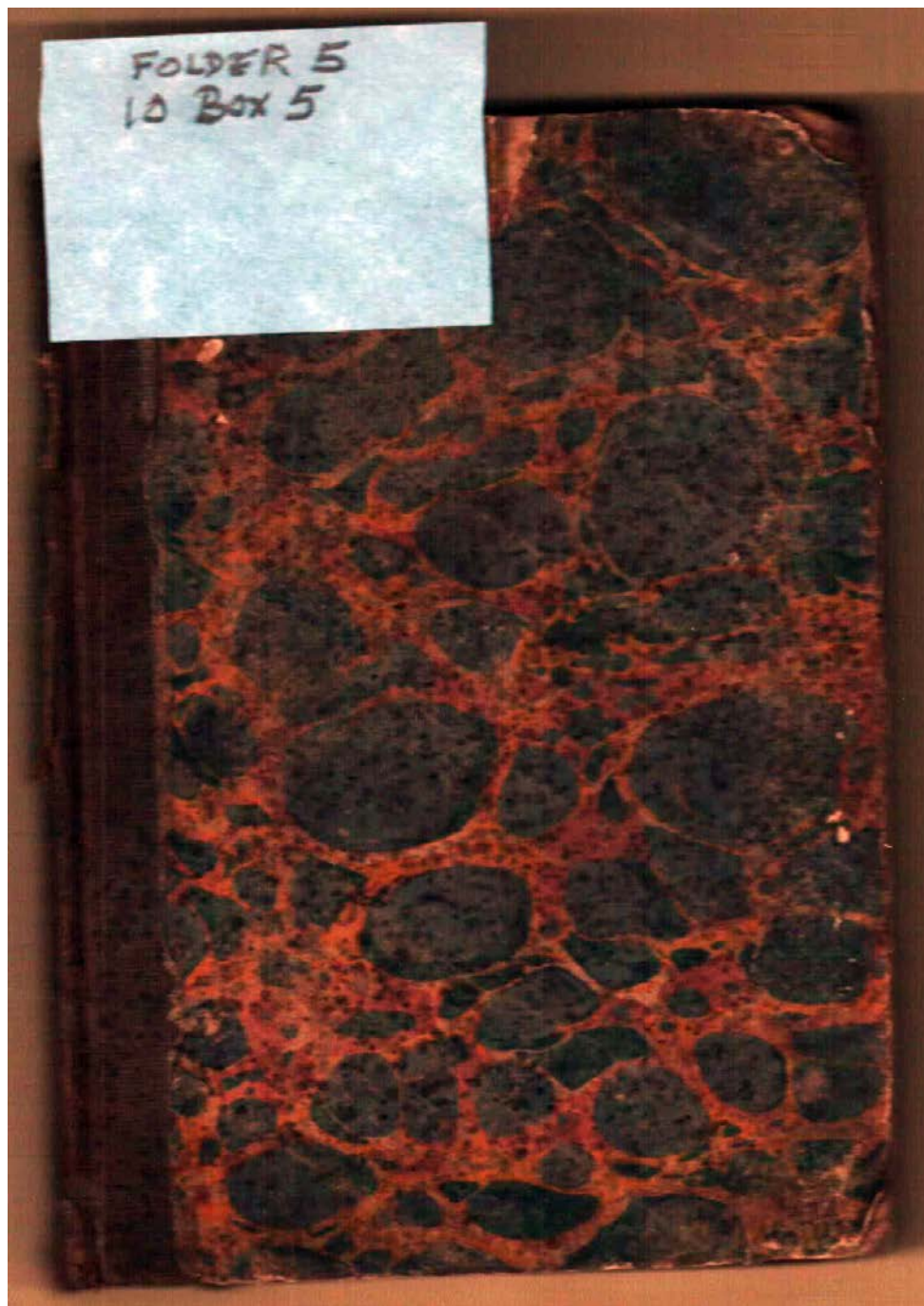


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"Memoirs of Captain James Wilson," Compiled for the American Sunday School Union by Tappan, W. B

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**Names:**

Memoirs of Captain  
James Wilson

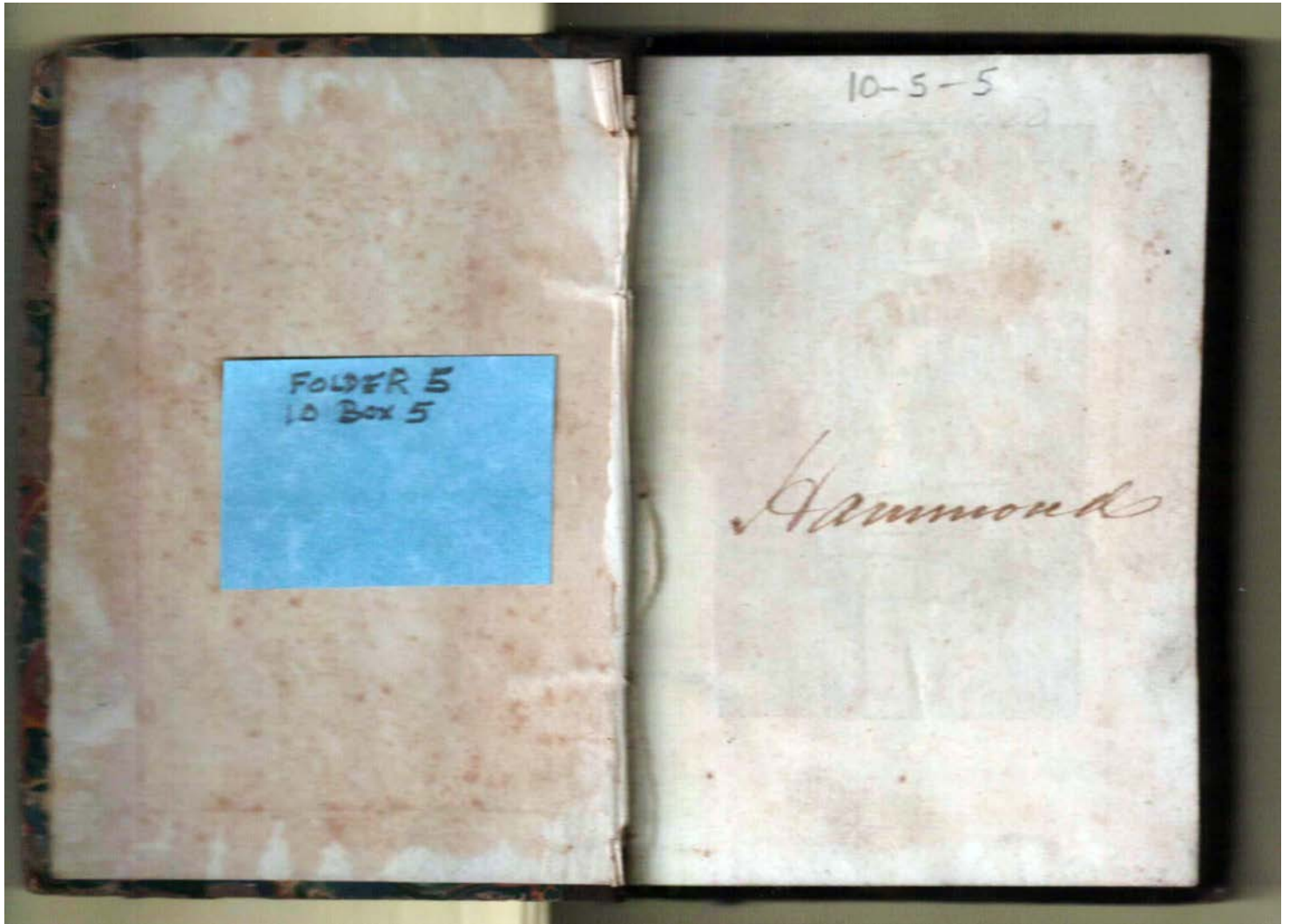
**Types:**

book cover

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Hammonds,

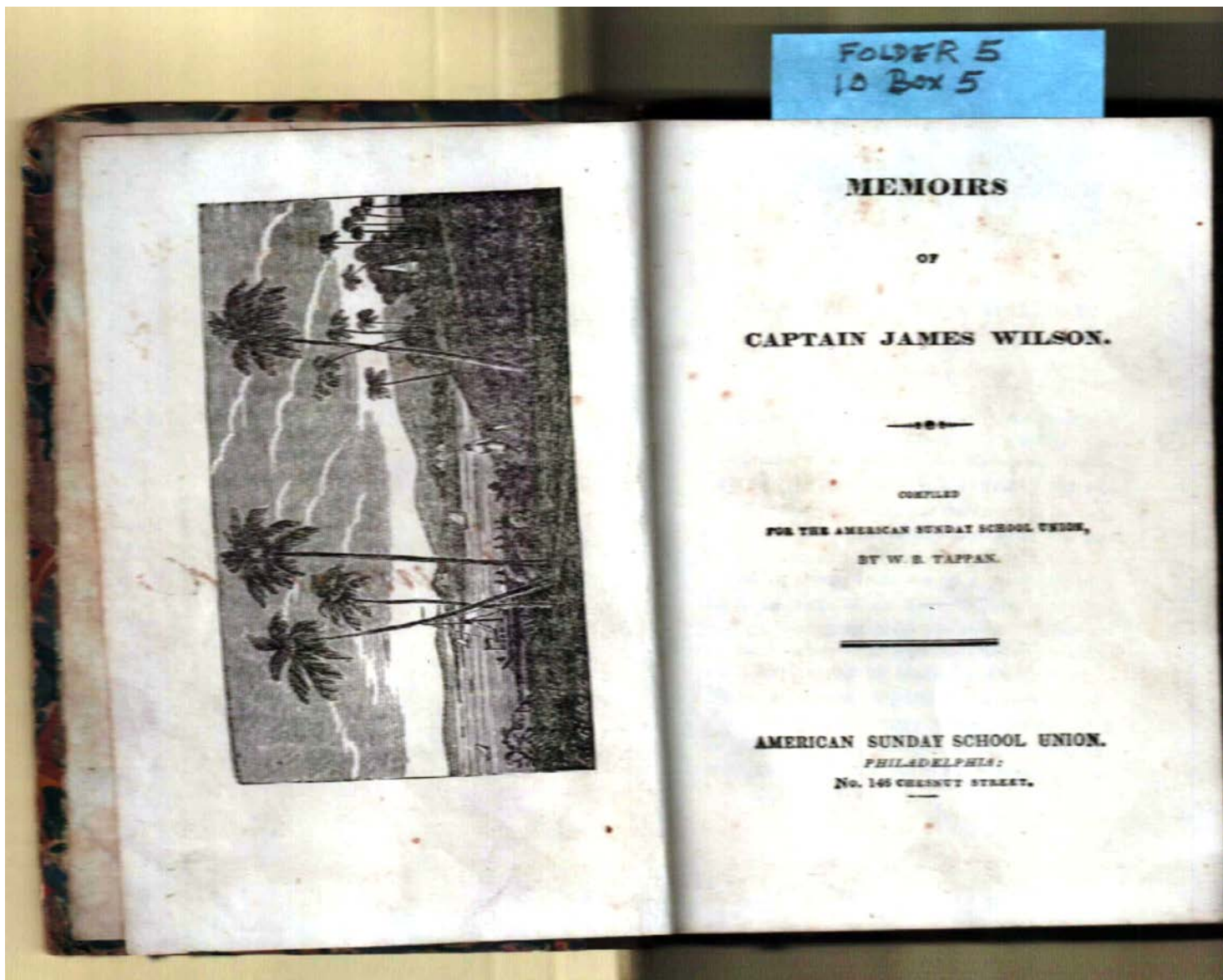
**Types:**

signature

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**Names:**

Memoirs of Captain  
John Wilson

Tappan, W. B.

**Places:**

Philadelphia, PA

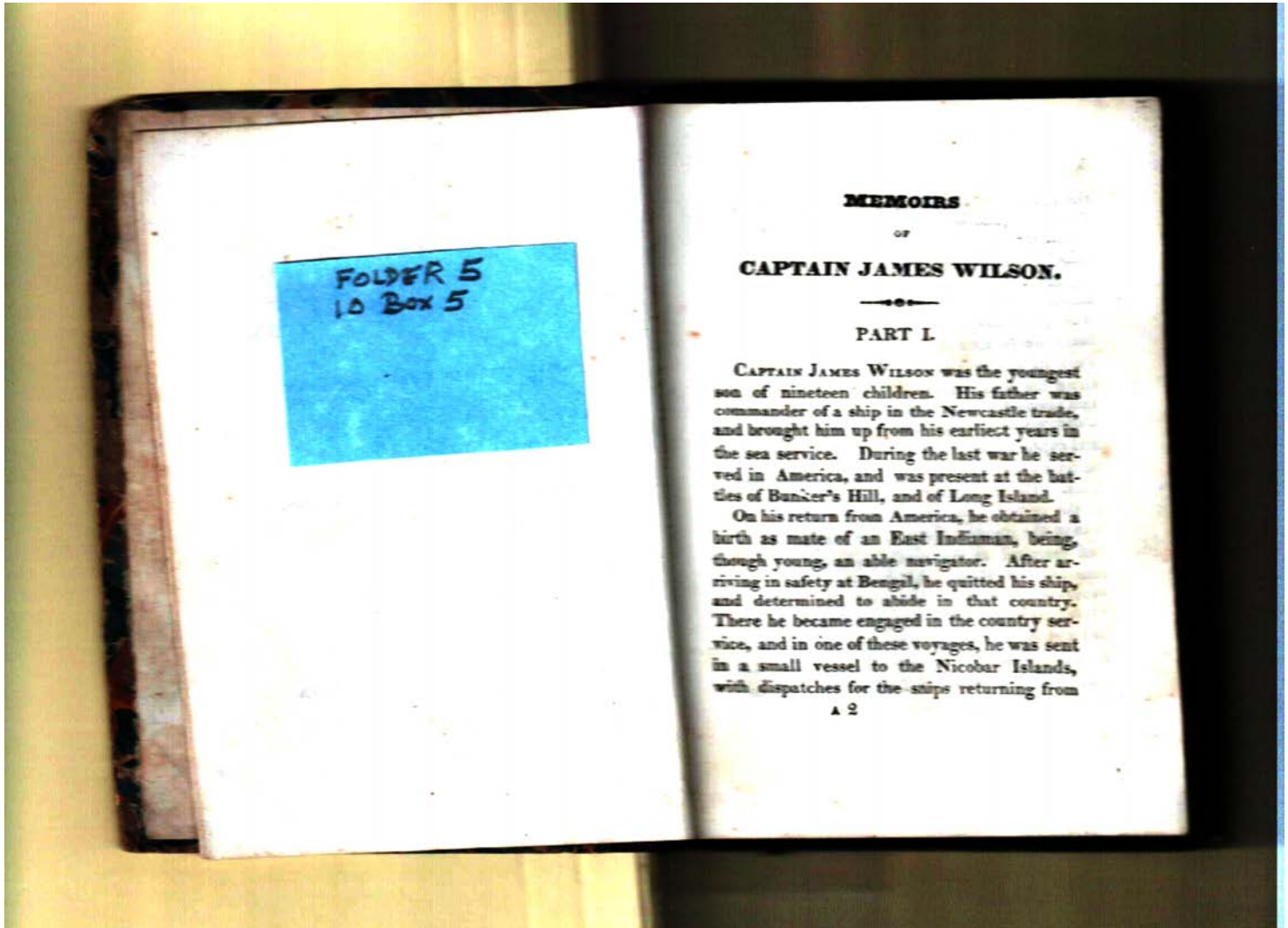
**Types:**

book

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**Names:**

Memoirs of Captain  
James Wilson Part I

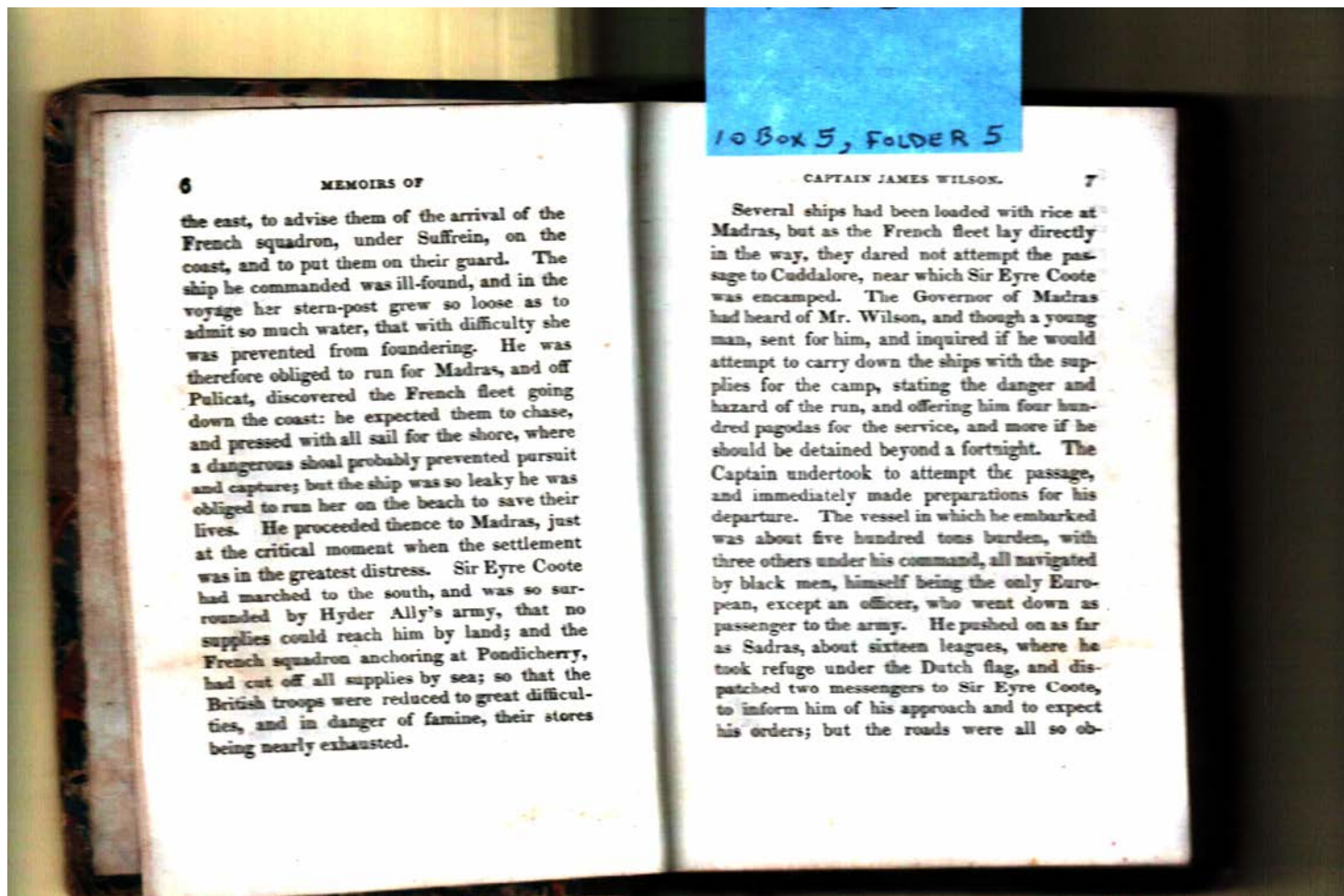
Wilson, James,  
Captain

**Places:**

Philadelphia, PA

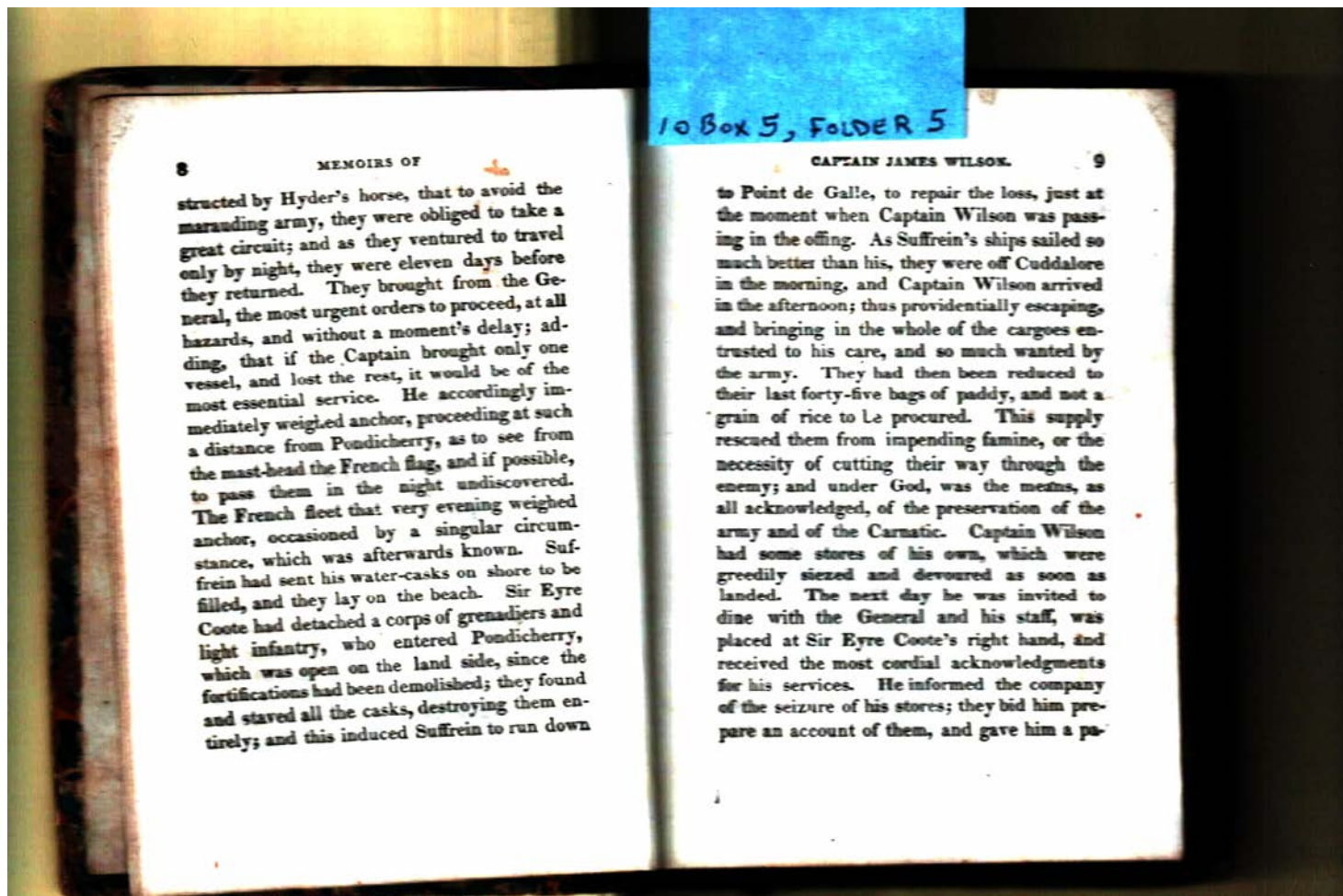
**Types:**

book



the east, to advise them of the arrival of the French squadron, under Suffrein, on the coast, and to put them on their guard. The ship he commanded was ill-found, and in the voyage her stern-post grew so loose as to admit so much water, that with difficulty she was prevented from foundering. He was therefore obliged to run for Madras, and off Pulicat, discovered the French fleet going down the coast: he expected them to chase, and pressed with all sail for the shore, where a dangerous shoal probably prevented pursuit and capture; but the ship was so leaky he was obliged to run her on the beach to save their lives. He proceeded thence to Madras, just at the critical moment when the settlement was in the greatest distress. Sir Eyre Coote had marched to the south, and was so surrounded by Hyder Ally's army, that no supplies could reach him by land; and the French squadron anchoring at Pondicherry, had cut off all supplies by sea; so that the British troops were reduced to great difficulties, and in danger of famine, their stores being nearly exhausted.

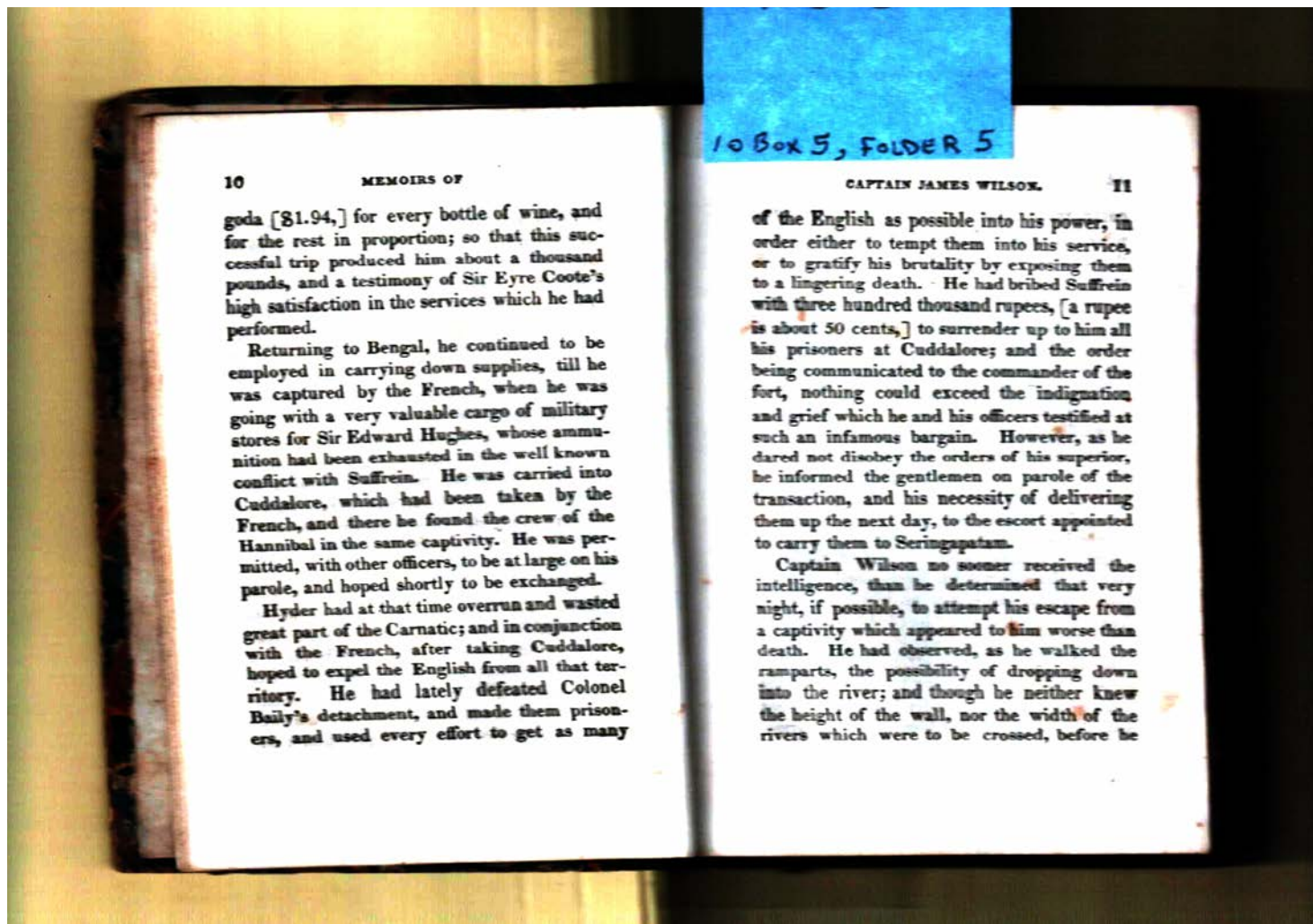
Several ships had been loaded with rice at Madras, but as the French fleet lay directly in the way, they dared not attempt the passage to Cuddalore, near which Sir Eyre Coote was encamped. The Governor of Madras had heard of Mr. Wilson, and though a young man, sent for him, and inquired if he would attempt to carry down the ships with the supplies for the camp, stating the danger and hazard of the run, and offering him four hundred pagodas for the service, and more if he should be detained beyond a fortnight. The Captain undertook to attempt the passage, and immediately made preparations for his departure. The vessel in which he embarked was about five hundred tons burden, with three others under his command, all navigated by black men, himself being the only European, except an officer, who went down as passenger to the army. He pushed on as far as Sadras, about sixteen leagues, where he took refuge under the Dutch flag, and dispatched two messengers to Sir Eyre Coote, to inform him of his approach and to expect his orders; but the roads were all so ob-



structed by Hyder's horse, that to avoid the marauding army, they were obliged to take a great circuit; and as they ventured to travel only by night, they were eleven days before they returned. They brought from the General, the most urgent orders to proceed, at all hazards, and without a moment's delay; adding, that if the Captain brought only one vessel, and lost the rest, it would be of the most essential service. He accordingly immediately weighed anchor, proceeding at such a distance from Pondicherry, as to see from the mast-head the French flag, and if possible, to pass them in the night undiscovered. The French fleet that very evening weighed anchor, occasioned by a singular circumstance, which was afterwards known. Suffrein had sent his water-casks on shore to be filled, and they lay on the beach. Sir Eyre Coote had detached a corps of grenadiers and light infantry, who entered Pondicherry, which was open on the land side, since the fortifications had been demolished; they found and staved all the casks, destroying them entirely; and this induced Suffrein to run down

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to Point de Galle, to repair the loss, just at the moment when Captain Wilson was passing in the offing. As Suffrein's ships sailed so much better than his, they were off Cuddalore in the morning, and Captain Wilson arrived in the afternoon; thus providentially escaping, and bringing in the whole of the cargoes entrusted to his care, and so much wanted by the army. They had then been reduced to their last forty-five bags of paddy, and not a grain of rice to be procured. This supply rescued them from impending famine, or the necessity of cutting their way through the enemy; and under God, was the means, as all acknowledged, of the preservation of the army and of the Carnatic. Captain Wilson had some stores of his own, which were greedily seized and devoured as soon as landed. The next day he was invited to dine with the General and his staff, was placed at Sir Eyre Coote's right hand, and received the most cordial acknowledgments for his services. He informed the company of the seizure of his stores; they bid him prepare an account of them, and gave him a pa-



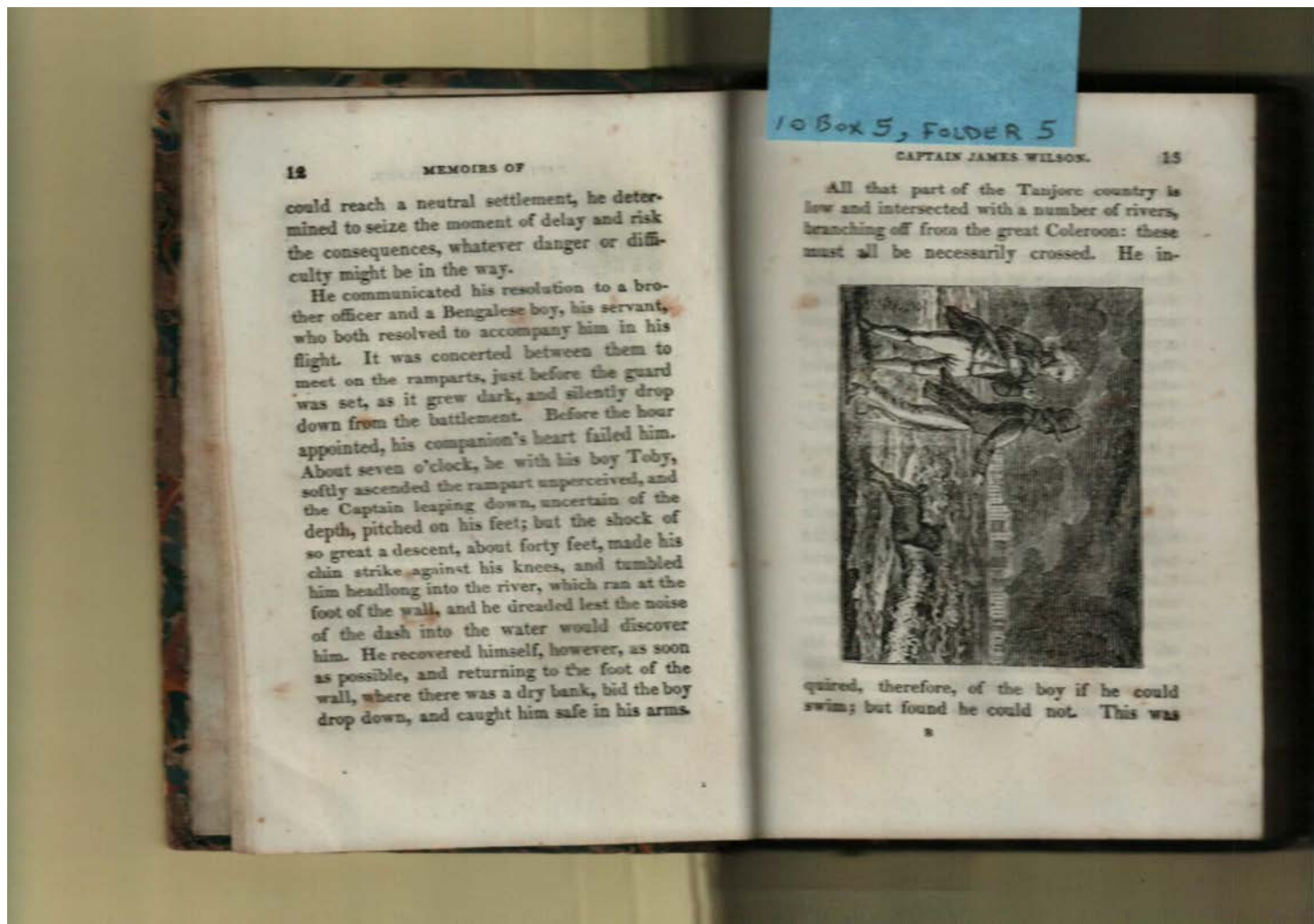
goda [81.94,] for every bottle of wine, and for the rest in proportion; so that this successful trip produced him about a thousand pounds, and a testimony of Sir Eyre Coote's high satisfaction in the services which he had performed.

Returning to Bengal, he continued to be employed in carrying down supplies, till he was captured by the French, when he was going with a very valuable cargo of military stores for Sir Edward Hughes, whose ammunition had been exhausted in the well known conflict with Suffrein. He was carried into Cuddalore, which had been taken by the French, and there he found the crew of the Hannibal in the same captivity. He was permitted, with other officers, to be at large on his parole, and hoped shortly to be exchanged.

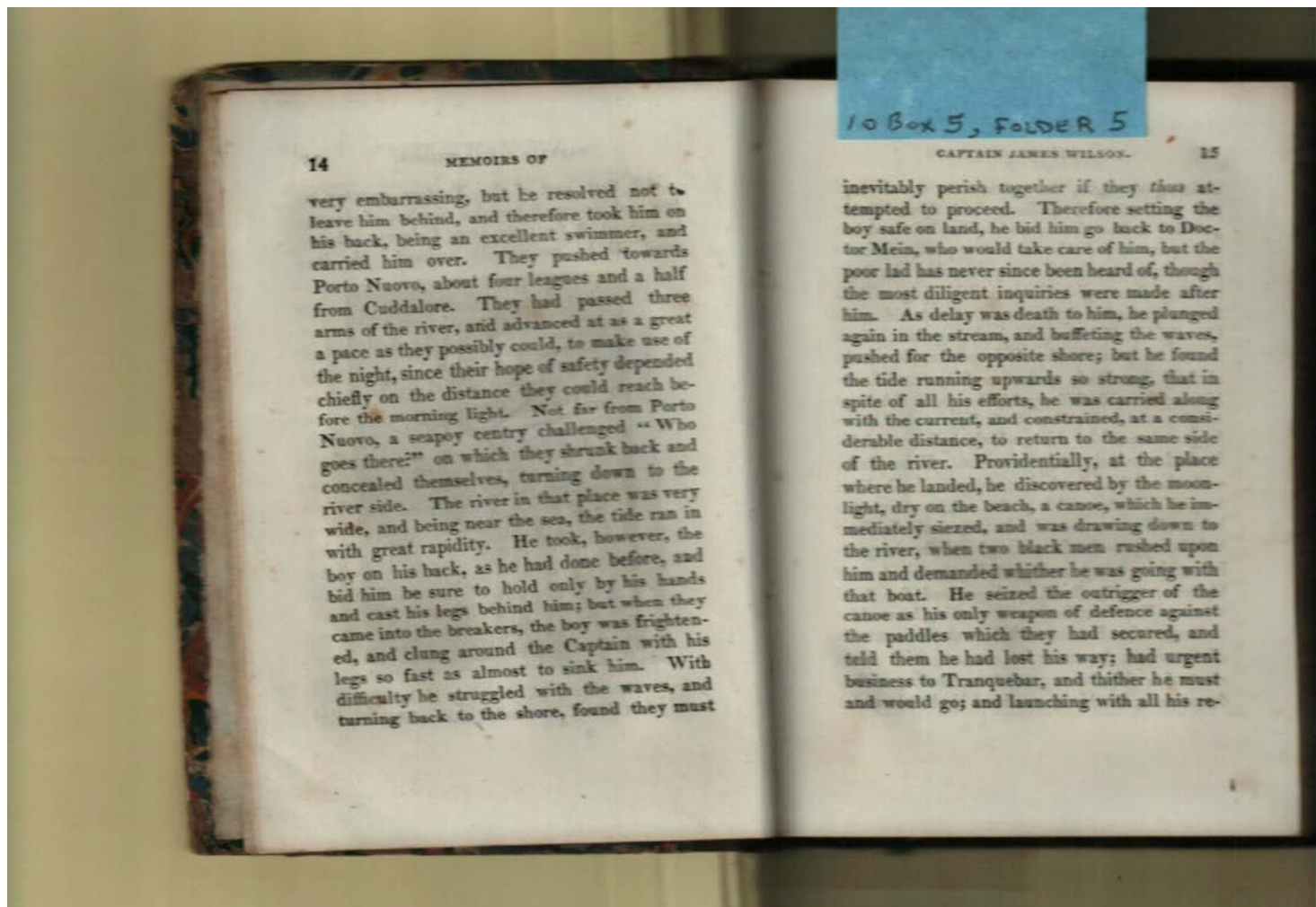
Hyder had at that time overrun and wasted great part of the Carnatic; and in conjunction with the French, after taking Cuddalore, hoped to expel the English from all that territory. He had lately defeated Colonel Baily's detachment, and made them prisoners, and used every effort to get as many

of the English as possible into his power, in order either to tempt them into his service, or to gratify his brutality by exposing them to a lingering death. He had bribed Suffrein with three hundred thousand rupees, [a rupee is about 50 cents,] to surrender up to him all his prisoners at Cuddalore; and the order being communicated to the commander of the fort, nothing could exceed the indignation and grief which he and his officers testified at such an infamous bargain. However, as he dared not disobey the orders of his superior, he informed the gentlemen on parole of the transaction, and his necessity of delivering them up the next day, to the escort appointed to carry them to Seringapatam.

Captain Wilson no sooner received the intelligence, than he determined that very night, if possible, to attempt his escape from a captivity which appeared to him worse than death. He had observed, as he walked the ramparts, the possibility of dropping down into the river; and though he neither knew the height of the wall, nor the width of the rivers which were to be crossed, before he

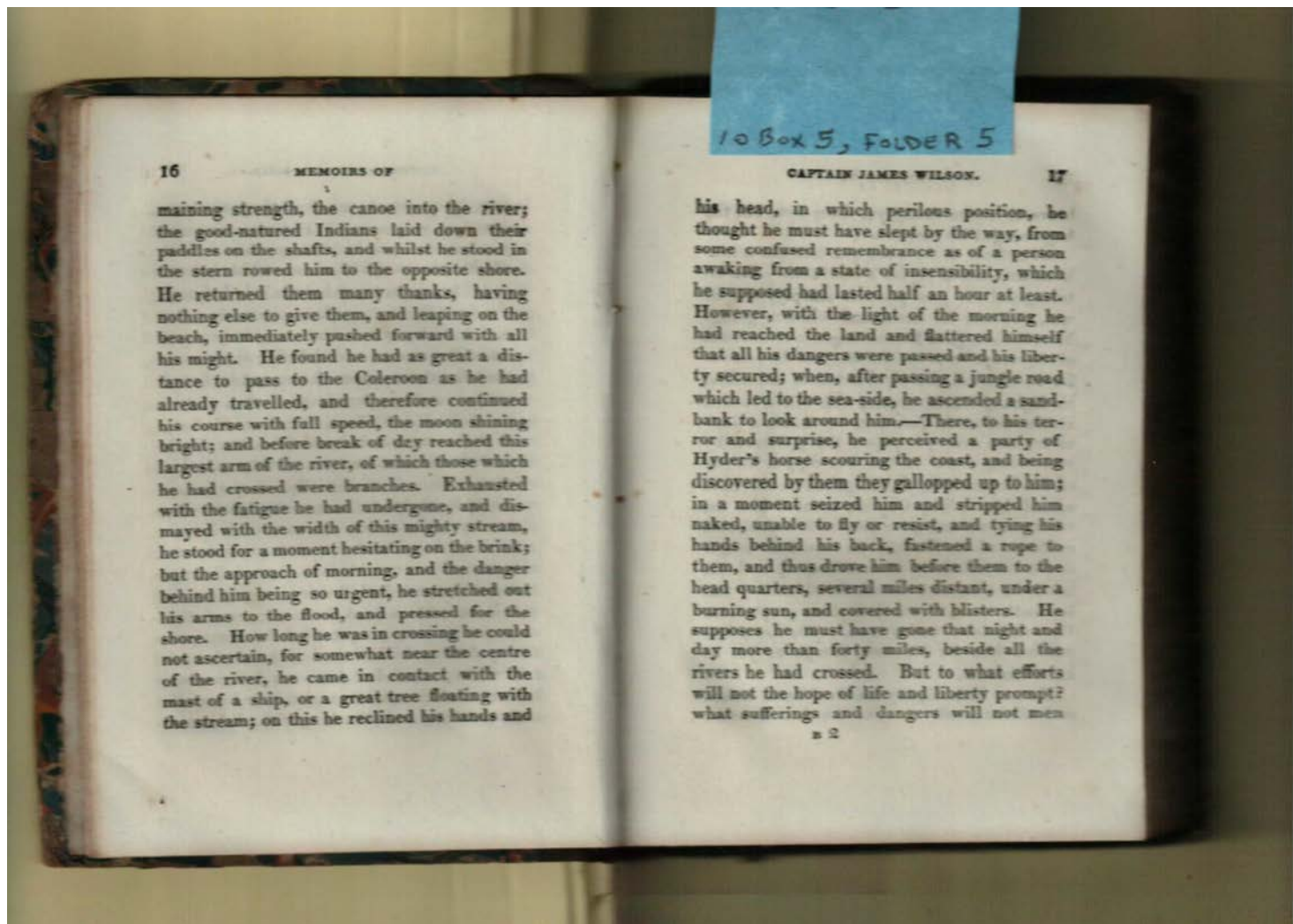


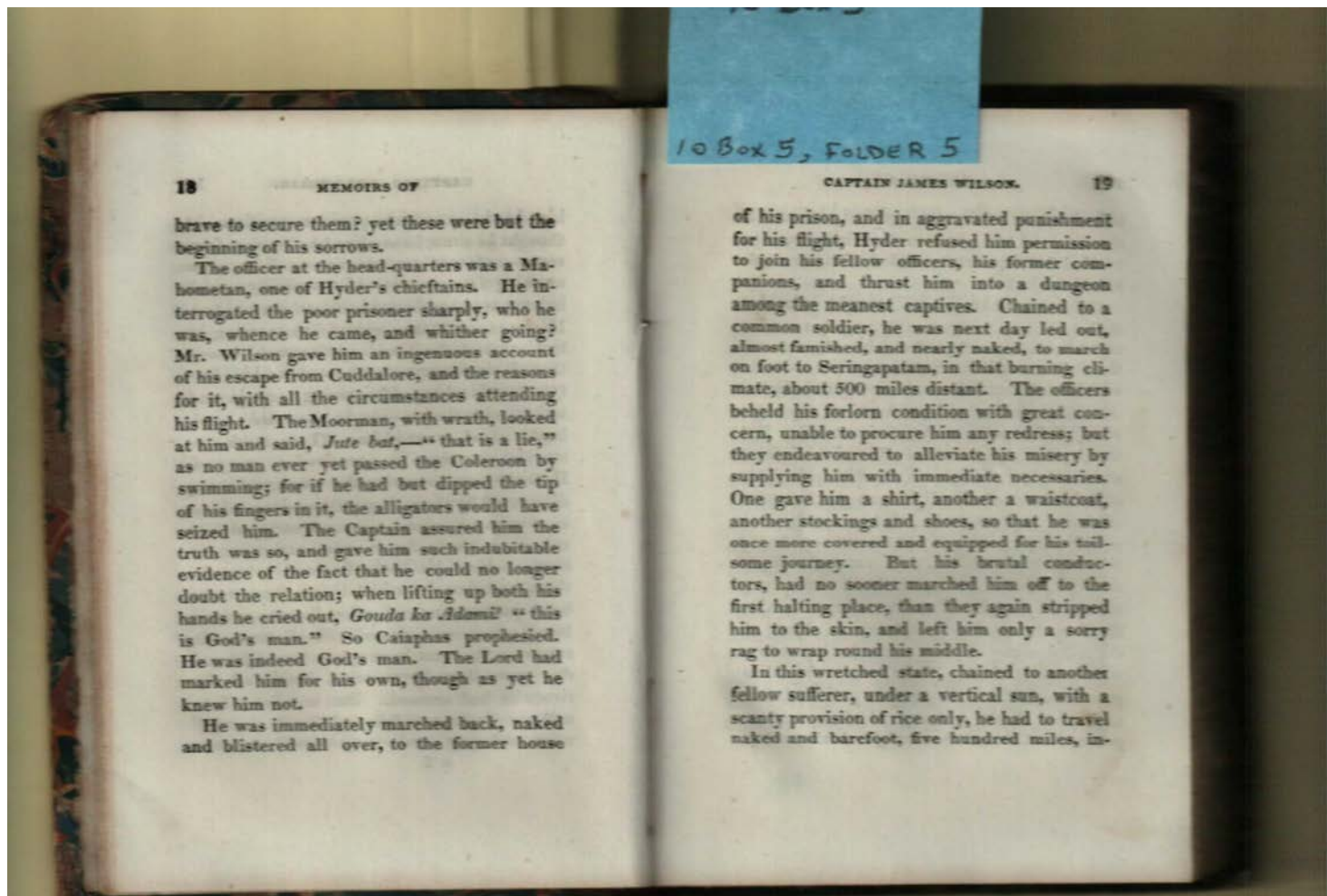




very embarrassing, but he resolved not to leave him behind, and therefore took him on his back, being an excellent swimmer, and carried him over. They pushed towards Porto Nuovo, about four leagues and a half from Cuddalore. They had passed three arms of the river, and advanced at as great a pace as they possibly could, to make use of the night, since their hope of safety depended chiefly on the distance they could reach before the morning light. Not far from Porto Nuovo, a seapoy centry challenged "Who goes there?" on which they shrunk back and concealed themselves, turning down to the river side. The river in that place was very wide, and being near the sea, the tide ran in with great rapidity. He took, however, the boy on his back, as he had done before, and bid him be sure to hold only by his hands and cast his legs behind him; but when they came into the breakers, the boy was frightened, and clung around the Captain with his legs so fast as almost to sink him. With difficulty he struggled with the waves, and turning back to the shore, found they must

inevitably perish together if they thus attempted to proceed. Therefore setting the boy safe on land, he bid him go back to Doctor Mein, who would take care of him, but the poor lad has never since been heard of, though the most diligent inquiries were made after him. As delay was death to him, he plunged again in the stream, and buffeting the waves, pushed for the opposite shore; but he found the tide running upwards so strong, that in spite of all his efforts, he was carried along with the current, and constrained, at a considerable distance, to return to the same side of the river. Providentially, at the place where he landed, he discovered by the moonlight, dry on the beach, a canoe, which he immediately seized, and was drawing down to the river, when two black men rushed upon him and demanded whether he was going with that boat. He seized the outrigger of the canoe as his only weapon of defence against the paddles which they had secured, and told them he had lost his way; had urgent business to Tranquebar, and thither he must and would go; and launching with all his re-





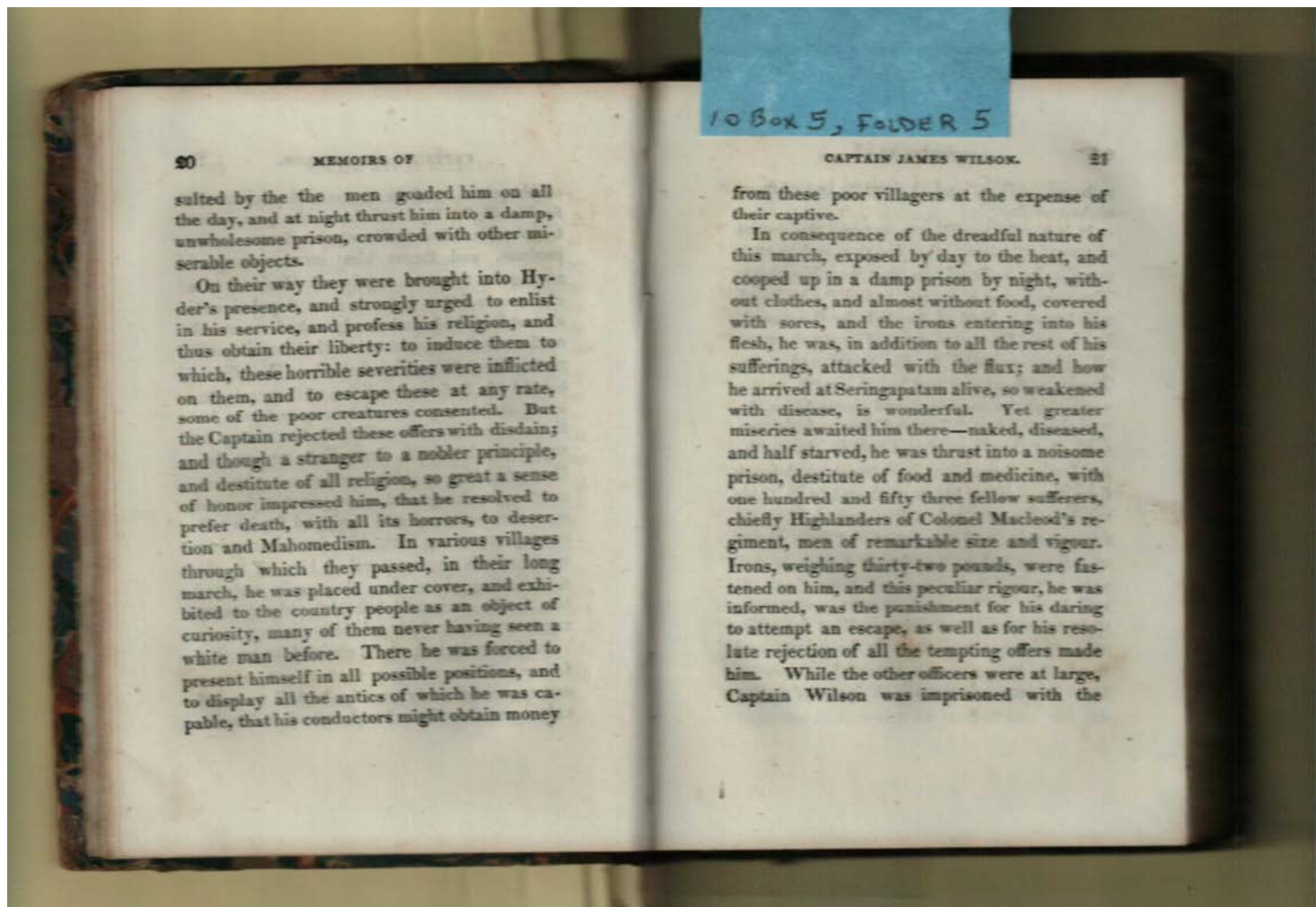
brave to secure them? yet these were but the beginning of his sorrows.

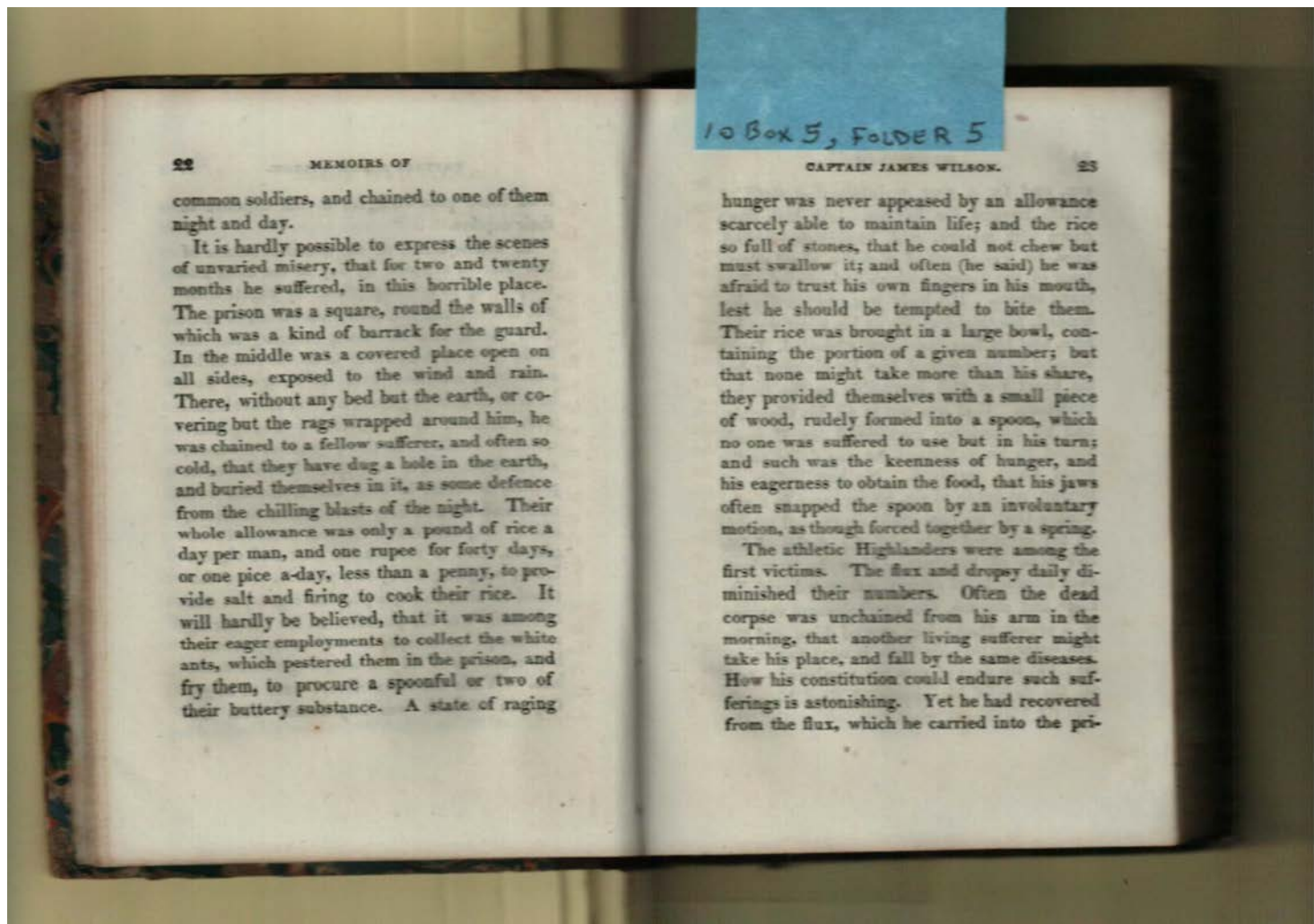
The officer at the head-quarters was a Mahometan, one of Hyder's chieftains. He interrogated the poor prisoner sharply, who he was, whence he came, and whither going? Mr. Wilson gave him an ingenuous account of his escape from Cuddalore, and the reasons for it, with all the circumstances attending his flight. The Moorman, with wrath, looked at him and said, *Jute bat*,—"that is a lie," as no man ever yet passed the Coleroon by swimming; for if he had but dipped the tip of his fingers in it, the alligators would have seized him. The Captain assured him the truth was so, and gave him such indubitable evidence of the fact that he could no longer doubt the relation; when lifting up both his hands he cried out, *Gouda ka Adami!* "this is God's man." So Caiaphas prophesied. He was indeed God's man. The Lord had marked him for his own, though as yet he knew him not.

He was immediately marched back, naked and blistered all over, to the former house

of his prison, and in aggravated punishment for his flight, Hyder refused him permission to join his fellow officers, his former companions, and thrust him into a dungeon among the meanest captives. Chained to a common soldier, he was next day led out, almost famished, and nearly naked, to march on foot to Seringapatam, in that burning climate, about 500 miles distant. The officers beheld his forlorn condition with great concern, unable to procure him any redress; but they endeavoured to alleviate his misery by supplying him with immediate necessaries. One gave him a shirt, another a waistcoat, another stockings and shoes, so that he was once more covered and equipped for his tedious journey. But his brutal conductors, had no sooner marched him off to the first halting place, than they again stripped him to the skin, and left him only a sorry rag to wrap round his middle.

In this wretched state, chained to another fellow sufferer, under a vertical sun, with a scanty provision of rice only, he had to travel naked and barefoot, five hundred miles, im-



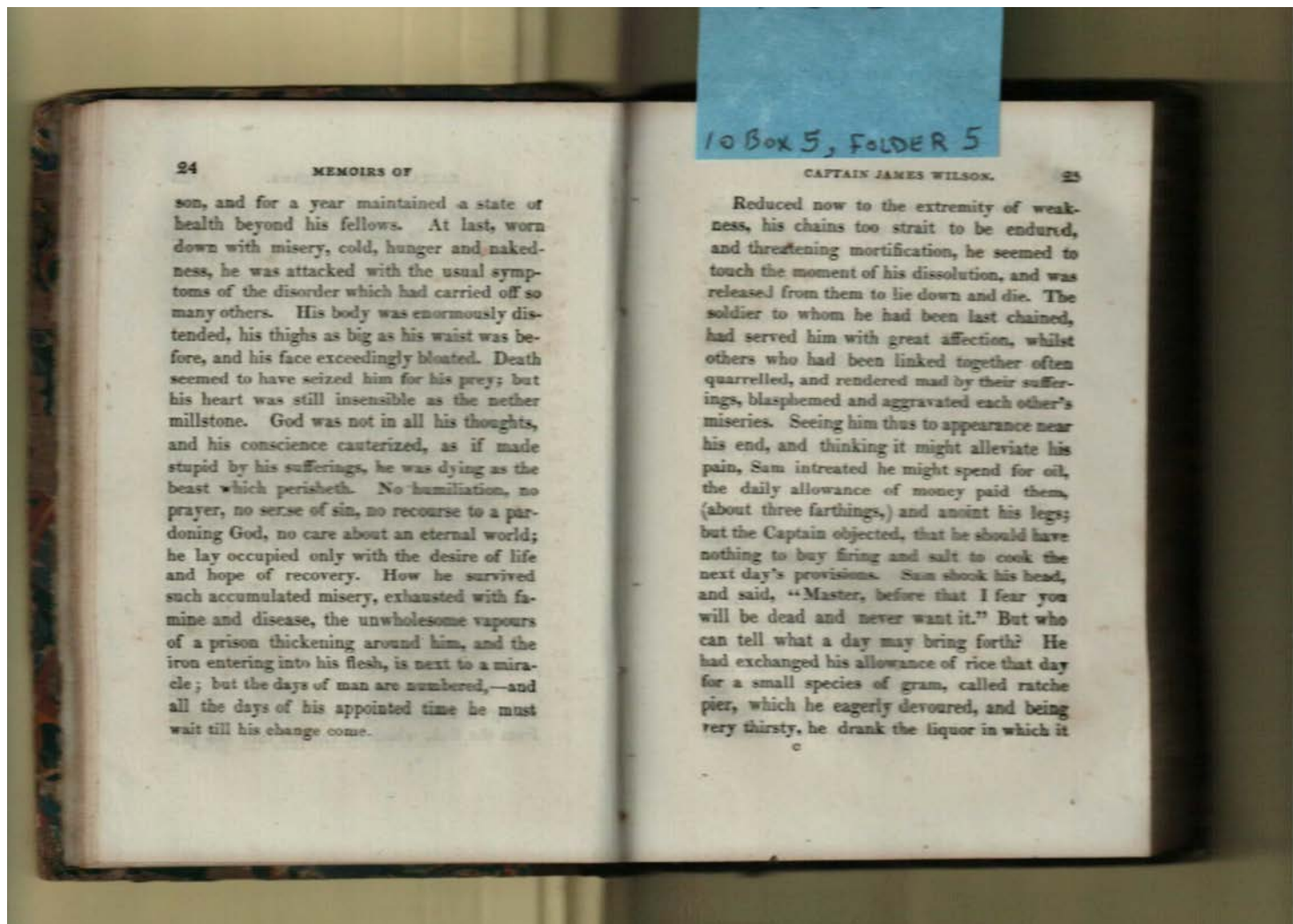


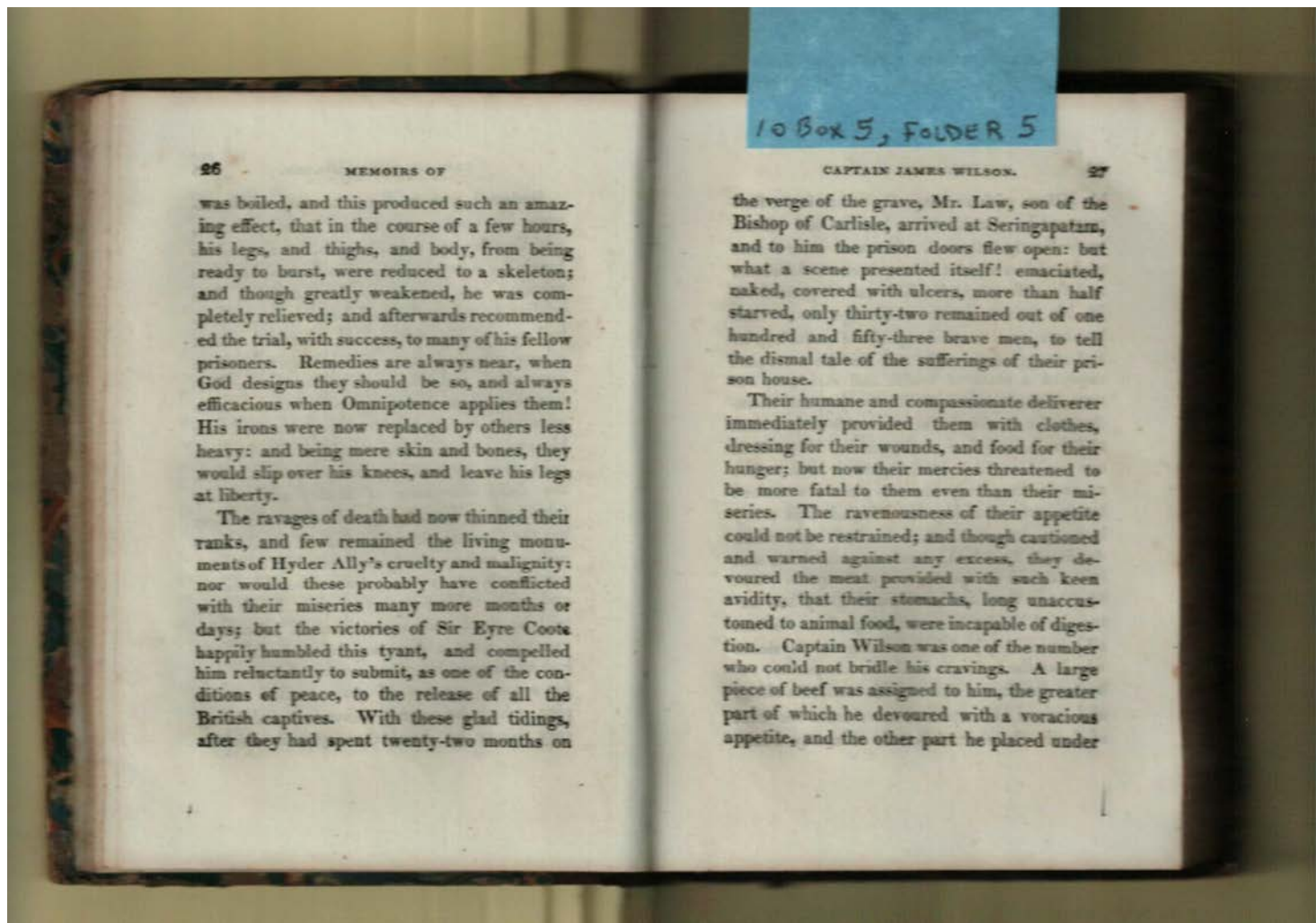
common soldiers, and chained to one of them night and day.

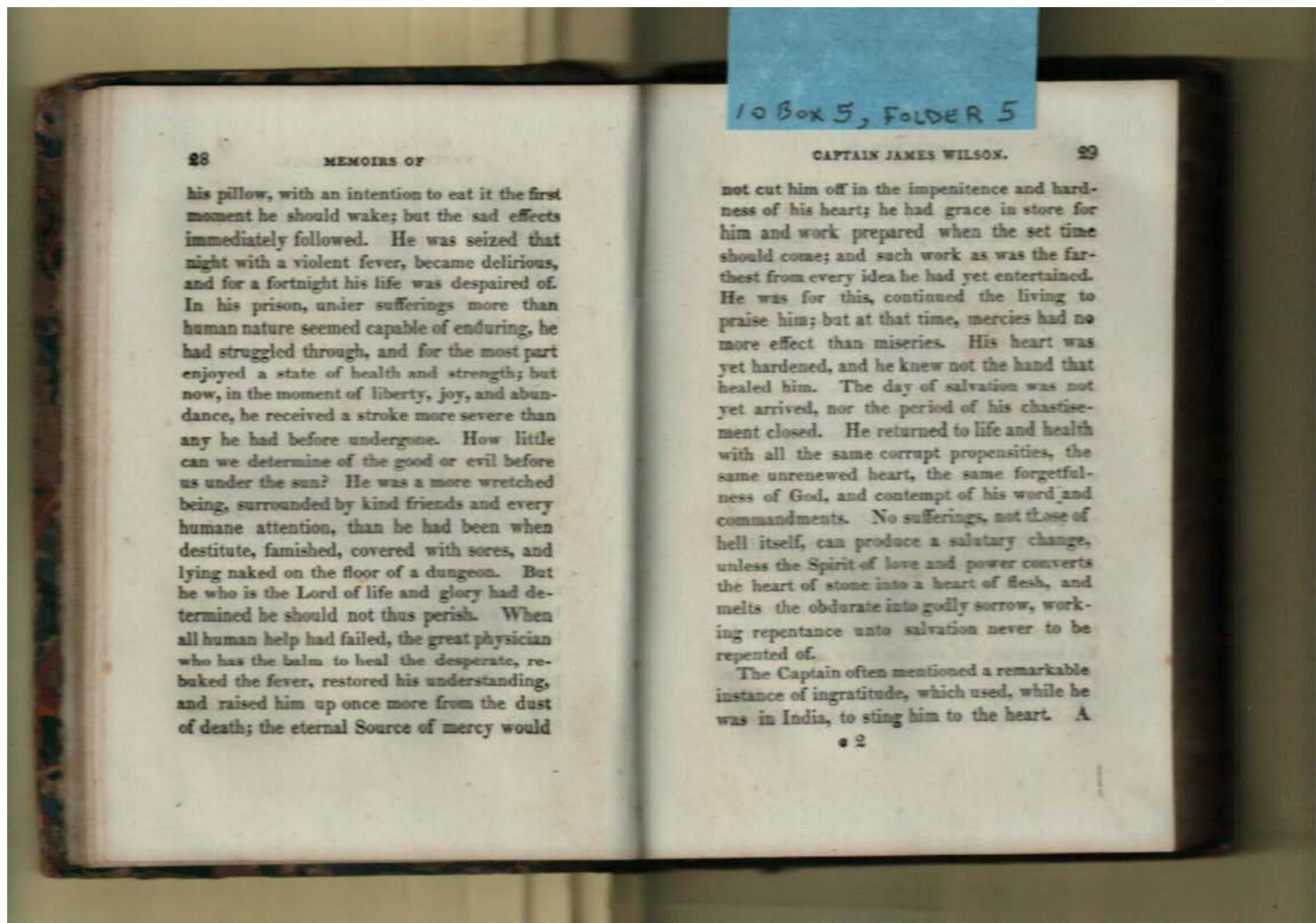
It is hardly possible to express the scenes of unvaried misery, that for two and twenty months he suffered, in this horrible place. The prison was a square, round the walls of which was a kind of barrack for the guard. In the middle was a covered place open on all sides, exposed to the wind and rain. There, without any bed but the earth, or covering but the rags wrapped around him, he was chained to a fellow sufferer, and often so cold, that they have dug a hole in the earth, and buried themselves in it, as some defence from the chilling blasts of the night. Their whole allowance was only a pound of rice a day per man, and one rupee for forty days, or one pice a-day, less than a penny, to provide salt and firing to cook their rice. It will hardly be believed, that it was among their eager employments to collect the white ants, which pestered them in the prison, and fry them, to procure a spoonful or two of their buttery substance. A state of raging

hunger was never appeased by an allowance scarcely able to maintain life; and the rice so full of stones, that he could not chew but must swallow it; and often (he said) he was afraid to trust his own fingers in his mouth, lest he should be tempted to bite them. Their rice was brought in a large bowl, containing the portion of a given number; but that none might take more than his share, they provided themselves with a small piece of wood, rudely formed into a spoon, which no one was suffered to use but in his turn; and such was the keenness of hunger, and his eagerness to obtain the food, that his jaws often snapped the spoon by an involuntary motion, as though forced together by a spring.

The athletic Highlanders were among the first victims. The flux and dropsy daily diminished their numbers. Often the dead corpse was unchained from his arm in the morning, that another living sufferer might take his place, and fall by the same diseases. How his constitution could endure such sufferings is astonishing. Yet he had recovered from the flux, which he carried into the pri-





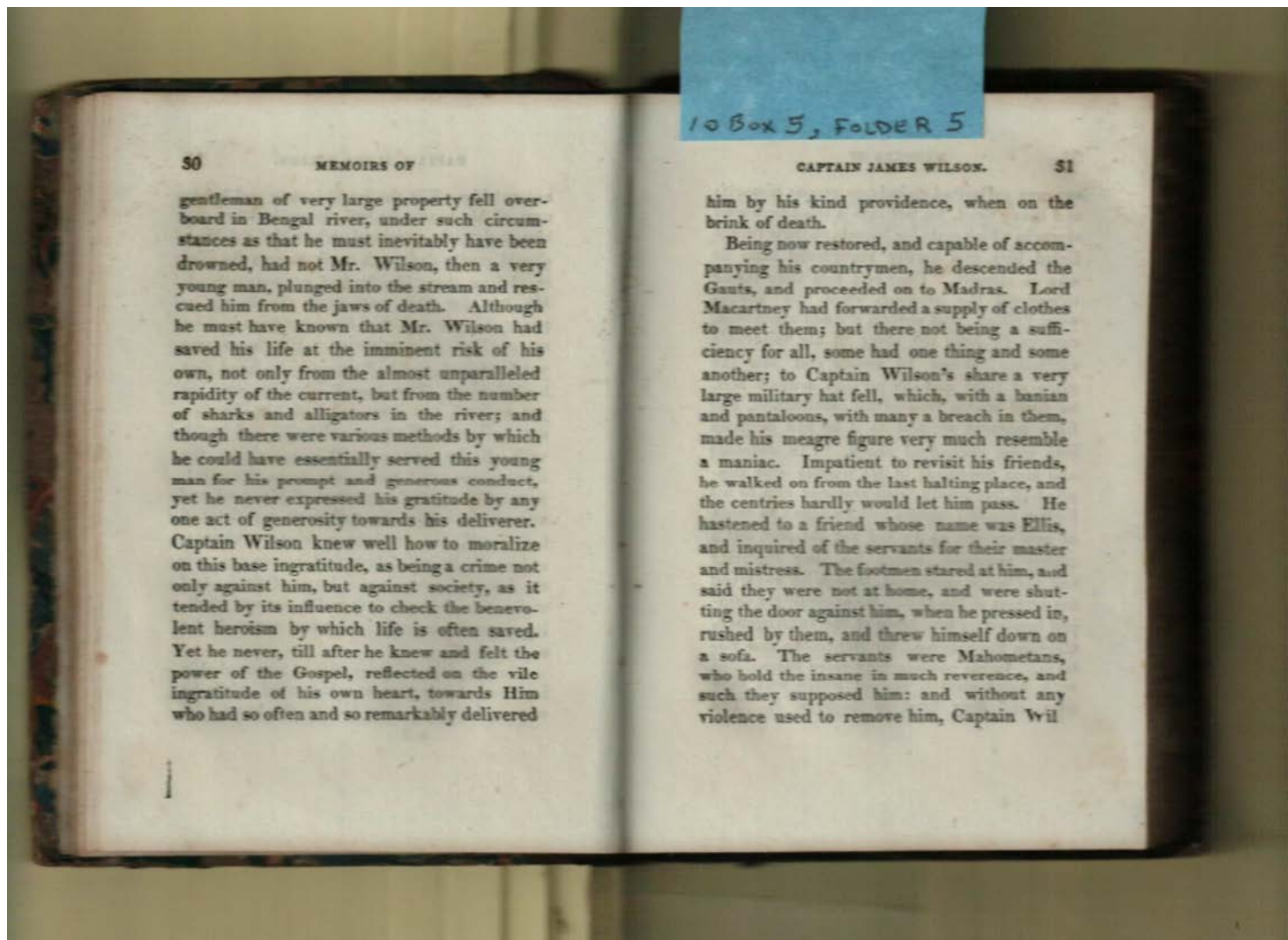


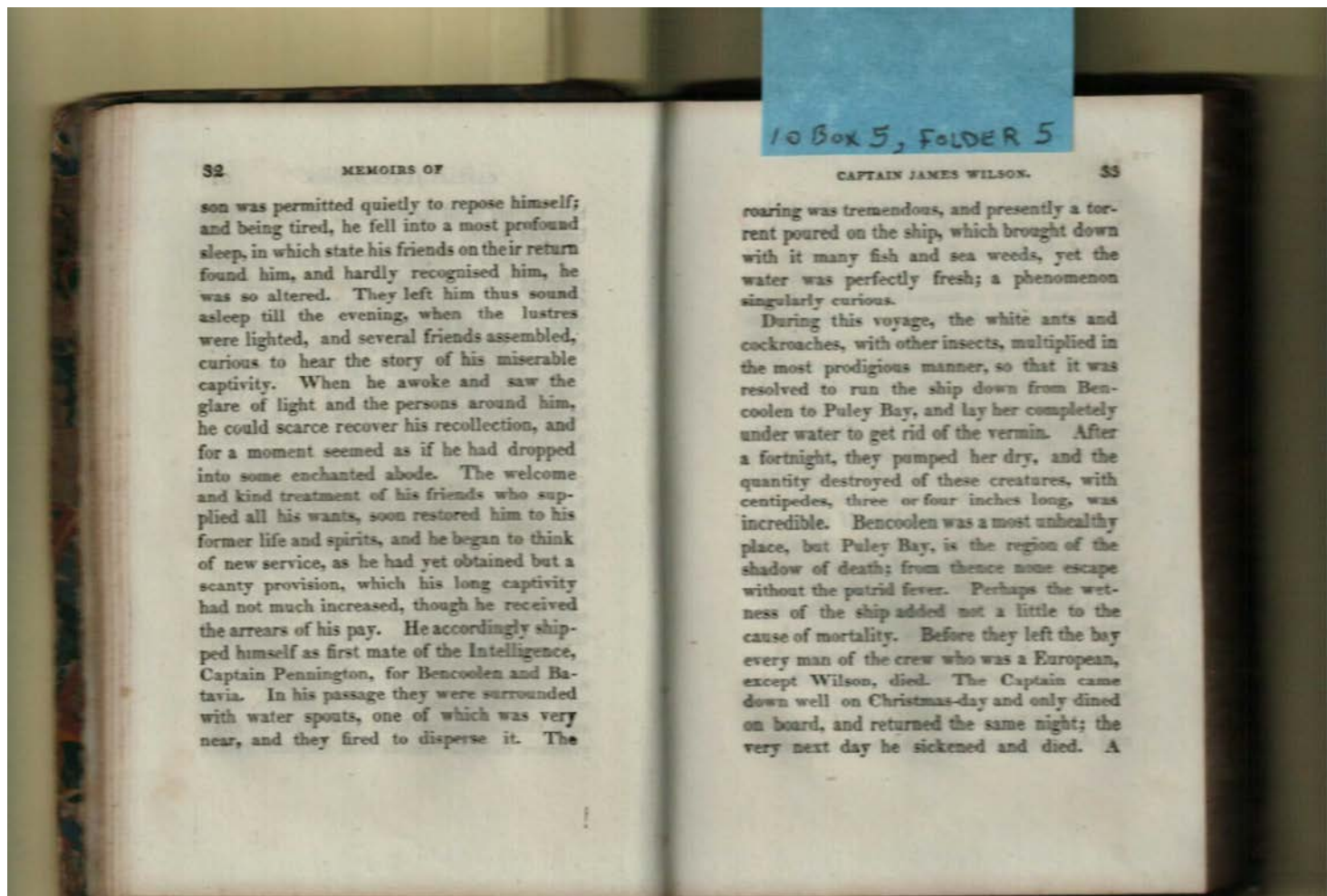
his pillow, with an intention to eat it the first moment he should wake; but the sad effects immediately followed. He was seized that night with a violent fever, became delirious, and for a fortnight his life was despaired of. In his prison, under sufferings more than human nature seemed capable of enduring, he had struggled through, and for the most part enjoyed a state of health and strength; but now, in the moment of liberty, joy, and abundance, he received a stroke more severe than any he had before undergone. How little can we determine of the good or evil before us under the sun? He was a more wretched being, surrounded by kind friends and every humane attention, than he had been when destitute, famished, covered with sores, and lying naked on the floor of a dungeon. But he who is the Lord of life and glory had determined he should not thus perish. When all human help had failed, the great physician who has the balm to heal the desperate, rebuked the fever, restored his understanding, and raised him up once more from the dust of death; the eternal Source of mercy would

not cut him off in the impenitence and hardness of his heart; he had grace in store for him and work prepared when the set time should come; and such work as was the farthest from every idea he had yet entertained. He was for this, continued the living to praise him; but at that time, mercies had no more effect than miseries. His heart was yet hardened, and he knew not the hand that healed him. The day of salvation was not yet arrived, nor the period of his chastisement closed. He returned to life and health with all the same corrupt propensities, the same unrenewed heart, the same forgetfulness of God, and contempt of his word and commandments. No sufferings, not those of hell itself, can produce a salutary change, unless the Spirit of love and power converts the heart of stone into a heart of flesh, and melts the obdurate into godly sorrow, working repentance unto salvation never to be repented of.

The Captain often mentioned a remarkable instance of ingratitude, which used, while he was in India, to sting him to the heart. A



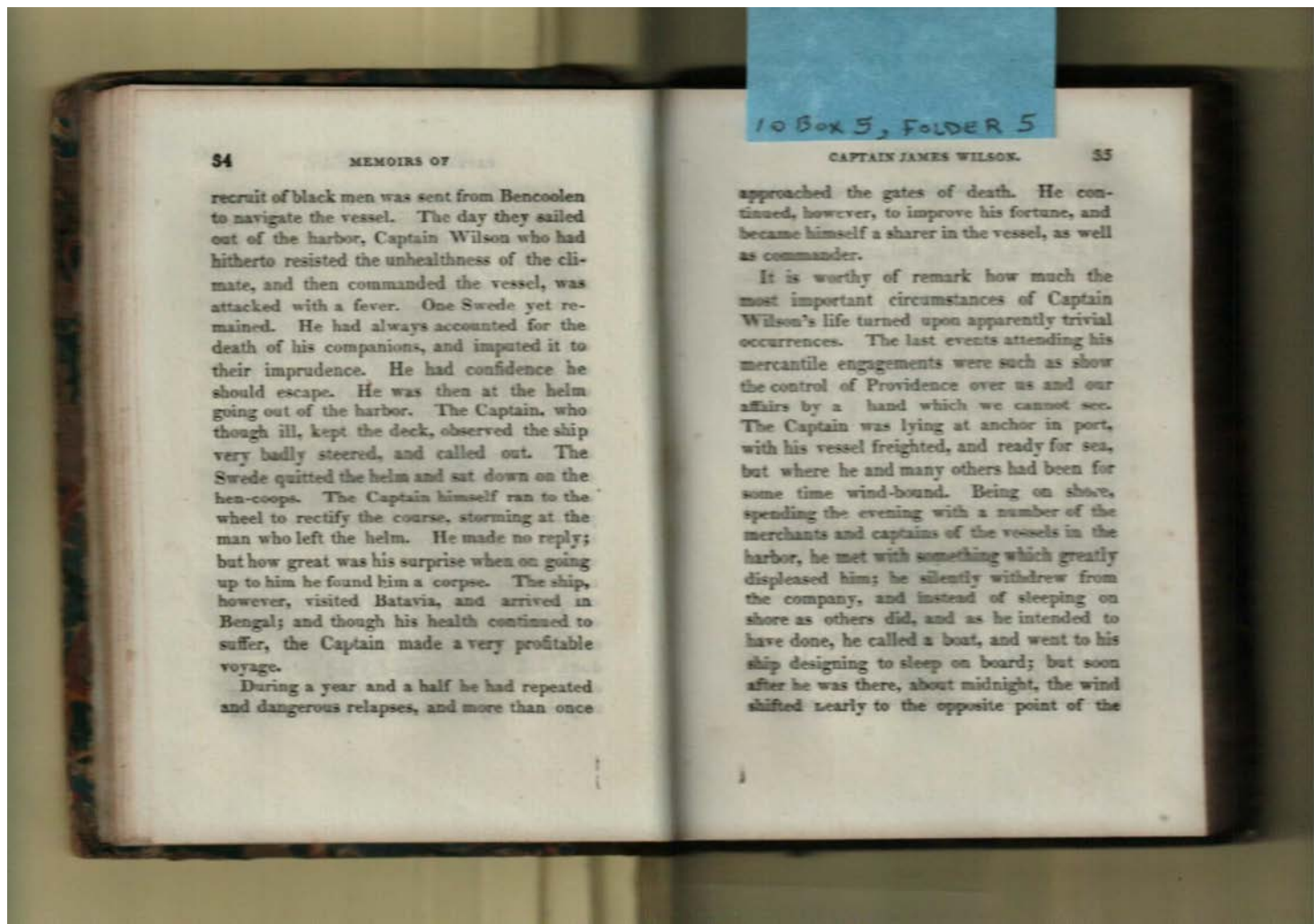




son was permitted quietly to repose himself; and being tired, he fell into a most profound sleep, in which state his friends on their return found him, and hardly recognised him, he was so altered. They left him thus sound asleep till the evening, when the lustres were lighted, and several friends assembled, curious to hear the story of his miserable captivity. When he awoke and saw the glare of light and the persons around him, he could scarce recover his recollection, and for a moment seemed as if he had dropped into some enchanted abode. The welcome and kind treatment of his friends who supplied all his wants, soon restored him to his former life and spirits, and he began to think of new service, as he had yet obtained but a scanty provision, which his long captivity had not much increased, though he received the arrears of his pay. He accordingly shipped himself as first mate of the *Intelligence*, Captain Pennington, for Bencoolen and Batavia. In his passage they were surrounded with water spouts, one of which was very near, and they fired to disperse it. The

roaring was tremendous, and presently a torrent poured on the ship, which brought down with it many fish and sea weeds, yet the water was perfectly fresh; a phenomenon singularly curious.

During this voyage, the white ants and cockroaches, with other insects, multiplied in the most prodigious manner, so that it was resolved to run the ship down from Bencoolen to Puley Bay, and lay her completely under water to get rid of the vermin. After a fortnight, they pumped her dry, and the quantity destroyed of these creatures, with centipedes, three or four inches long, was incredible. Bencoolen was a most unhealthy place, but Puley Bay, is the region of the shadow of death; from thence none escape without the putrid fever. Perhaps the wetness of the ship added not a little to the cause of mortality. Before they left the bay every man of the crew who was a European, except Wilson, died. The Captain came down well on Christmas-day and only dined on board, and returned the same night; the very next day he sickened and died. A

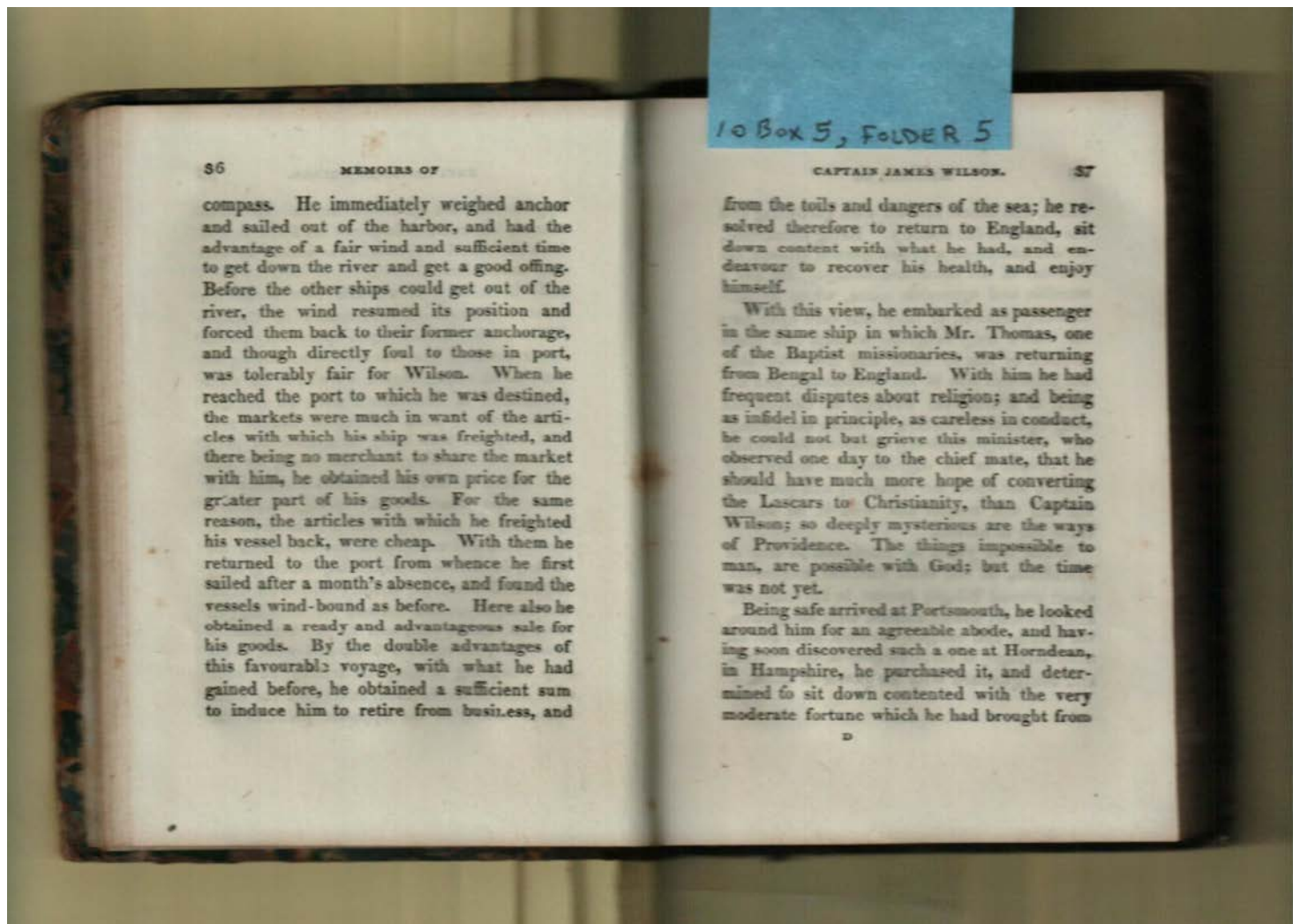


recruit of black men was sent from Bencoolen to navigate the vessel. The day they sailed out of the harbor, Captain Wilson who had hitherto resisted the unhealthiness of the climate, and then commanded the vessel, was attacked with a fever. One Swede yet remained. He had always accounted for the death of his companions, and imputed it to their imprudence. He had confidence he should escape. He was then at the helm going out of the harbor. The Captain, who though ill, kept the deck, observed the ship very badly steered, and called out. The Swede quitted the helm and sat down on the hen-coops. The Captain himself ran to the wheel to rectify the course, storming at the man who left the helm. He made no reply; but how great was his surprise when on going up to him he found him a corpse. The ship, however, visited Batavia, and arrived in Bengal; and though his health continued to suffer, the Captain made a very profitable voyage.

During a year and a half he had repeated and dangerous relapses, and more than once

approached the gates of death. He continued, however, to improve his fortune, and became himself a sharer in the vessel, as well as commander.

It is worthy of remark how much the most important circumstances of Captain Wilson's life turned upon apparently trivial occurrences. The last events attending his mercantile engagements were such as show the control of Providence over us and our affairs by a hand which we cannot see. The Captain was lying at anchor in port, with his vessel freighted, and ready for sea, but where he and many others had been for some time wind-bound. Being on shore, spending the evening with a number of the merchants and captains of the vessels in the harbor, he met with something which greatly displeased him; he silently withdrew from the company, and instead of sleeping on shore as others did, and as he intended to have done, he called a boat, and went to his ship designing to sleep on board; but soon after he was there, about midnight, the wind shifted nearly to the opposite point of the



compass. He immediately weighed anchor and sailed out of the harbor, and had the advantage of a fair wind and sufficient time to get down the river and get a good offing. Before the other ships could get out of the river, the wind resumed its position and forced them back to their former anchorage, and though directly foul to those in port, was tolerably fair for Wilson. When he reached the port to which he was destined, the markets were much in want of the articles with which his ship was freighted, and there being no merchant to share the market with him, he obtained his own price for the greater part of his goods. For the same reason, the articles with which he freighted his vessel back, were cheap. With them he returned to the port from whence he first sailed after a month's absence, and found the vessels wind-bound as before. Here also he obtained a ready and advantageous sale for his goods. By the double advantages of this favourable voyage, with what he had gained before, he obtained a sufficient sum to induce him to retire from business, and

from the toils and dangers of the sea; he resolved therefore to return to England, sit down content with what he had, and endeavour to recover his health, and enjoy himself.

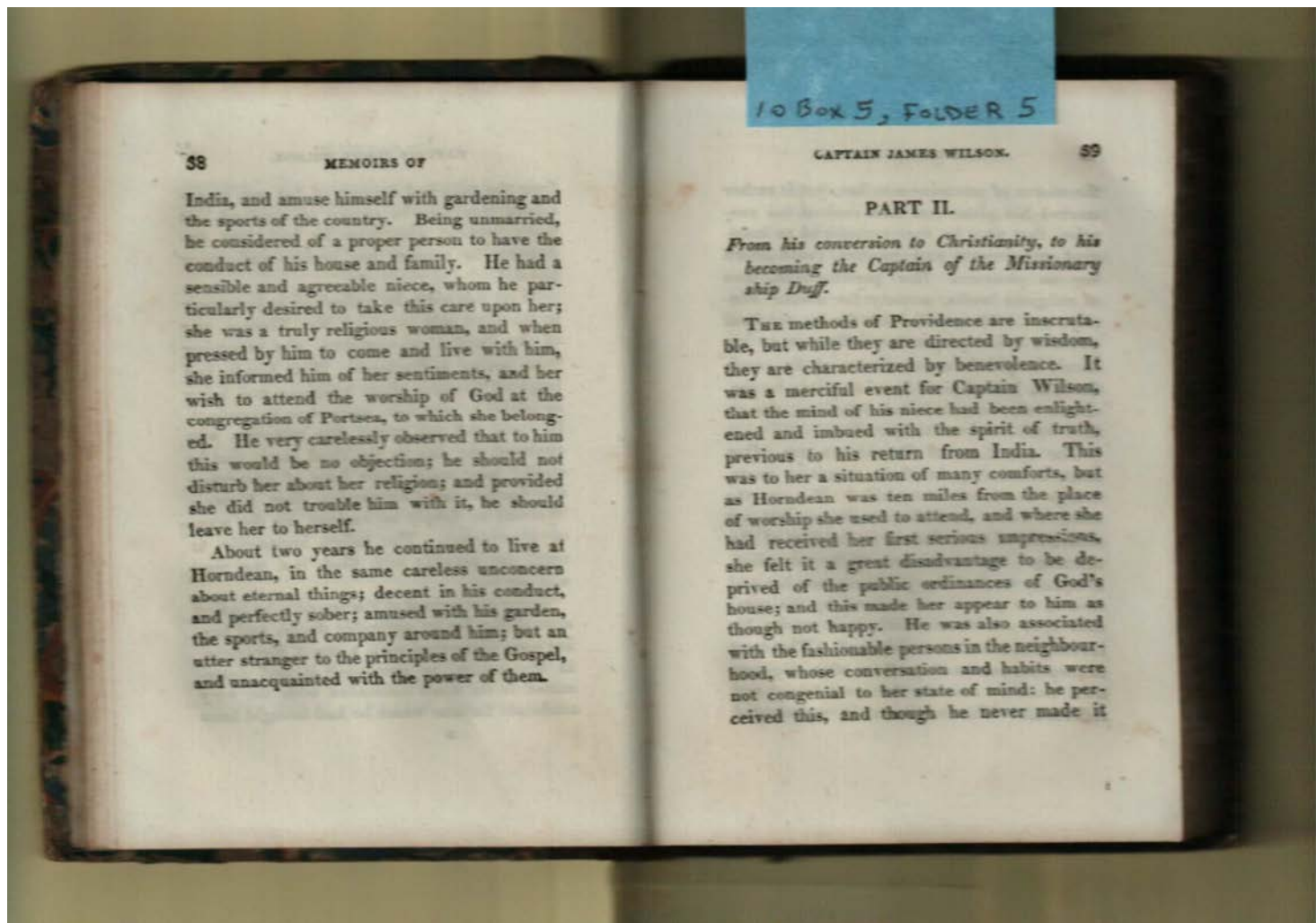
With this view, he embarked as passenger in the same ship in which Mr. Thomas, one of the Baptist missionaries, was returning from Bengal to England. With him he had frequent disputes about religion; and being as infidel in principle, as careless in conduct, he could not but grieve this minister, who observed one day to the chief mate, that he should have much more hope of converting the Lascars to Christianity, than Captain Wilson; so deeply mysterious are the ways of Providence. The things impossible to man, are possible with God; but the time was not yet.

Being safe arrived at Portsmouth, he looked around him for an agreeable abode, and having soon discovered such a one at Horndean, in Hampshire, he purchased it, and determined to sit down contented with the very moderate fortune which he had brought from

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James Wilson Part

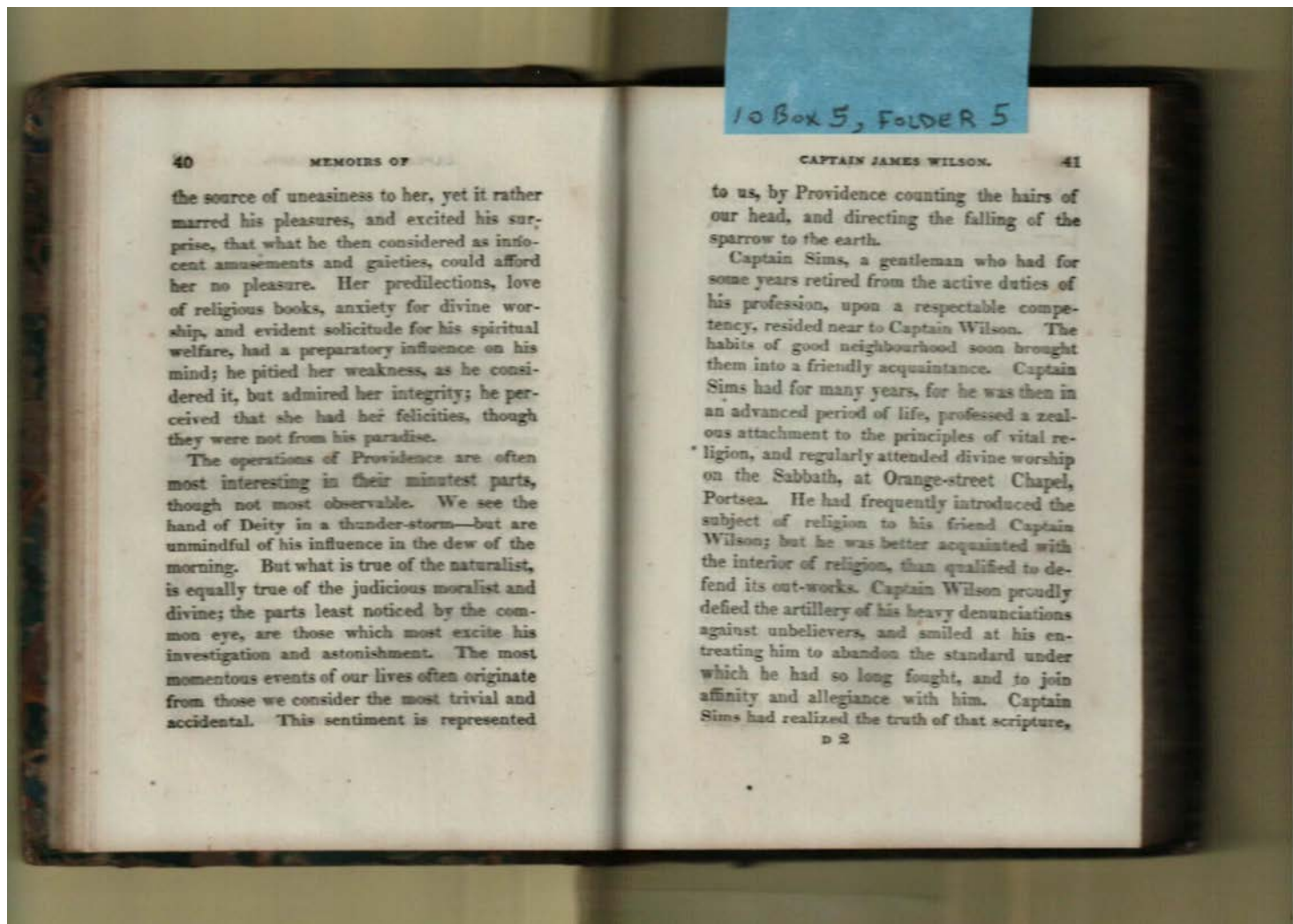
II

**Places:**

Philadelphia, PA

**Types:**

book

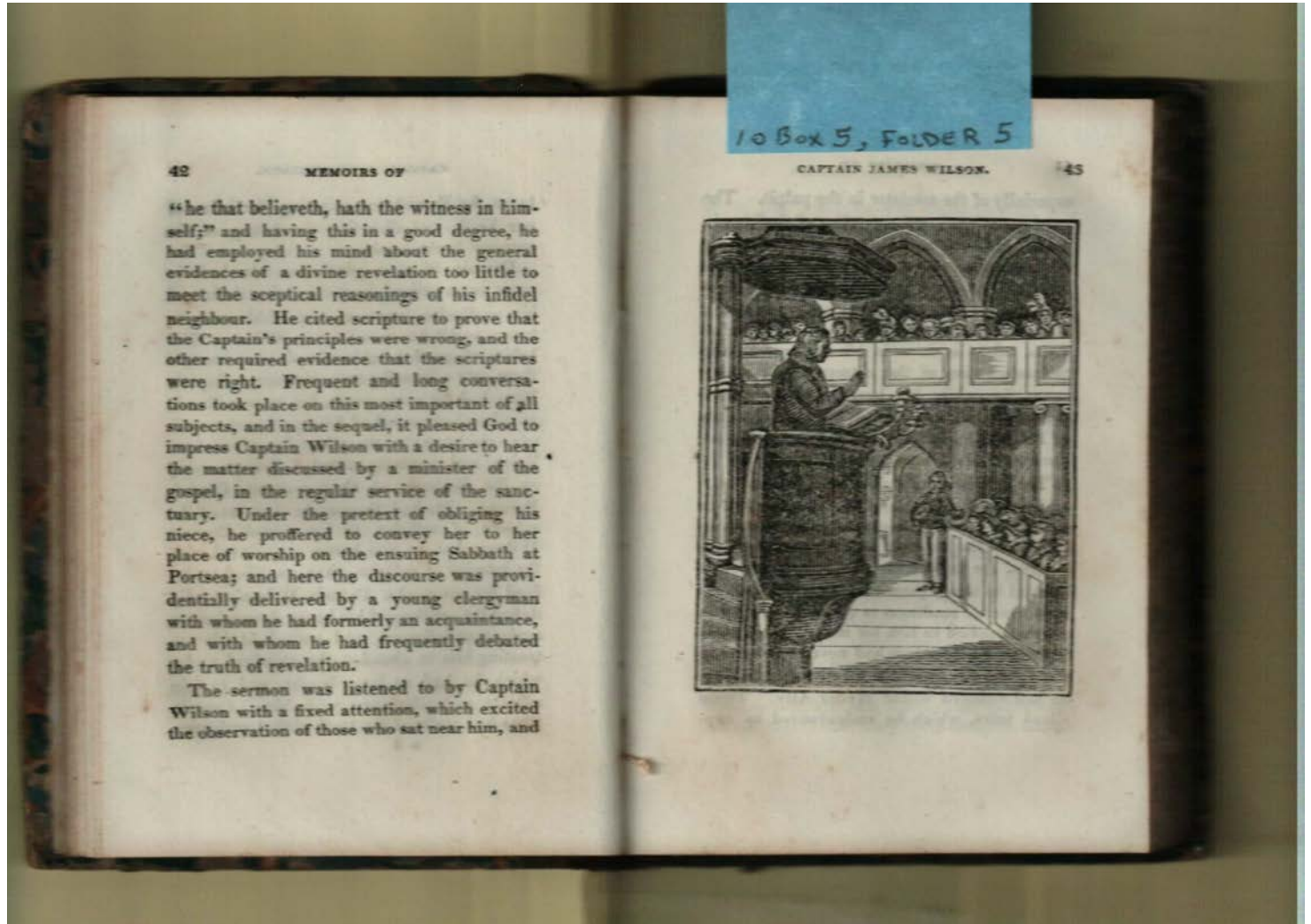


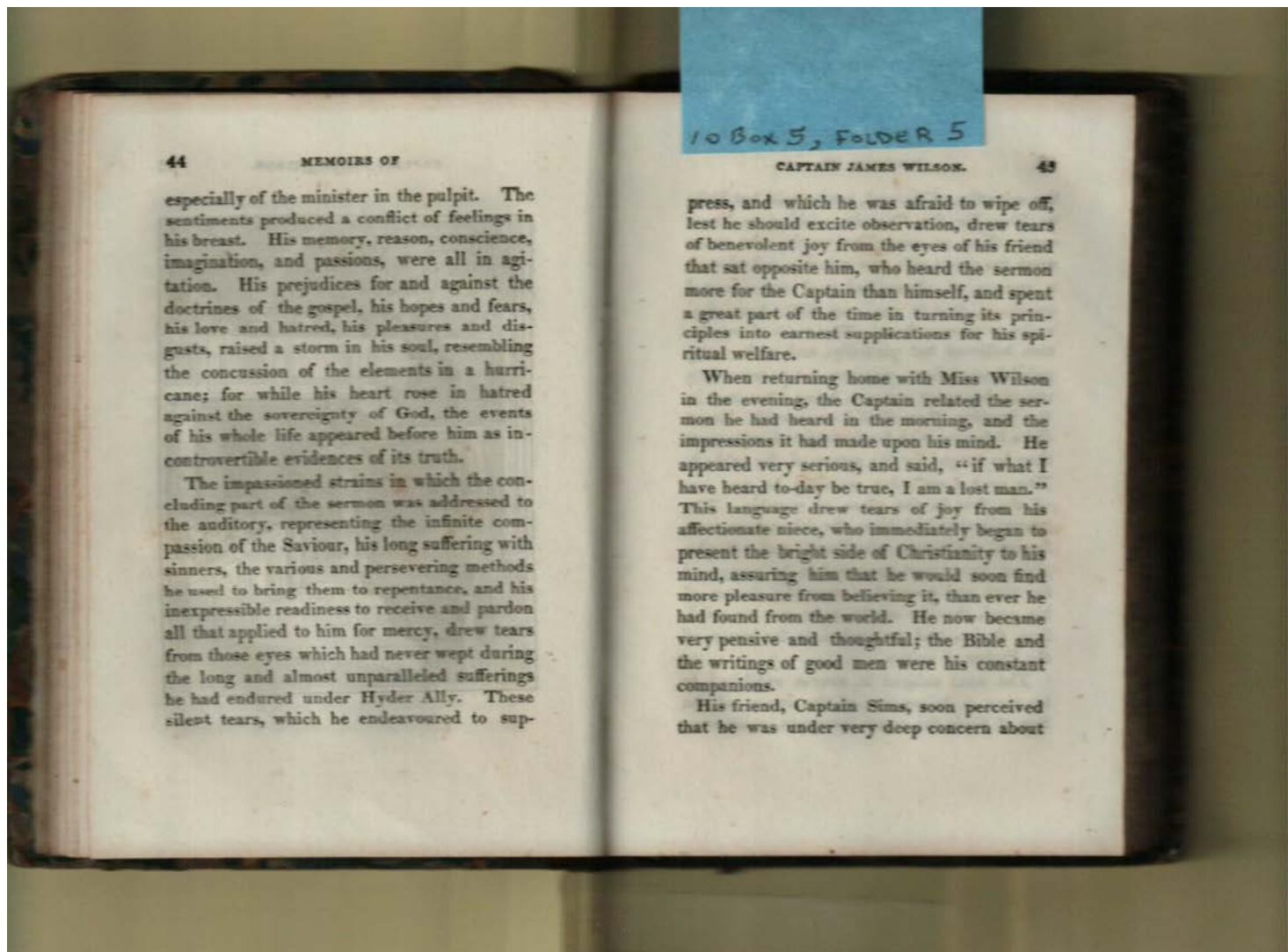
the source of uneasiness to her, yet it rather marred his pleasures, and excited his surprise, that what he then considered as innocent amusements and gaieties, could afford her no pleasure. Her predilections, love of religious books, anxiety for divine worship, and evident solicitude for his spiritual welfare, had a preparatory influence on his mind; he pitied her weakness, as he considered it, but admired her integrity; he perceived that she had her felicities, though they were not from his paradise.

The operations of Providence are often most interesting in their minutest parts, though not most observable. We see the hand of Deity in a thunder-storm—but are unmindful of his influence in the dew of the morning. But what is true of the naturalist, is equally true of the judicious moralist and divine; the parts least noticed by the common eye, are those which most excite his investigation and astonishment. The most momentous events of our lives often originate from those we consider the most trivial and accidental. This sentiment is represented

to us, by Providence counting the hairs of our head, and directing the falling of the sparrow to the earth.

Captain Sims, a gentleman who had for some years retired from the active duties of his profession, upon a respectable competency, resided near to Captain Wilson. The habits of good neighbourhood soon brought them into a friendly acquaintance. Captain Sims had for many years, for he was then in an advanced period of life, professed a zealous attachment to the principles of vital religion, and regularly attended divine worship on the Sabbath, at Orange-street Chapel, Portsea. He had frequently introduced the subject of religion to his friend Captain Wilson; but he was better acquainted with the interior of religion, than qualified to defend its out-works. Captain Wilson proudly defied the artillery of his heavy denunciations against unbelievers, and smiled at his entreating him to abandon the standard under which he had so long fought, and to join affinity and allegiance with him. Captain Sims had realized the truth of that scripture,





especially of the minister in the pulpit. The sentiments produced a conflict of feelings in his breast. His memory, reason, conscience, imagination, and passions, were all in agitation. His prejudices for and against the doctrines of the gospel, his hopes and fears, his love and hatred, his pleasures and disgusts, raised a storm in his soul, resembling the concussion of the elements in a hurricane; for while his heart rose in hatred against the sovereignty of God, the events of his whole life appeared before him as incontrovertible evidences of its truth.

The impassioned strains in which the concluding part of the sermon was addressed to the auditory, representing the infinite compassion of the Saviour, his long suffering with sinners, the various and persevering methods he used to bring them to repentance, and his inexpressible readiness to receive and pardon all that applied to him for mercy, drew tears from those eyes which had never wept during the long and almost unparalleled sufferings he had endured under Hyder Ally. These silent tears, which he endeavoured to sup-

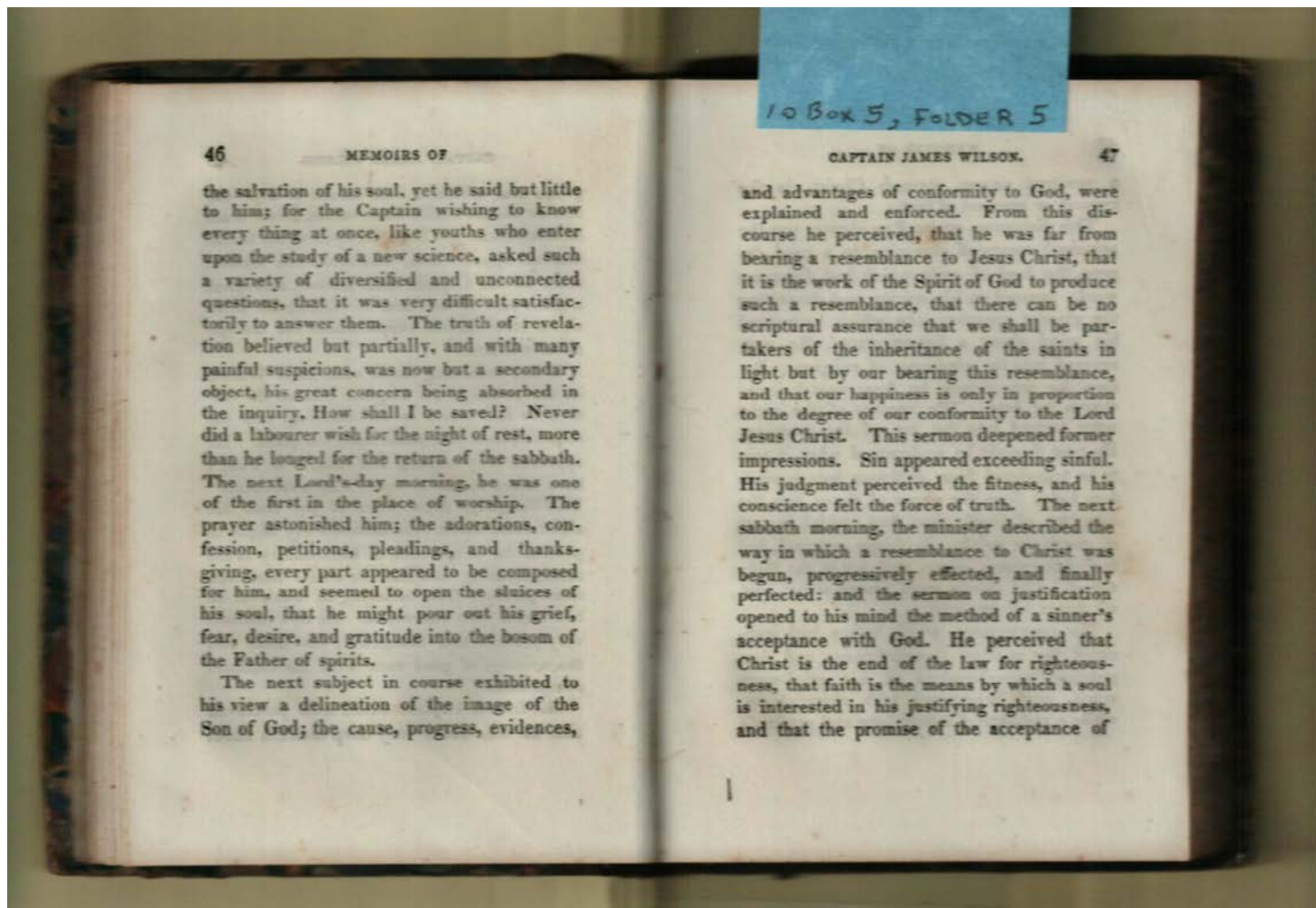
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press, and which he was afraid to wipe off, lest he should excite observation, drew tears of benevolent joy from the eyes of his friend that sat opposite him, who heard the sermon more for the Captain than himself, and spent a great part of the time in turning its principles into earnest supplications for his spiritual welfare.

When returning home with Miss Wilson in the evening, the Captain related the sermon he had heard in the morning, and the impressions it had made upon his mind. He appeared very serious, and said, "if what I have heard to-day be true, I am a lost man." This language drew tears of joy from his affectionate niece, who immediately began to present the bright side of Christianity to his mind, assuring him that he would soon find more pleasure from believing it, than ever he had found from the world. He now became very pensive and thoughtful; the Bible and the writings of good men were his constant companions.

His friend, Captain Sims, soon perceived that he was under very deep concern about

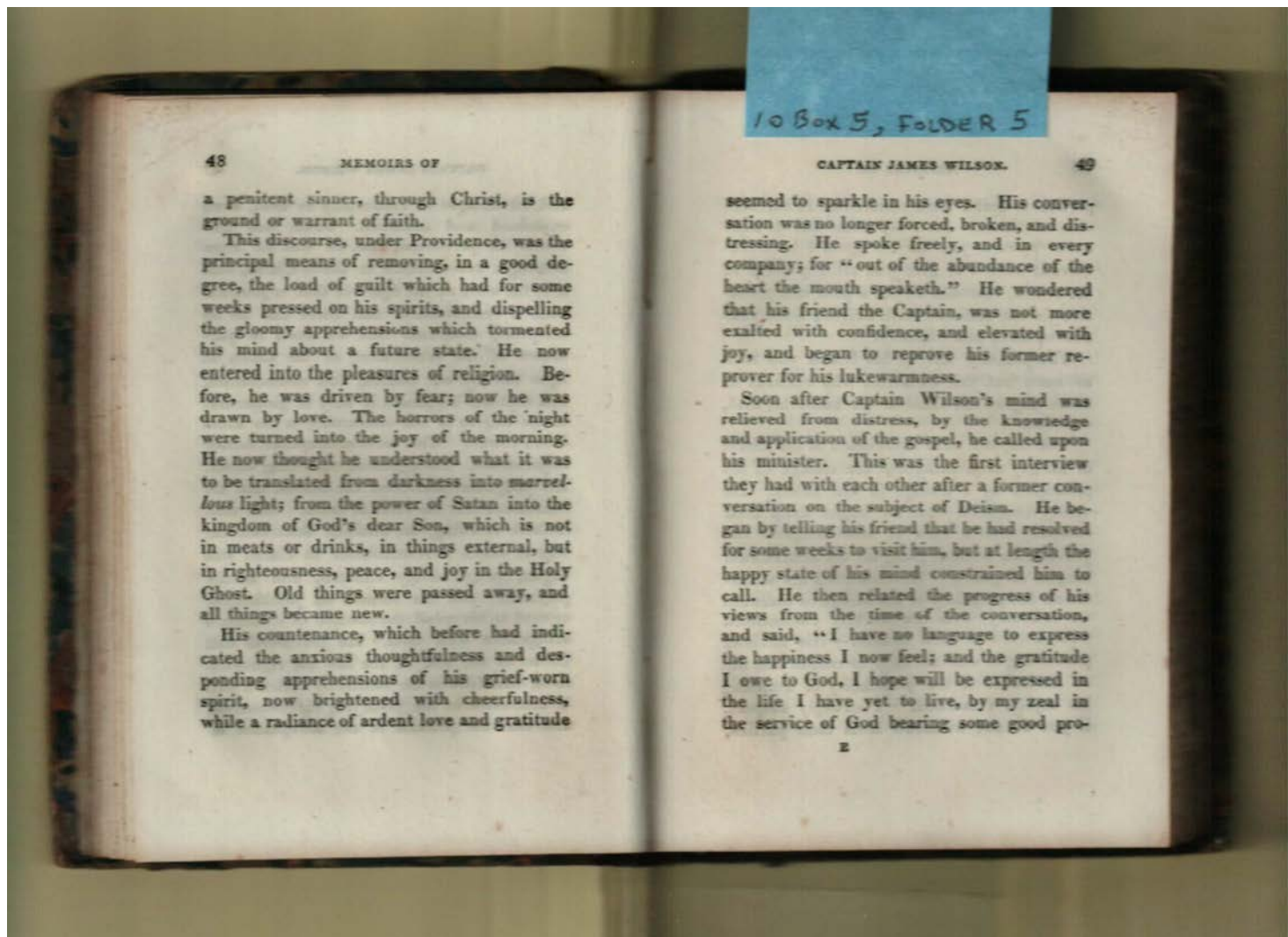




the salvation of his soul, yet he said but little to him; for the Captain wishing to know every thing at once, like youths who enter upon the study of a new science, asked such a variety of diversified and unconnected questions, that it was very difficult satisfactorily to answer them. The truth of revelation believed but partially, and with many painful suspicions, was now but a secondary object, his great concern being absorbed in the inquiry, How shall I be saved? Never did a labourer wish for the night of rest, more than he longed for the return of the sabbath. The next Lord's-day morning, he was one of the first in the place of worship. The prayer astonished him; the adorations, confession, petitions, pleadings, and thanksgiving, every part appeared to be composed for him, and seemed to open the sluices of his soul, that he might pour out his grief, fear, desire, and gratitude into the bosom of the Father of spirits.

The next subject in course exhibited to his view a delineation of the image of the Son of God; the cause, progress, evidences,

and advantages of conformity to God, were explained and enforced. From this discourse he perceived, that he was far from bearing a resemblance to Jesus Christ, that it is the work of the Spirit of God to produce such a resemblance, that there can be no scriptural assurance that we shall be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light but by our bearing this resemblance, and that our happiness is only in proportion to the degree of our conformity to the Lord Jesus Christ. This sermon deepened former impressions. Sin appeared exceeding sinful. His judgment perceived the fitness, and his conscience felt the force of truth. The next sabbath morning, the minister described the way in which a resemblance to Christ was begun, progressively effected, and finally perfected: and the sermon on justification opened to his mind the method of a sinner's acceptance with God. He perceived that Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, that faith is the means by which a soul is interested in his justifying righteousness, and that the promise of the acceptance of



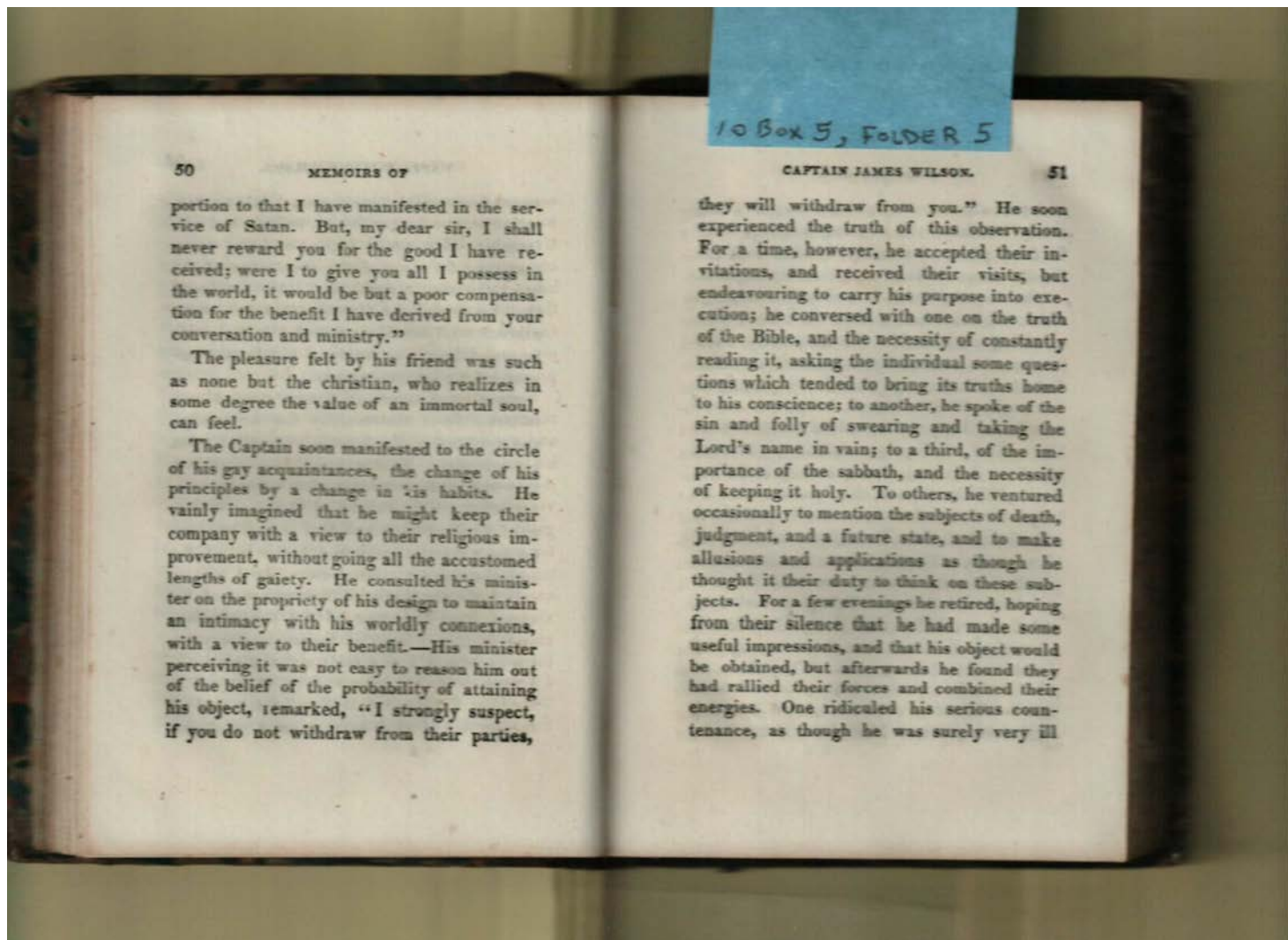
a penitent sinner, through Christ, is the ground or warrant of faith.

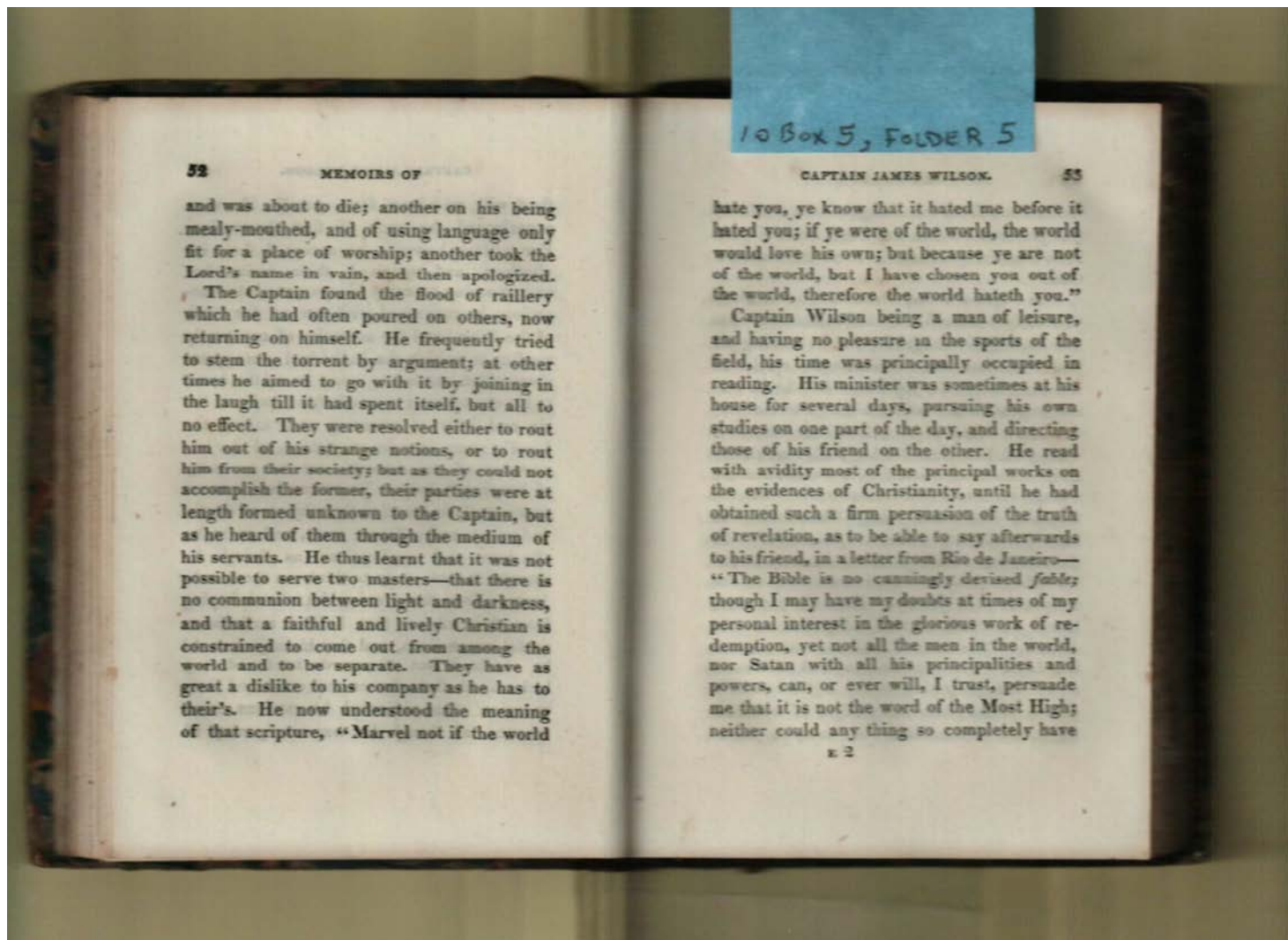
This discourse, under Providence, was the principal means of removing, in a good degree, the load of guilt which had for some weeks pressed on his spirits, and dispelling the gloomy apprehensions which tormented his mind about a future state. He now entered into the pleasures of religion. Before, he was driven by fear; now he was drawn by love. The horrors of the night were turned into the joy of the morning. He now thought he understood what it was to be translated from darkness into marvellous light; from the power of Satan into the kingdom of God's dear Son, which is not in meats or drinks, in things external, but in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Old things were passed away, and all things became new.

His countenance, which before had indicated the anxious thoughtfulness and desponding apprehensions of his grief-worn spirit, now brightened with cheerfulness, while a radiance of ardent love and gratitude

seemed to sparkle in his eyes. His conversation was no longer forced, broken, and distressing. He spoke freely, and in every company; for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." He wondered that his friend the Captain, was not more exalted with confidence, and elevated with joy, and began to reprove his former reprover for his lukewarmness.

Soon after Captain Wilson's mind was relieved from distress, by the knowledge and application of the gospel, he called upon his minister. This was the first interview they had with each other after a former conversation on the subject of Deism. He began by telling his friend that he had resolved for some weeks to visit him, but at length the happy state of his mind constrained him to call. He then related the progress of his views from the time of the conversation, and said, "I have no language to express the happiness I now feel; and the gratitude I owe to God, I hope will be expressed in the life I have yet to live, by my zeal in the service of God bearing some good pro-

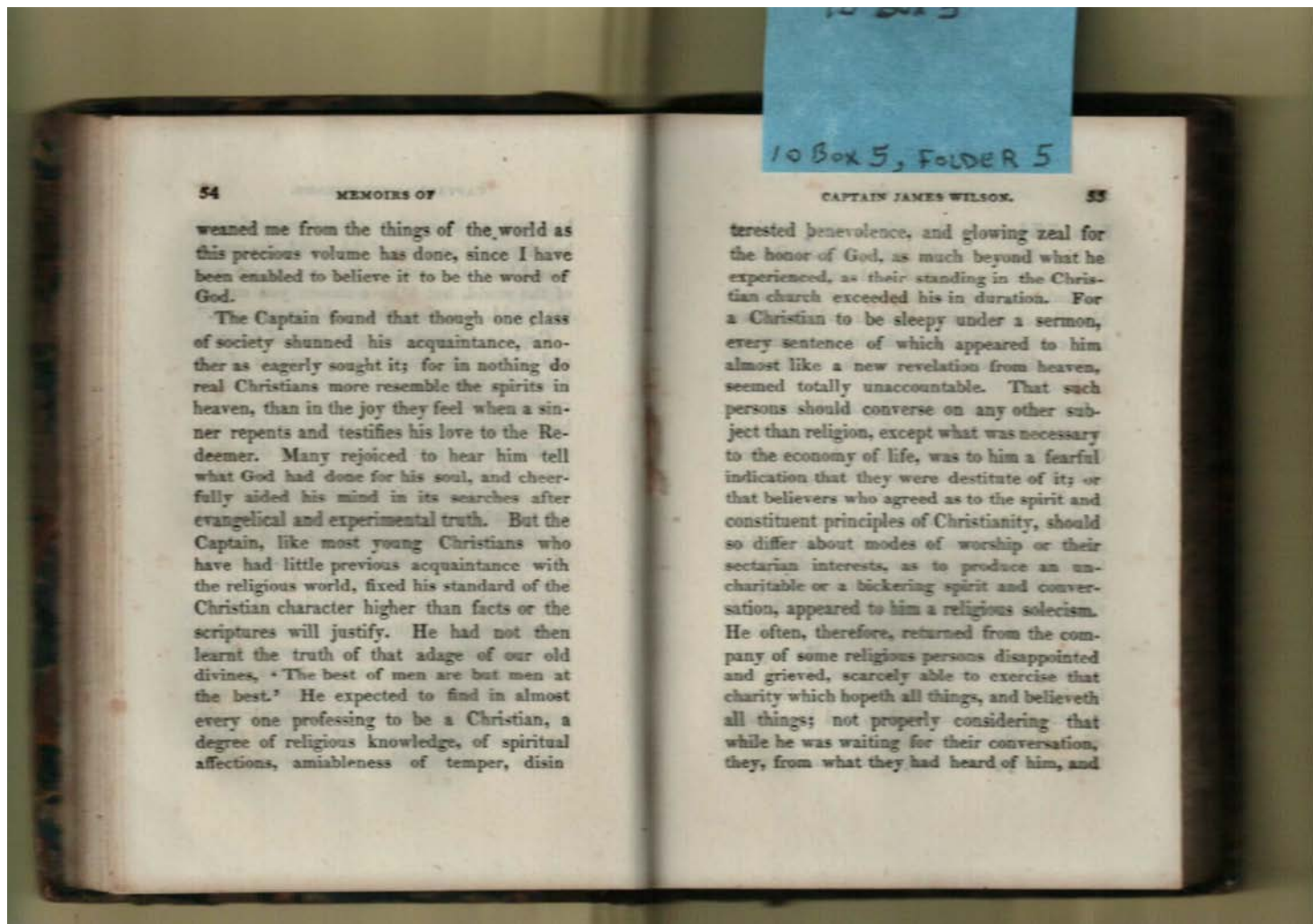




and was about to die; another on his being mealy-mouthed, and of using language only fit for a place of worship; another took the Lord's name in vain, and then apologized. The Captain found the flood of raillery which he had often poured on others, now returning on himself. He frequently tried to stem the torrent by argument; at other times he aimed to go with it by joining in the laugh till it had spent itself, but all to no effect. They were resolved either to rout him out of his strange notions, or to rout him from their society; but as they could not accomplish the former, their parties were at length formed unknown to the Captain, but as he heard of them through the medium of his servants. He thus learnt that it was not possible to serve two masters—that there is no communion between light and darkness, and that a faithful and lively Christian is constrained to come out from among the world and to be separate. They have as great a dislike to his company as he has to their's. He now understood the meaning of that scripture, "Marvel not if the world

hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you; if ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

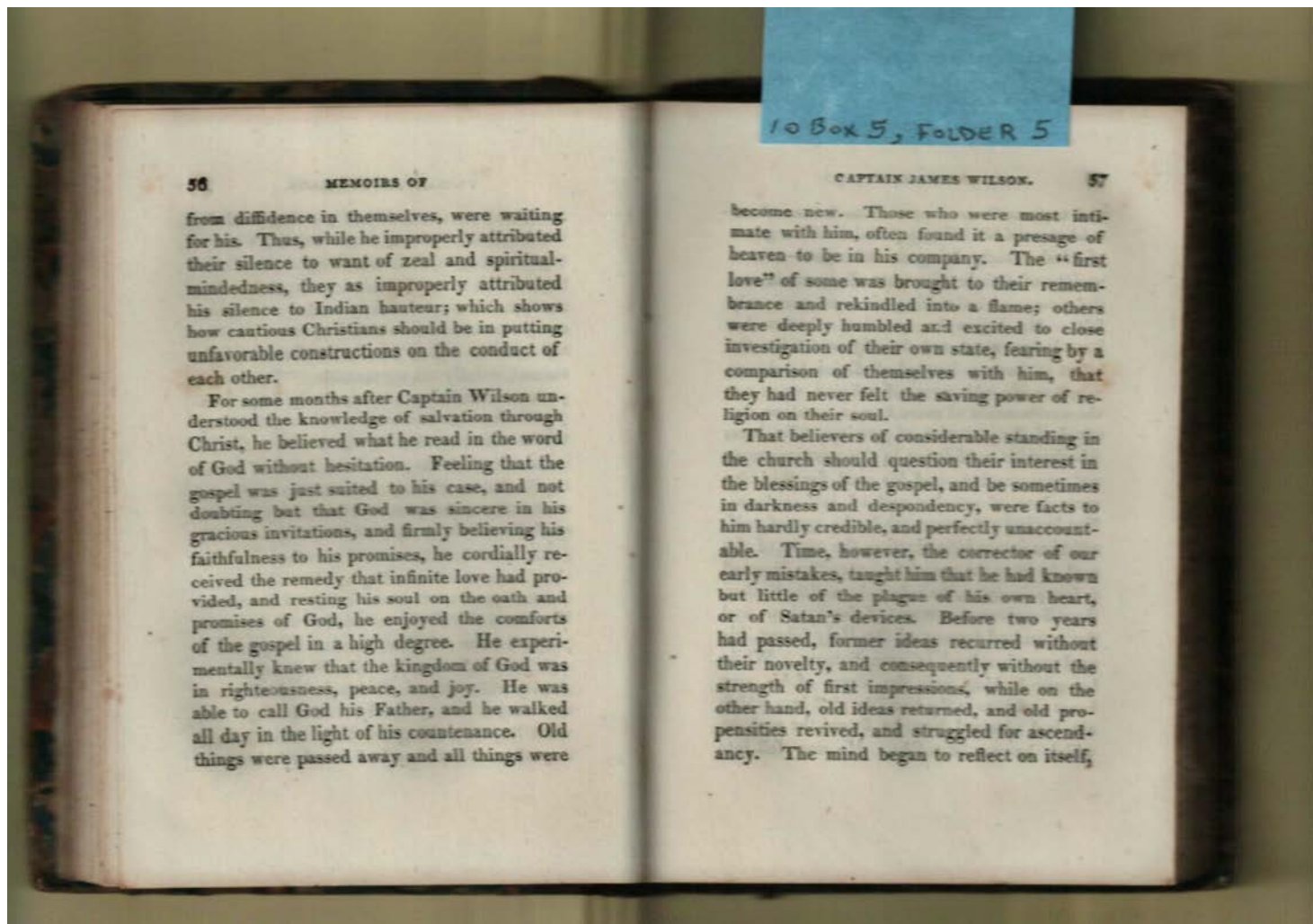
Captain Wilson being a man of leisure, and having no pleasure in the sports of the field, his time was principally occupied in reading. His minister was sometimes at his house for several days, pursuing his own studies on one part of the day, and directing those of his friend on the other. He read with avidity most of the principal works on the evidences of Christianity, until he had obtained such a firm persuasion of the truth of revelation, as to be able to say afterwards to his friend, in a letter from Rio de Janeiro—  
"The Bible is no cunningly devised fable; though I may have my doubts at times of my personal interest in the glorious work of redemption, yet not all the men in the world, nor Satan with all his principalities and powers, can, or ever will, I trust, persuade me that it is not the word of the Most High; neither could any thing so completely have



weaned me from the things of the world as this precious volume has done, since I have been enabled to believe it to be the word of God.

The Captain found that though one class of society shunned his acquaintance, another as eagerly sought it; for in nothing do real Christians more resemble the spirits in heaven, than in the joy they feel when a sinner repents and testifies his love to the Redeemer. Many rejoiced to hear him tell what God had done for his soul, and cheerfully aided his mind in its searches after evangelical and experimental truth. But the Captain, like most young Christians who have had little previous acquaintance with the religious world, fixed his standard of the Christian character higher than facts or the scriptures will justify. He had not then learnt the truth of that adage of our old divines, 'The best of men are but men at the best.' He expected to find in almost every one professing to be a Christian, a degree of religious knowledge, of spiritual affections, amiableness of temper, disin-

terested benevolence, and glowing zeal for the honor of God, as much beyond what he experienced, as their standing in the Christian church exceeded his in duration. For a Christian to be sleepy under a sermon, every sentence of which appeared to him almost like a new revelation from heaven, seemed totally unaccountable. That such persons should converse on any other subject than religion, except what was necessary to the economy of life, was to him a fearful indication that they were destitute of it; or that believers who agreed as to the spirit and constituent principles of Christianity, should so differ about modes of worship or their sectarian interests, as to produce an uncharitable or a bickering spirit and conversation, appeared to him a religious solecism. He often, therefore, returned from the company of some religious persons disappointed and grieved, scarcely able to exercise that charity which hopeth all things, and believeth all things; not properly considering that while he was waiting for their conversation, they, from what they had heard of him, and

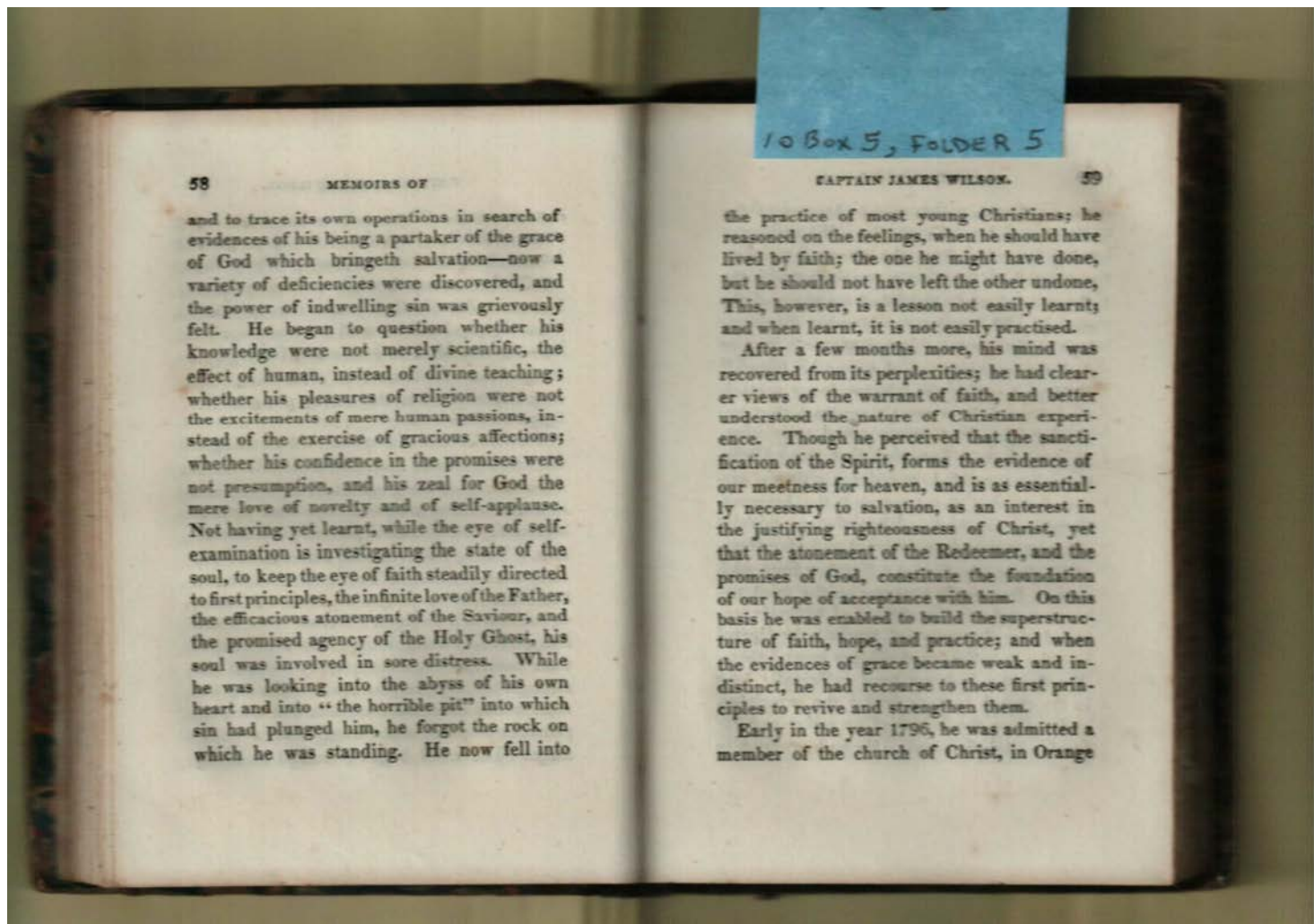


from diffidence in themselves, were waiting for his. Thus, while he improperly attributed their silence to want of zeal and spiritual-mindedness, they as improperly attributed his silence to Indian hauteur; which shows how cautious Christians should be in putting unfavorable constructions on the conduct of each other.

For some months after Captain Wilson understood the knowledge of salvation through Christ, he believed what he read in the word of God without hesitation. Feeling that the gospel was just suited to his case, and not doubting but that God was sincere in his gracious invitations, and firmly believing his faithfulness to his promises, he cordially received the remedy that infinite love had provided, and resting his soul on the oath and promises of God, he enjoyed the comforts of the gospel in a high degree. He experimentally knew that the kingdom of God was in righteousness, peace, and joy. He was able to call God his Father, and he walked all day in the light of his countenance. Old things were passed away and all things were

become new. Those who were most intimate with him, often found it a presage of heaven to be in his company. The "first love" of some was brought to their remembrance and rekindled into a flame; others were deeply humbled and excited to close investigation of their own state, fearing by a comparison of themselves with him, that they had never felt the saving power of religion on their soul.

That believers of considerable standing in the church should question their interest in the blessings of the gospel, and be sometimes in darkness and despondency, were facts to him hardly credible, and perfectly unaccountable. Time, however, the corrector of our early mistakes, taught him that he had known but little of the plague of his own heart, or of Satan's devices. Before two years had passed, former ideas recurred without their novelty, and consequently without the strength of first impressions, while on the other hand, old ideas returned, and old propensities revived, and struggled for ascendancy. The mind began to reflect on itself,

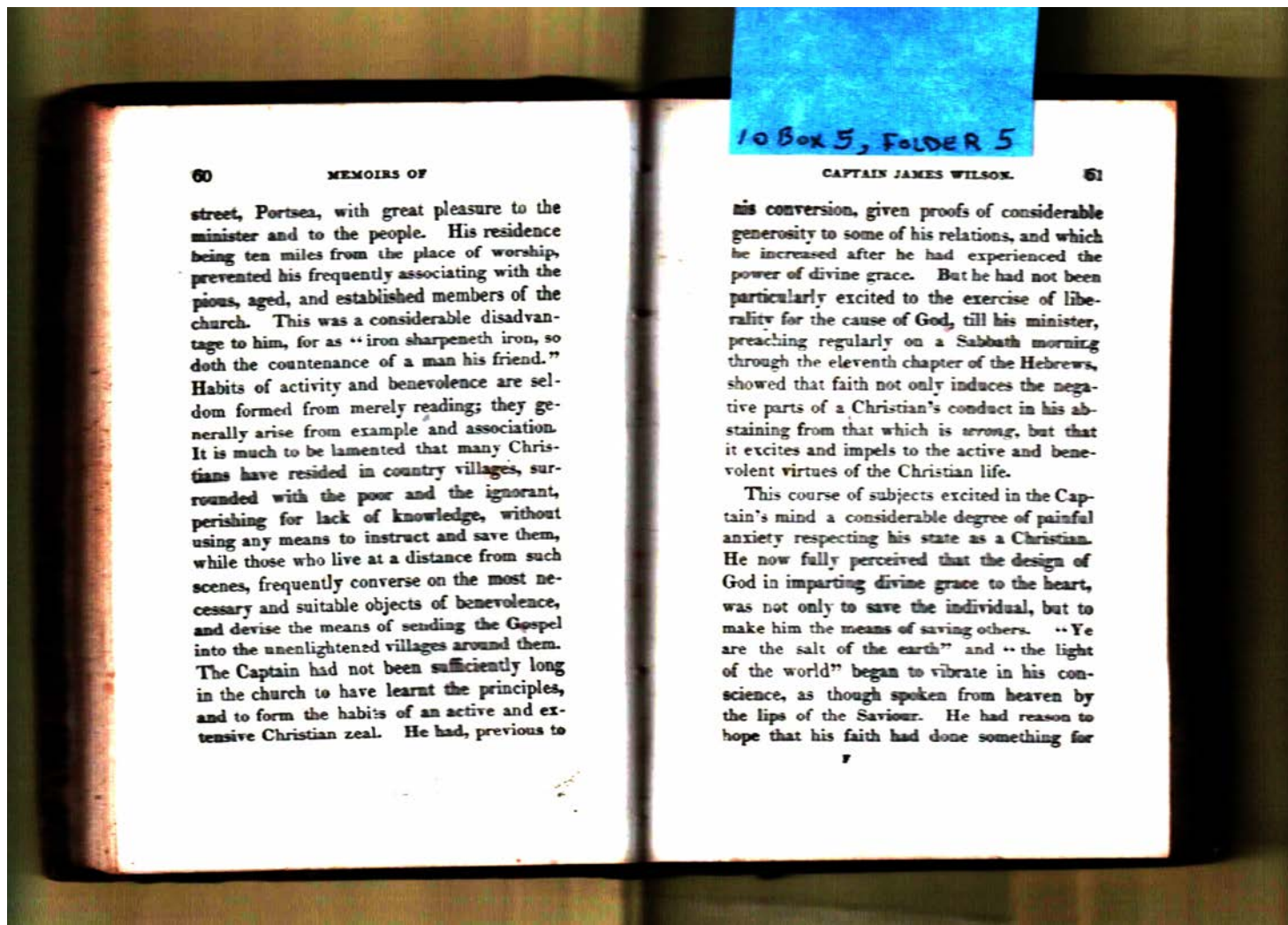


and to trace its own operations in search of evidences of his being a partaker of the grace of God which bringeth salvation—now a variety of deficiencies were discovered, and the power of indwelling sin was grievously felt. He began to question whether his knowledge were not merely scientific, the effect of human, instead of divine teaching; whether his pleasures of religion were not the excitements of mere human passions, instead of the exercise of gracious affections; whether his confidence in the promises were not presumption, and his zeal for God the mere love of novelty and of self-applause. Not having yet learnt, while the eye of self-examination is investigating the state of the soul, to keep the eye of faith steadily directed to first principles, the infinite love of the Father, the efficacious atonement of the Saviour, and the promised agency of the Holy Ghost, his soul was involved in sore distress. While he was looking into the abyss of his own heart and into "the horrible pit" into which sin had plunged him, he forgot the rock on which he was standing. He now fell into

the practice of most young Christians; he reasoned on the feelings, when he should have lived by faith; the one he might have done, but he should not have left the other undone, This, however, is a lesson not easily learnt; and when learnt, it is not easily practised.

After a few months more, his mind was recovered from its perplexities; he had clearer views of the warrant of faith, and better understood the nature of Christian experience. Though he perceived that the sanctification of the Spirit, forms the evidence of our meetness for heaven, and is as essentially necessary to salvation, as an interest in the justifying righteousness of Christ, yet that the atonement of the Redeemer, and the promises of God, constitute the foundation of our hope of acceptance with him. On this basis he was enabled to build the superstructure of faith, hope, and practice; and when the evidences of grace became weak and indistinct, he had recourse to these first principles to revive and strengthen them.

Early in the year 1796, he was admitted a member of the church of Christ, in Orange



street, Portsea, with great pleasure to the minister and to the people. His residence being ten miles from the place of worship, prevented his frequently associating with the pious, aged, and established members of the church. This was a considerable disadvantage to him, for as "iron sharpeneth iron, so doth the countenance of a man his friend." Habits of activity and benevolence are seldom formed from merely reading; they generally arise from example and association. It is much to be lamented that many Christians have resided in country villages, surrounded with the poor and the ignorant, perishing for lack of knowledge, without using any means to instruct and save them, while those who live at a distance from such scenes, frequently converse on the most necessary and suitable objects of benevolence, and devise the means of sending the Gospel into the unenlightened villages around them. The Captain had not been sufficiently long in the church to have learnt the principles, and to form the habits of an active and extensive Christian zeal. He had, previous to

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his conversion, given proofs of considerable generosity to some of his relations, and which he increased after he had experienced the power of divine grace. But he had not been particularly excited to the exercise of liberality for the cause of God, till his minister, preaching regularly on a Sabbath morning through the eleventh chapter of the Hebrews, showed that faith not only induces the negative parts of a Christian's conduct in his abstaining from that which is wrong, but that it excites and impels to the active and benevolent virtues of the Christian life.

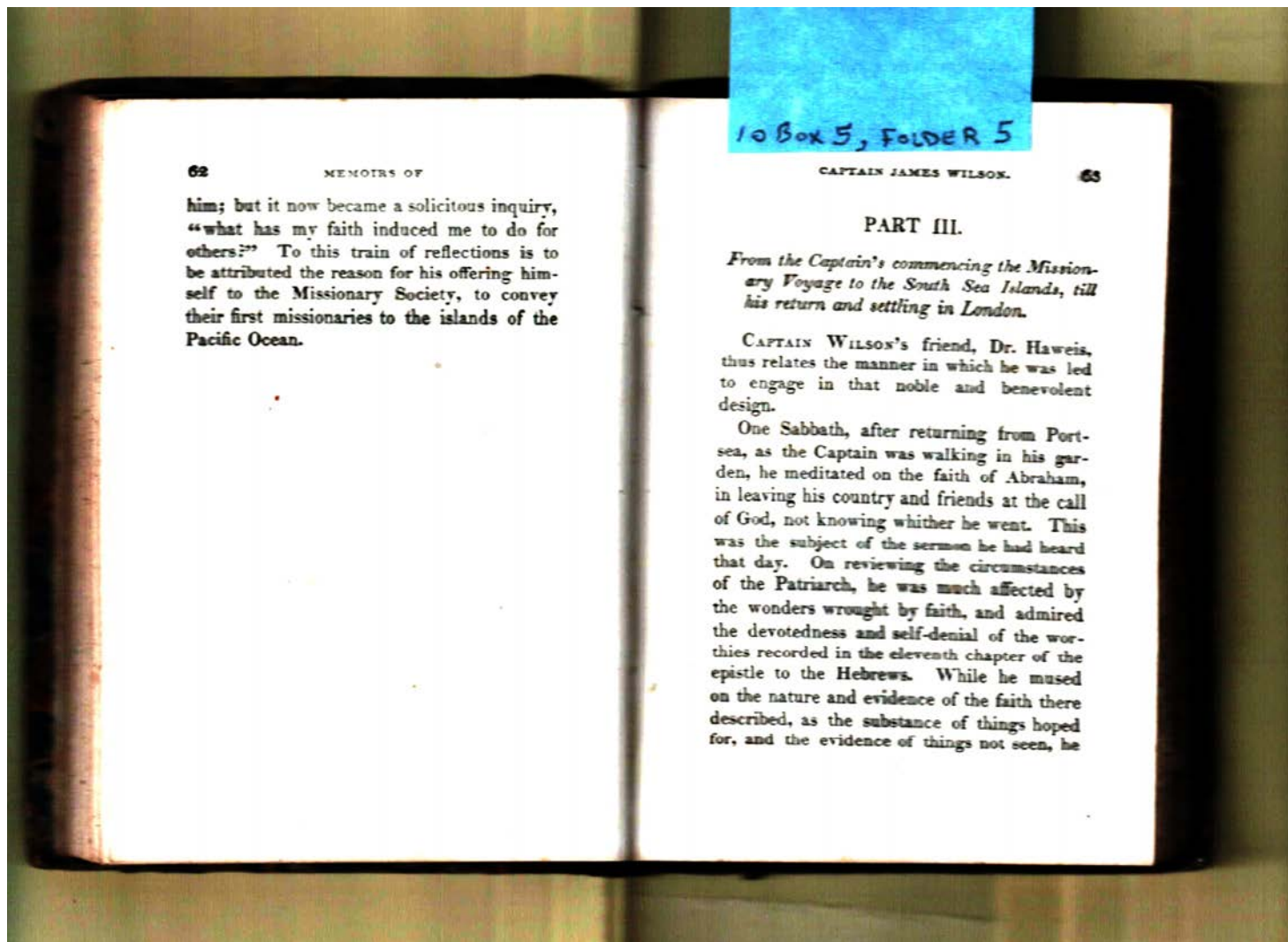
This course of subjects excited in the Captain's mind a considerable degree of painful anxiety respecting his state as a Christian. He now fully perceived that the design of God in imparting divine grace to the heart, was not only to save the individual, but to make him the means of saving others. "Ye are the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world" began to vibrate in his conscience, as though spoken from heaven by the lips of the Saviour. He had reason to hope that his faith had done something for



Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection: Series 10, Box 5, Folder 5

"Memoirs of Captain James Wilson," Compiled for the American Sunday School Union by Tappan, W. B

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**Names:**

Memoirs of Captain  
James Wilson Part

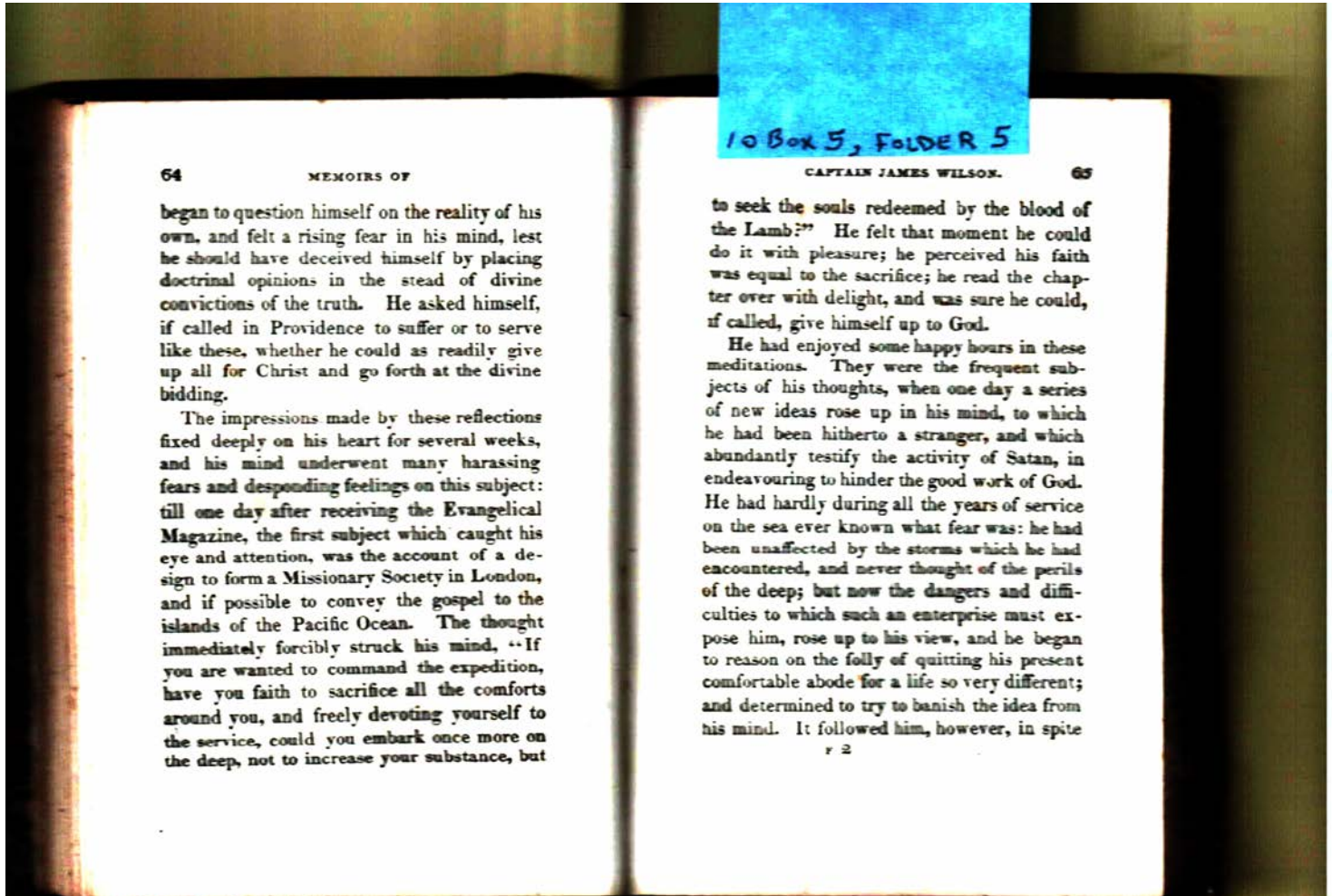
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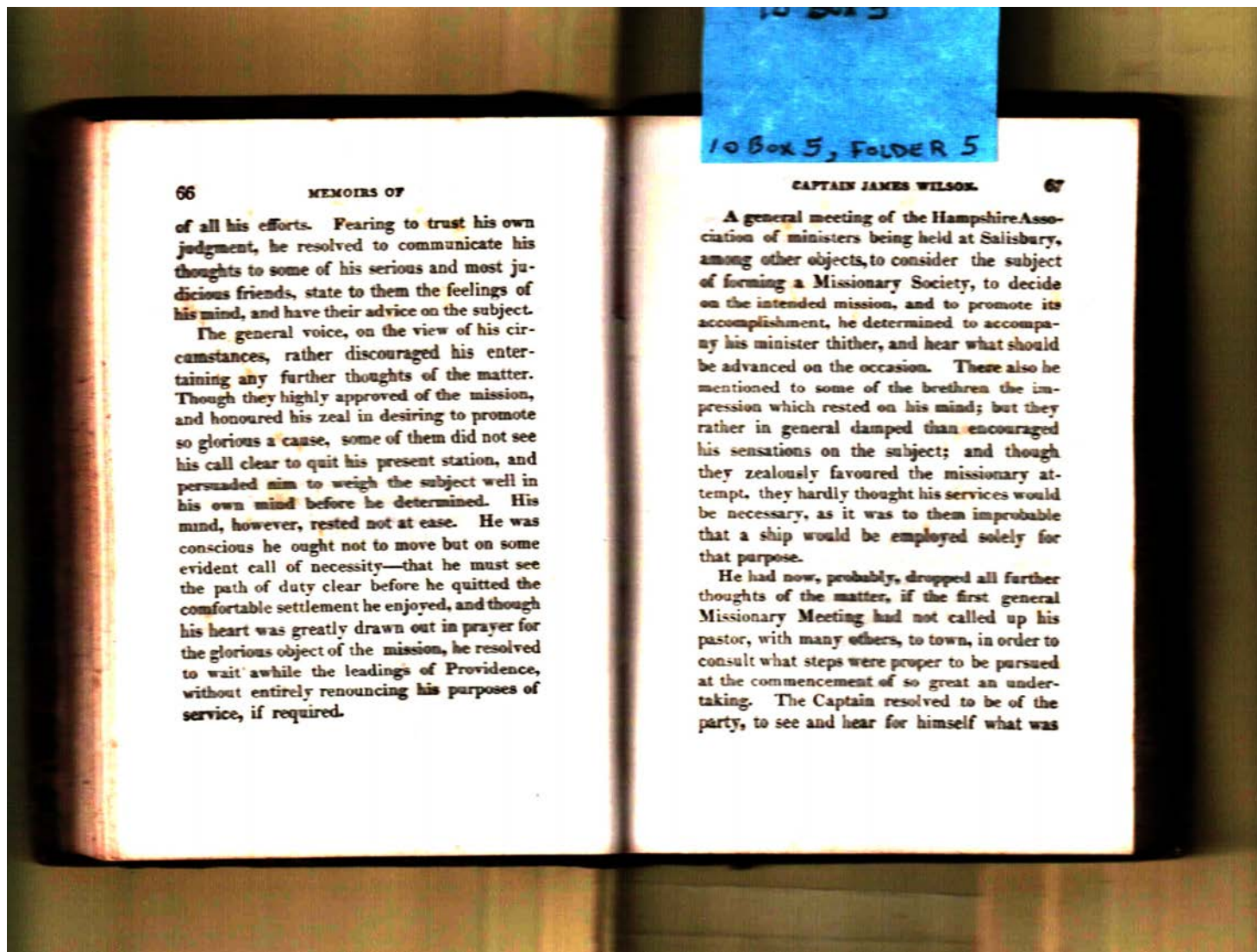
began to question himself on the reality of his own, and felt a rising fear in his mind, lest he should have deceived himself by placing doctrinal opinions in the stead of divine convictions of the truth. He asked himself, if called in Providence to suffer or to serve like these, whether he could as readily give up all for Christ and go forth at the divine bidding.

The impressions made by these reflections fixed deeply on his heart for several weeks, and his mind underwent many harassing fears and desponding feelings on this subject: till one day after receiving the Evangelical Magazine, the first subject which caught his eye and attention, was the account of a design to form a Missionary Society in London, and if possible to convey the gospel to the islands of the Pacific Ocean. The thought immediately forcibly struck his mind, "If you are wanted to command the expedition, have you faith to sacrifice all the comforts around you, and freely devoting yourself to the service, could you embark once more on the deep, not to increase your substance, but

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to seek the souls redeemed by the blood of the Lamb?" He felt that moment he could do it with pleasure; he perceived his faith was equal to the sacrifice; he read the chapter over with delight, and was sure he could, if called, give himself up to God.

He had enjoyed some happy hours in these meditations. They were the frequent subjects of his thoughts, when one day a series of new ideas rose up in his mind, to which he had been hitherto a stranger, and which abundantly testify the activity of Satan, in endeavouring to hinder the good work of God. He had hardly during all the years of service on the sea ever known what fear was: he had been unaffected by the storms which he had encountered, and never thought of the perils of the deep; but now the dangers and difficulties to which such an enterprise must expose him, rose up to his view, and he began to reason on the folly of quitting his present comfortable abode for a life so very different; and determined to try to banish the idea from his mind. It followed him, however, in spite

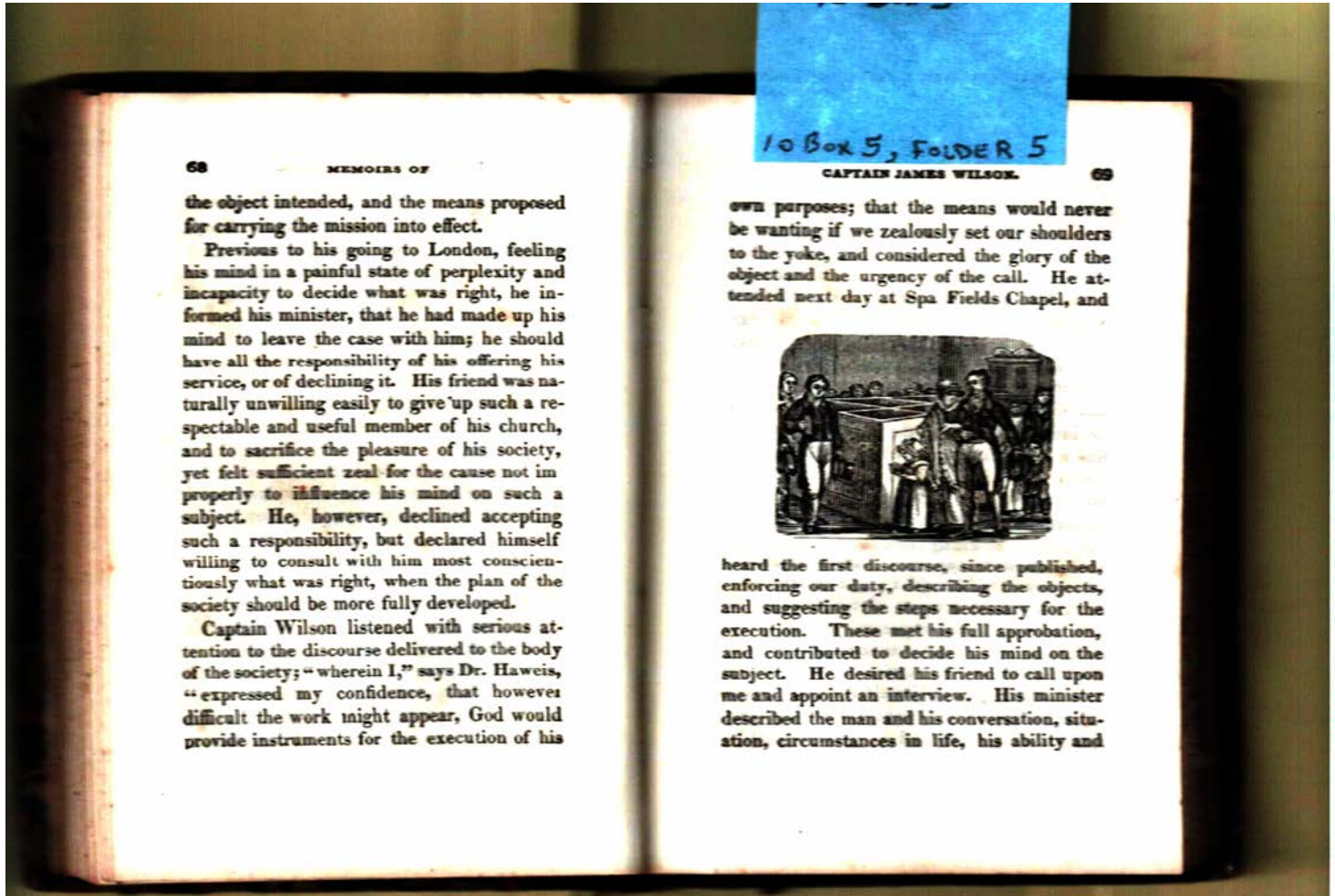


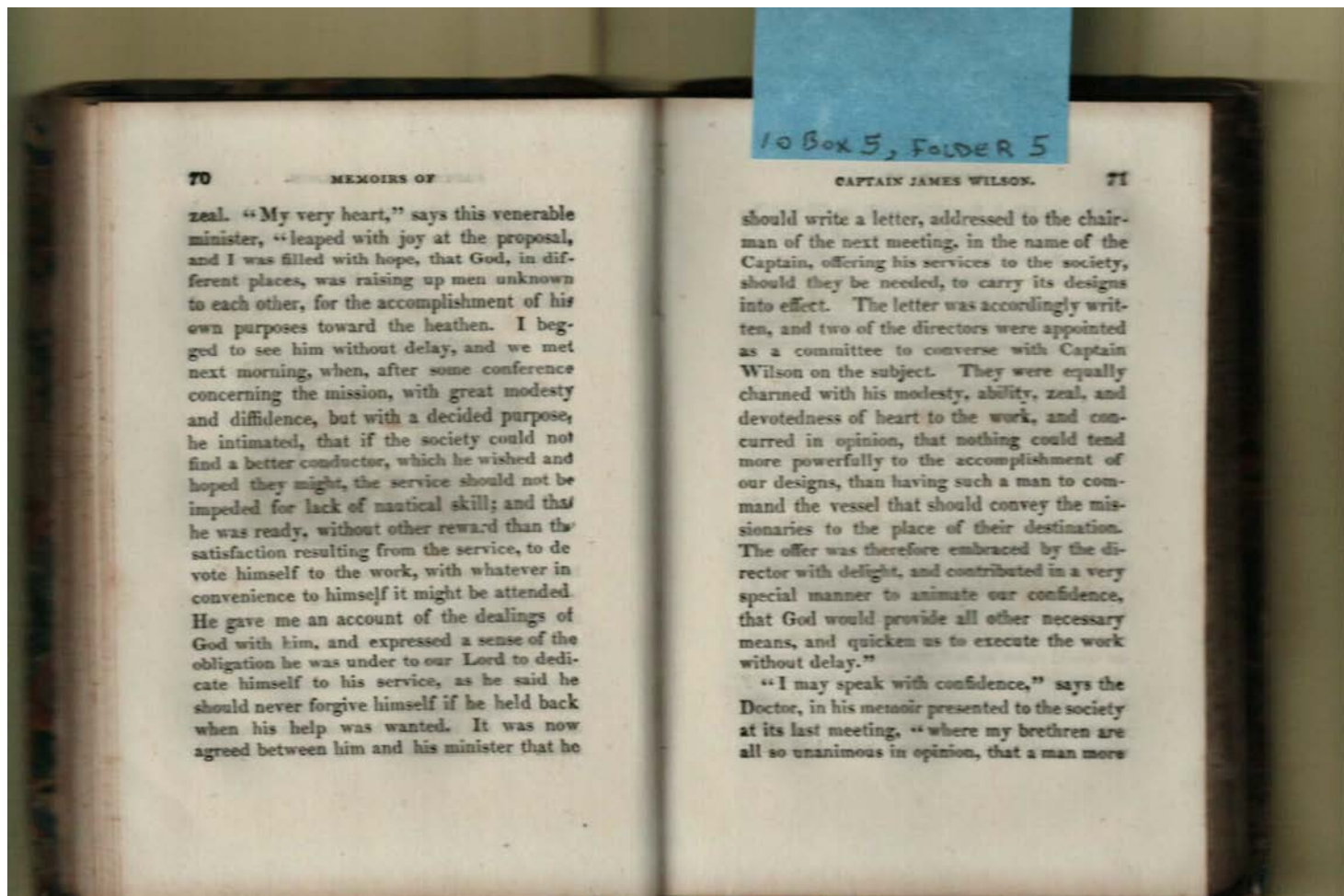
of all his efforts. Fearing to trust his own judgment, he resolved to communicate his thoughts to some of his serious and most judicious friends, state to them the feelings of his mind, and have their advice on the subject.

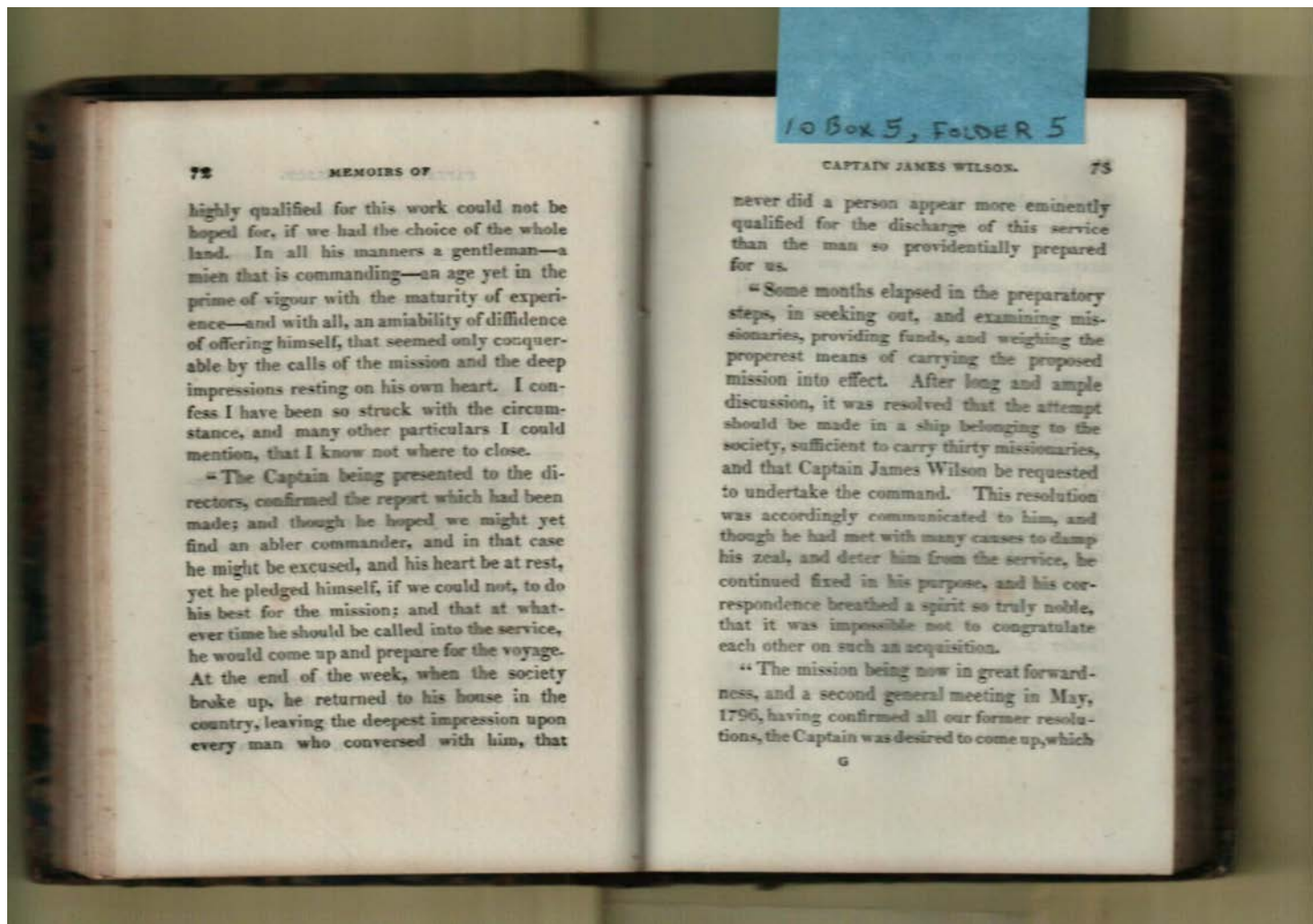
The general voice, on the view of his circumstances, rather discouraged his entertaining any further thoughts of the matter. Though they highly approved of the mission, and honoured his zeal in desiring to promote so glorious a cause, some of them did not see his call clear to quit his present station, and persuaded him to weigh the subject well in his own mind before he determined. His mind, however, rested not at ease. He was conscious he ought not to move but on some evident call of necessity—that he must see the path of duty clear before he quitted the comfortable settlement he enjoyed, and though his heart was greatly drawn out in prayer for the glorious object of the mission, he resolved to wait awhile the leadings of Providence, without entirely renouncing his purposes of service, if required.

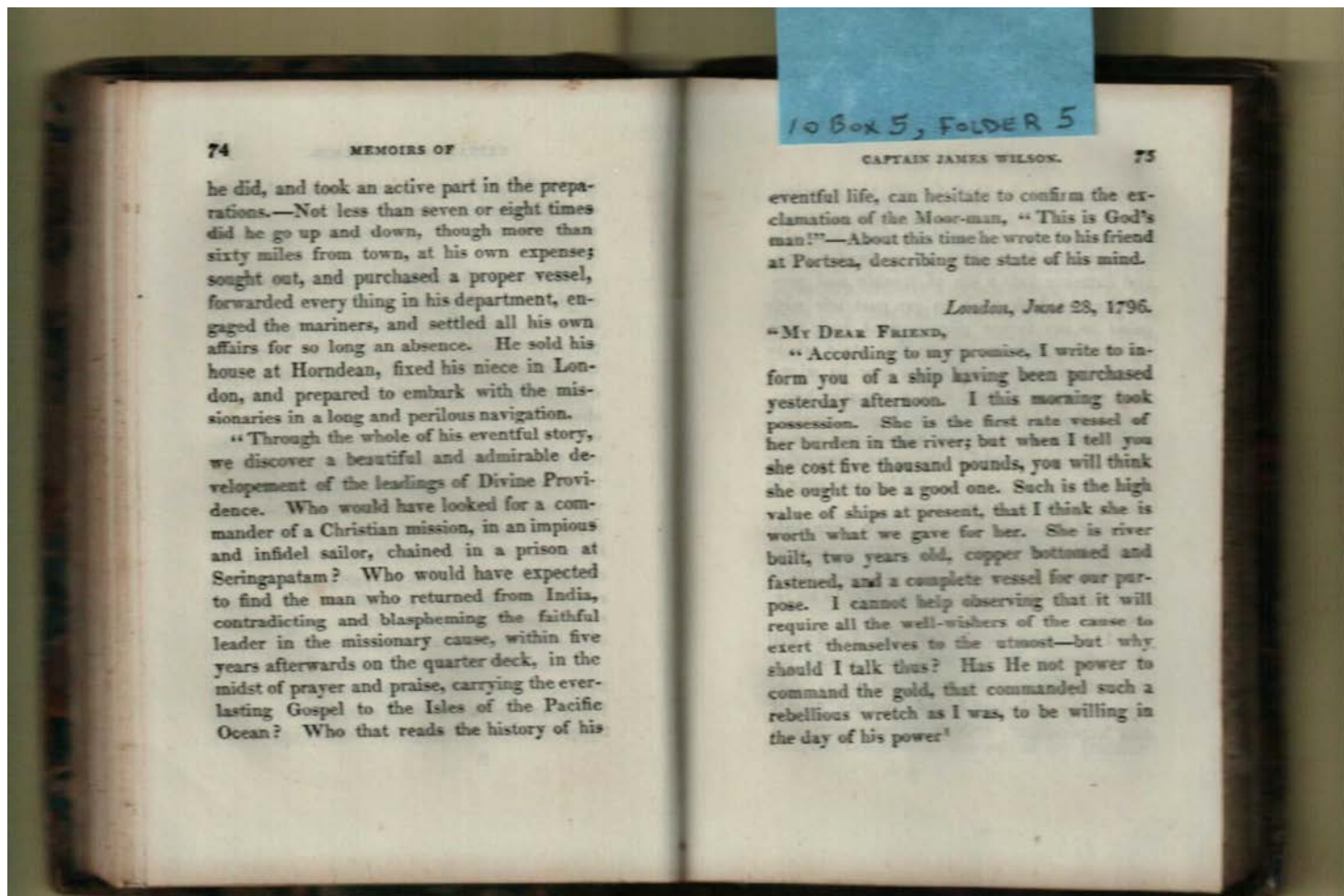
A general meeting of the Hampshire Association of ministers being held at Salisbury, among other objects, to consider the subject of forming a Missionary Society, to decide on the intended mission, and to promote its accomplishment, he determined to accompany his minister thither, and hear what should be advanced on the occasion. There also he mentioned to some of the brethren the impression which rested on his mind; but they rather in general damped than encouraged his sensations on the subject; and though they zealously favoured the missionary attempt, they hardly thought his services would be necessary, as it was to them improbable that a ship would be employed solely for that purpose.

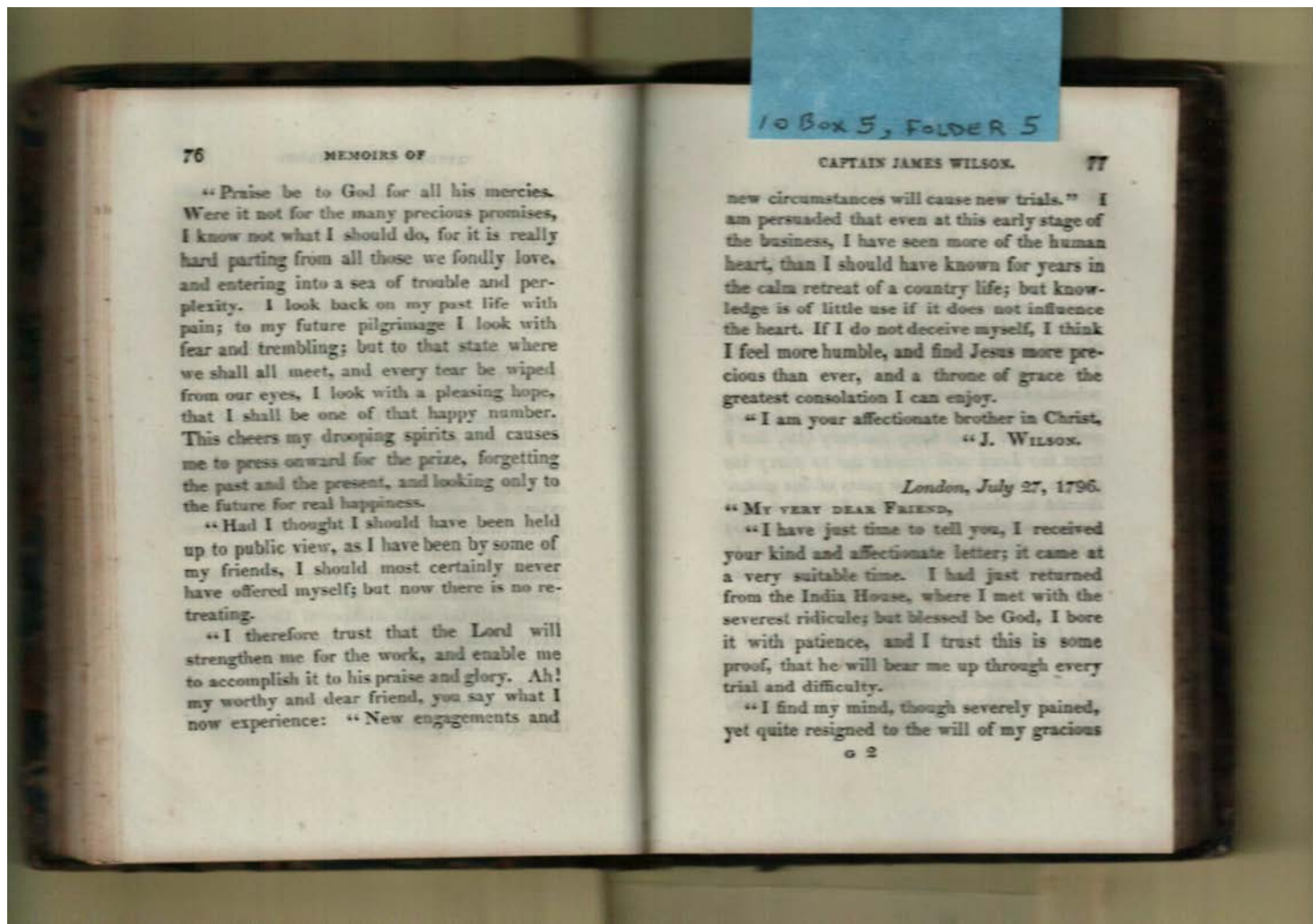
He had now, probably, dropped all further thoughts of the matter, if the first general Missionary Meeting had not called up his pastor, with many others, to town, in order to consult what steps were proper to be pursued at the commencement of so great an undertaking. The Captain resolved to be of the party, to see and hear for himself what was











"Praise be to God for all his mercies. Were it not for the many precious promises, I know not what I should do, for it is really hard parting from all those we fondly love, and entering into a sea of trouble and perplexity. I look back on my past life with pain; to my future pilgrimage I look with fear and trembling; but to that state where we shall all meet, and every tear be wiped from our eyes, I look with a pleasing hope, that I shall be one of that happy number. This cheers my drooping spirits and causes me to press onward for the prize, forgetting the past and the present, and looking only to the future for real happiness.

"Had I thought I should have been held up to public view, as I have been by some of my friends, I should most certainly never have offered myself; but now there is no retreating.

"I therefore trust that the Lord will strengthen me for the work, and enable me to accomplish it to his praise and glory. Ah! my worthy and dear friend, you say what I now experience: "New engagements and

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new circumstances will cause new trials." I am persuaded that even at this early stage of the business, I have seen more of the human heart, than I should have known for years in the calm retreat of a country life; but knowledge is of little use if it does not influence the heart. If I do not deceive myself, I think I feel more humble, and find Jesus more precious than ever, and a throne of grace the greatest consolation I can enjoy.

"I am your affectionate brother in Christ,  
" J. WILSON.

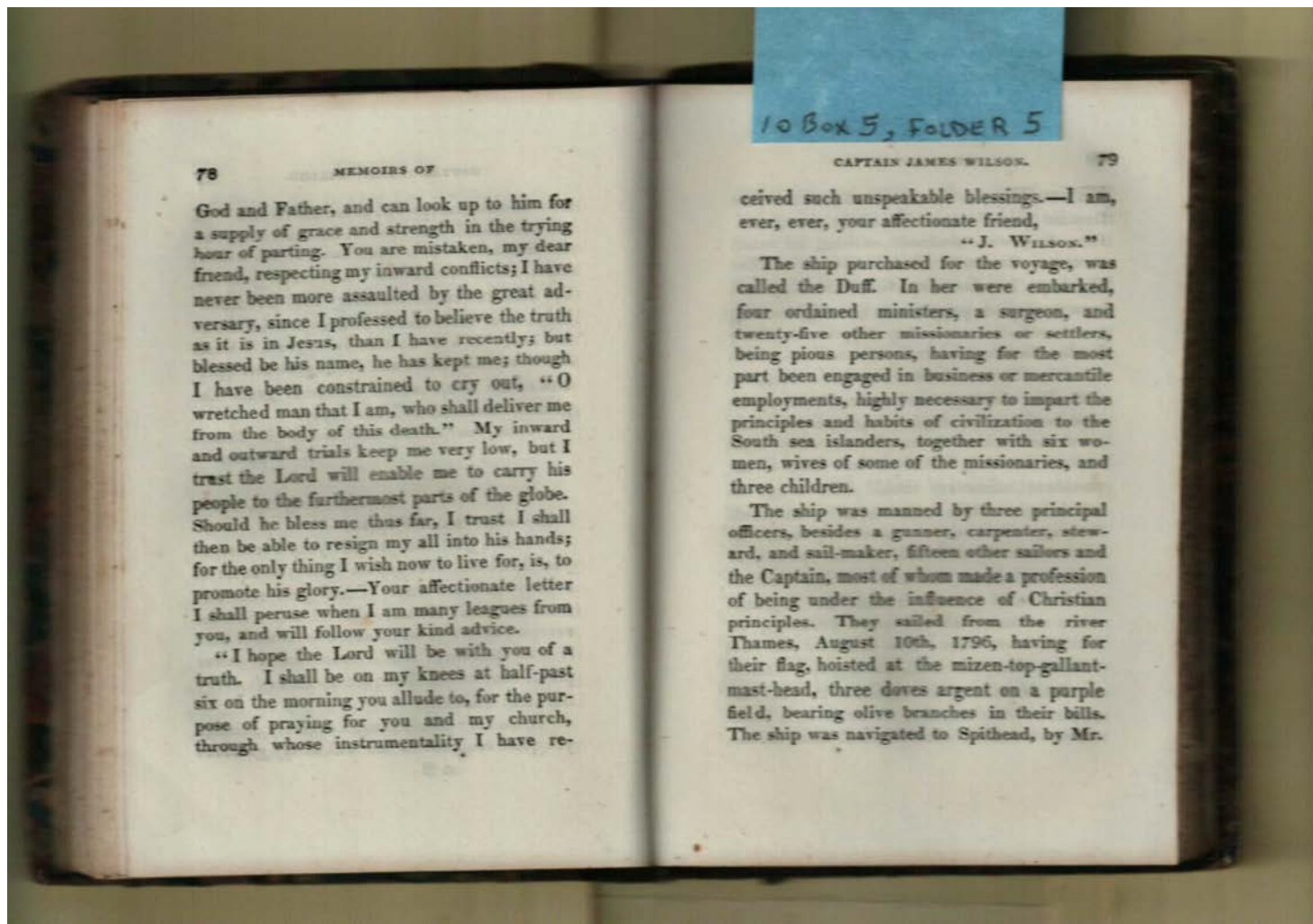
*London, July 27, 1796.*

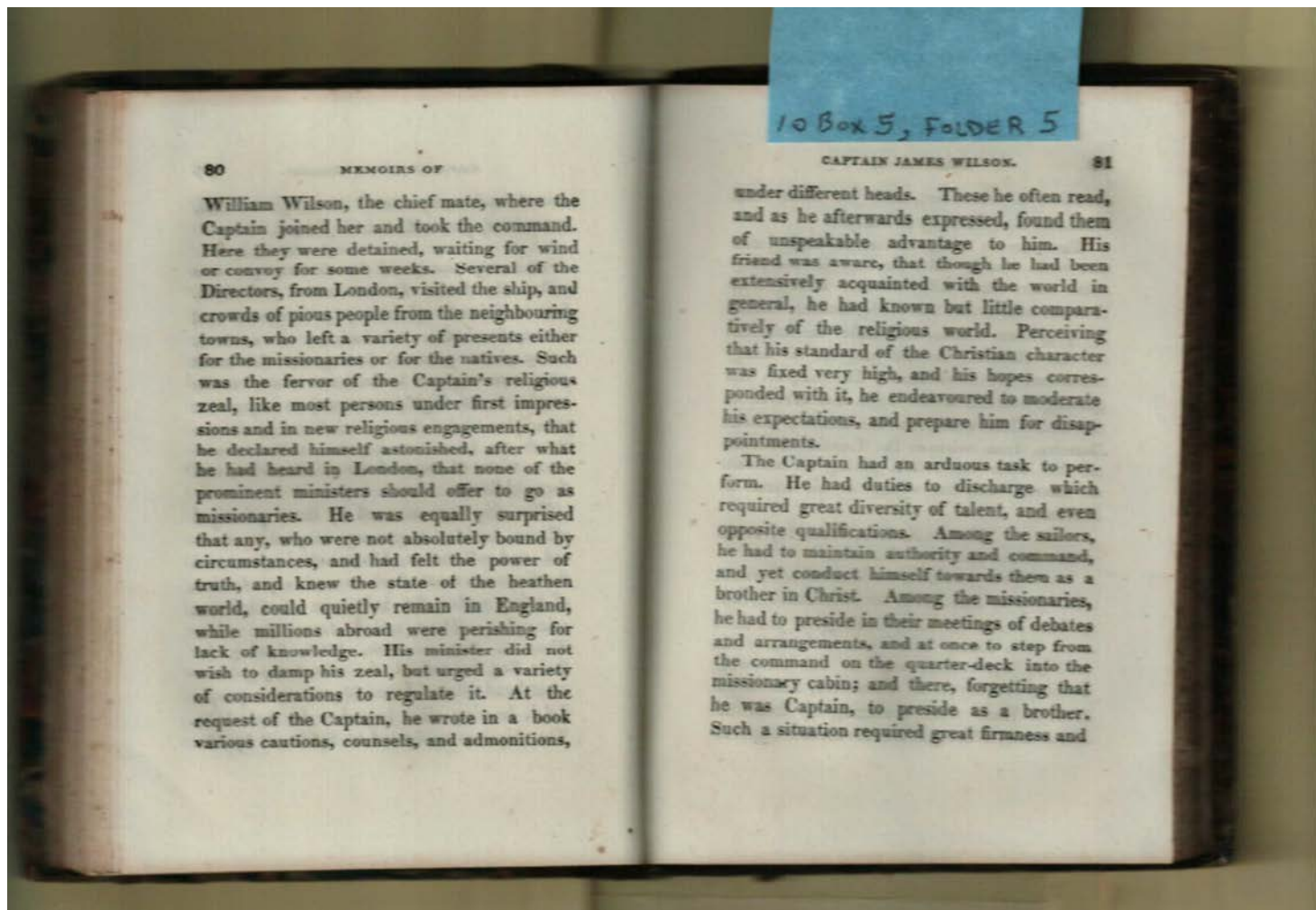
"MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

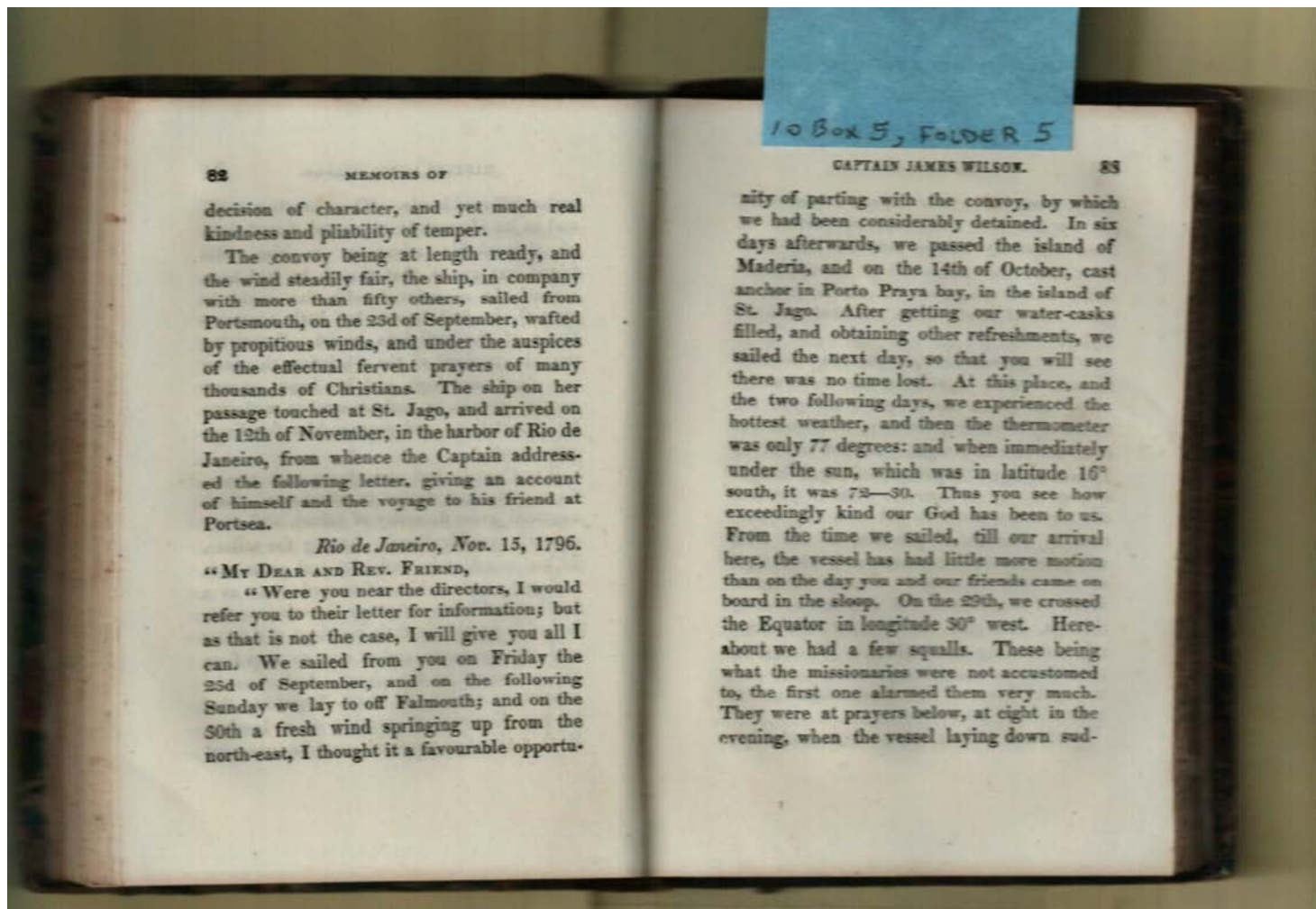
"I have just time to tell you, I received your kind and affectionate letter; it came at a very suitable time. I had just returned from the India House, where I met with the severest ridicule; but blessed be God, I bore it with patience, and I trust this is some proof, that he will bear me up through every trial and difficulty.

"I find my mind, though severely pained, yet quite resigned to the will of my gracious









decision of character, and yet much real kindness and pliability of temper.

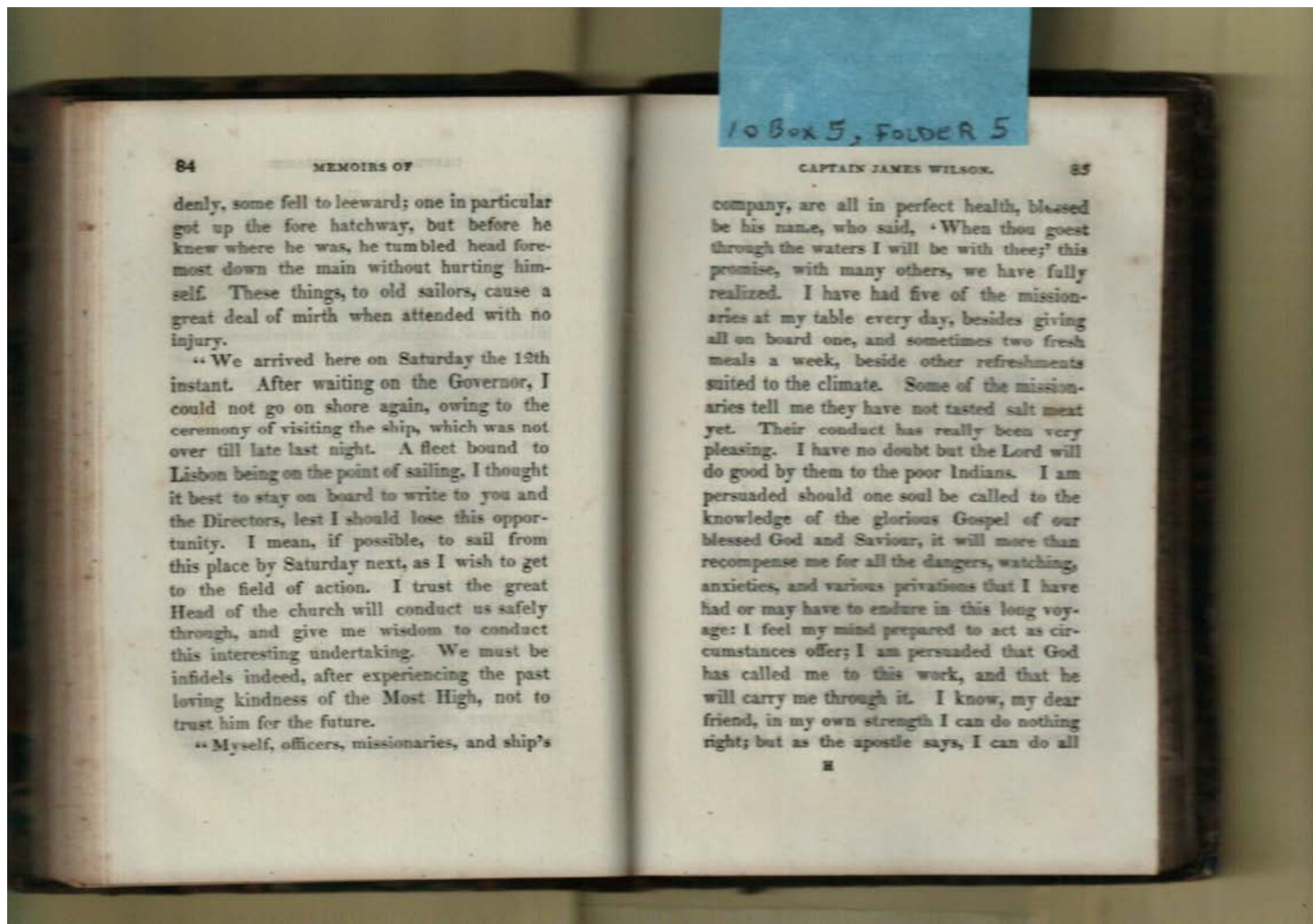
The convoy being at length ready, and the wind steadily fair, the ship, in company with more than fifty others, sailed from Portsmouth, on the 23d of September, wafted by propitious winds, and under the auspices of the effectual fervent prayers of many thousands of Christians. The ship on her passage touched at St. Jago, and arrived on the 12th of November, in the harbor of Rio de Janeiro, from whence the Captain addressed the following letter, giving an account of himself and the voyage to his friend at Portsea.

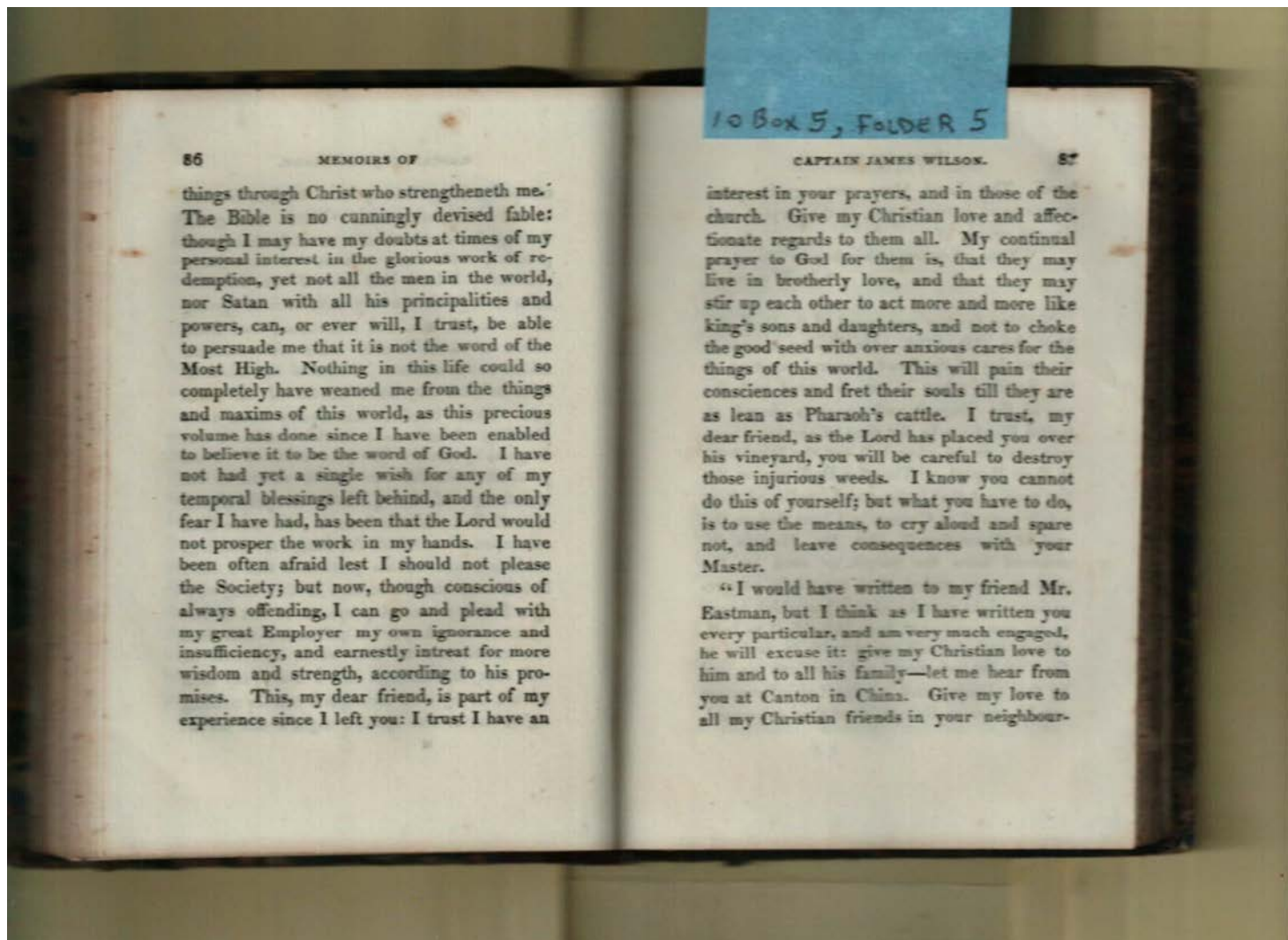
*Rio de Janeiro, Nov. 15, 1796.*

“MY DEAR AND REV. FRIEND,

“Were you near the directors, I would refer you to their letter for information; but as that is not the case, I will give you all I can. We sailed from you on Friday the 23d of September, and on the following Sunday we lay to off Falmouth; and on the 30th a fresh wind springing up from the north-east, I thought it a favourable opportu-

nity of parting with the convoy, by which we had been considerably detained. In six days afterwards, we passed the island of Maderia, and on the 14th of October, cast anchor in Porto Praya bay, in the island of St. Jago. After getting our water-casks filled, and obtaining other refreshments, we sailed the next day, so that you will see there was no time lost. At this place, and the two following days, we experienced the hottest weather, and then the thermometer was only 77 degrees: and when immediately under the sun, which was in latitude 16° south, it was 72—30. Thus you see how exceedingly kind our God has been to us. From the time we sailed, till our arrival here, the vessel has had little more motion than on the day you and our friends came on board in the sloop. On the 29th, we crossed the Equator in longitude 30° west. Hereabout we had a few squalls. These being what the missionaries were not accustomed to, the first one alarmed them very much. They were at prayers below, at eight in the evening, when the vessel laying down sud-

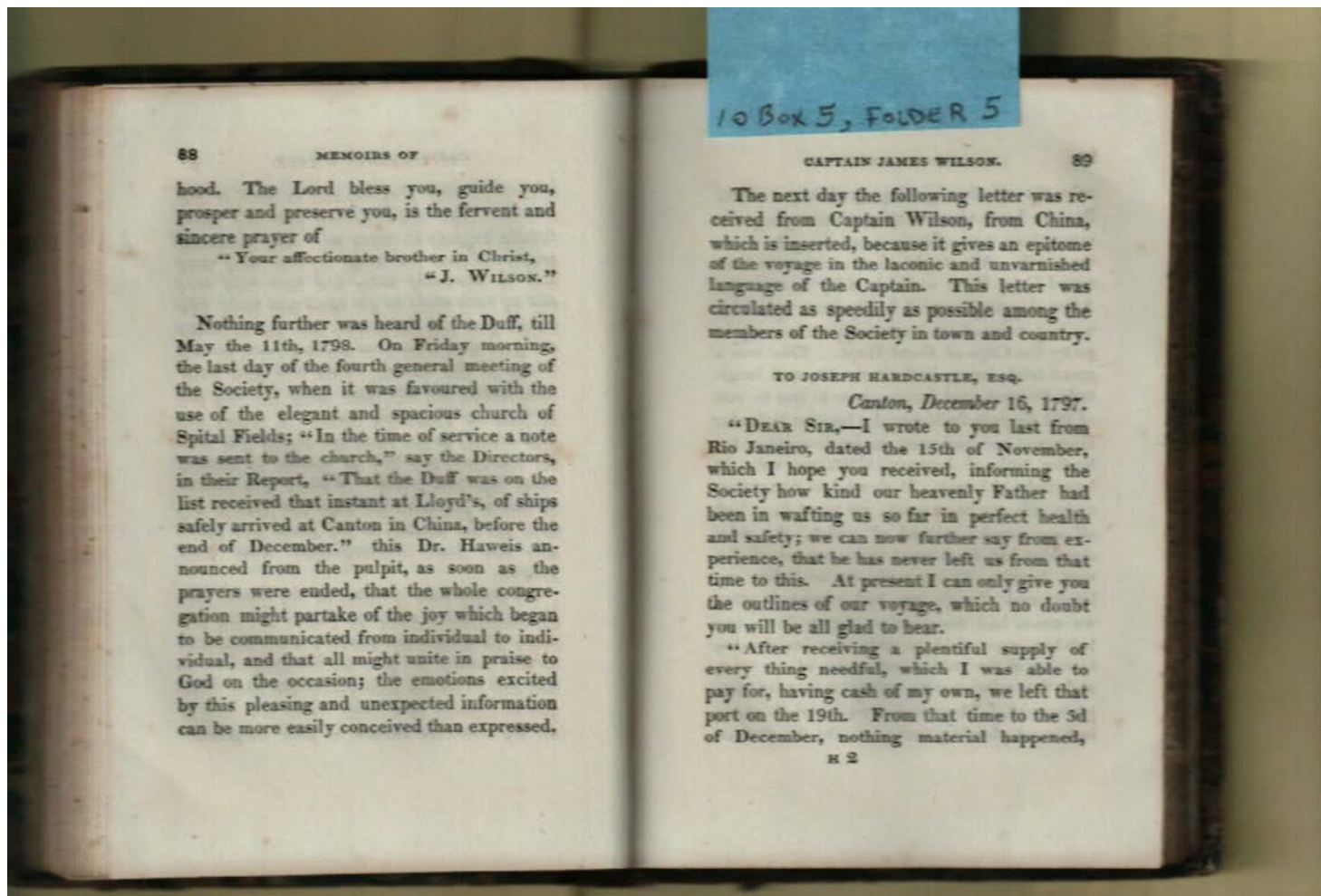


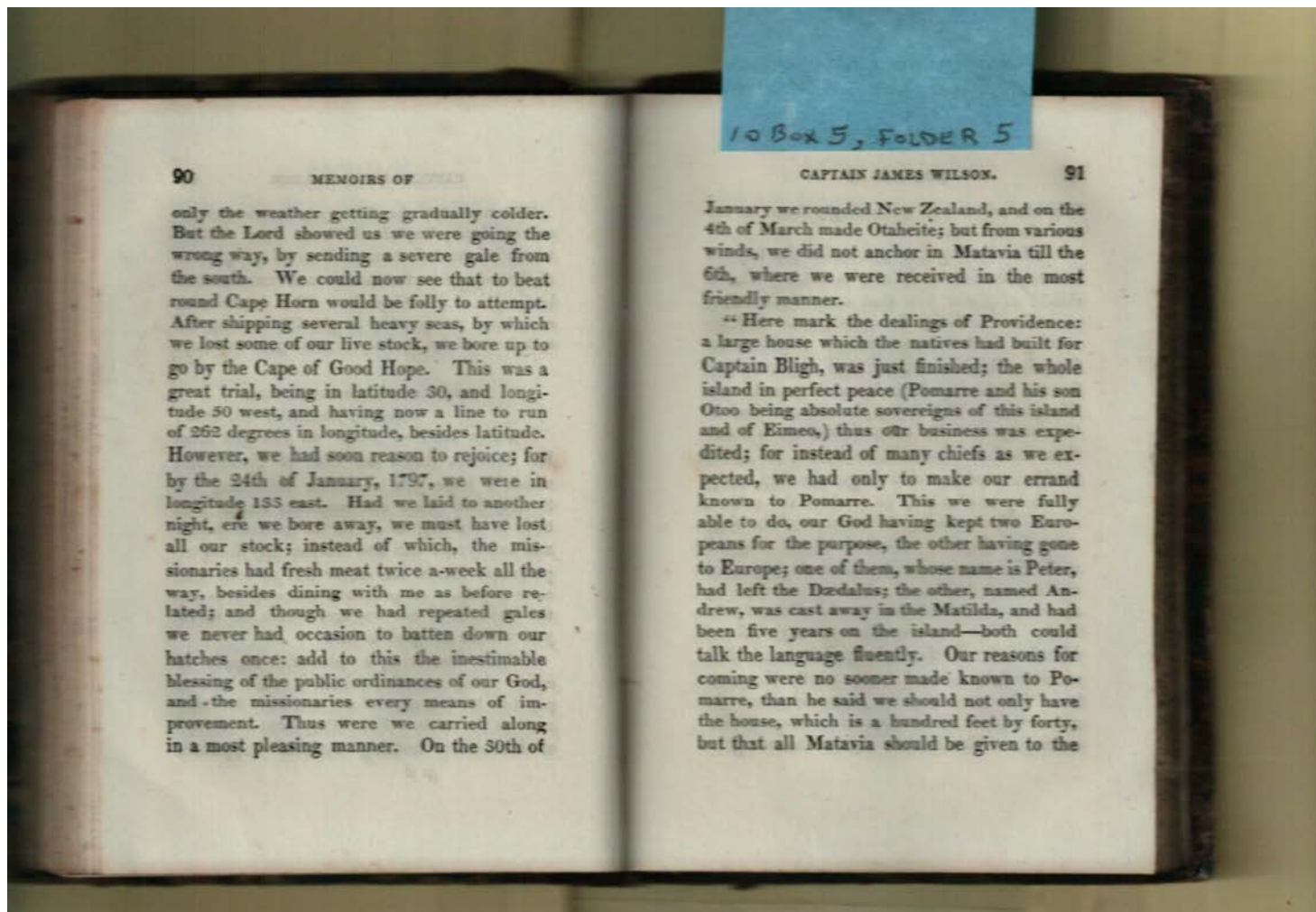


things through Christ who strengtheneth me. The Bible is no cunningly devised fable: though I may have my doubts at times of my personal interest in the glorious work of redemption, yet not all the men in the world, nor Satan with all his principalities and powers, can, or ever will, I trust, be able to persuade me that it is not the word of the Most High. Nothing in this life could so completely have weaned me from the things and maxims of this world, as this precious volume has done since I have been enabled to believe it to be the word of God. I have not had yet a single wish for any of my temporal blessings left behind, and the only fear I have had, has been that the Lord would not prosper the work in my hands. I have been often afraid lest I should not please the Society; but now, though conscious of always offending, I can go and plead with my great Employer my own ignorance and insufficiency, and earnestly intreat for more wisdom and strength, according to his promises. This, my dear friend, is part of my experience since I left you: I trust I have an

interest in your prayers, and in those of the church. Give my Christian love and affectionate regards to them all. My continual prayer to God for them is, that they may live in brotherly love, and that they may stir up each other to act more and more like king's sons and daughters, and not to choke the good seed with over anxious cares for the things of this world. This will pain their consciences and fret their souls till they are as lean as Pharaoh's cattle. I trust, my dear friend, as the Lord has placed you over his vineyard, you will be careful to destroy those injurious weeds. I know you cannot do this of yourself; but what you have to do, is to use the means, to cry aloud and spare not, and leave consequences with your Master.

"I would have written to my friend Mr. Eastman, but I think as I have written you every particular, and am very much engaged, he will excuse it: give my Christian love to him and to all his family—let me hear from you at Canton in China. Give my love to all my Christian friends in your neighbour-

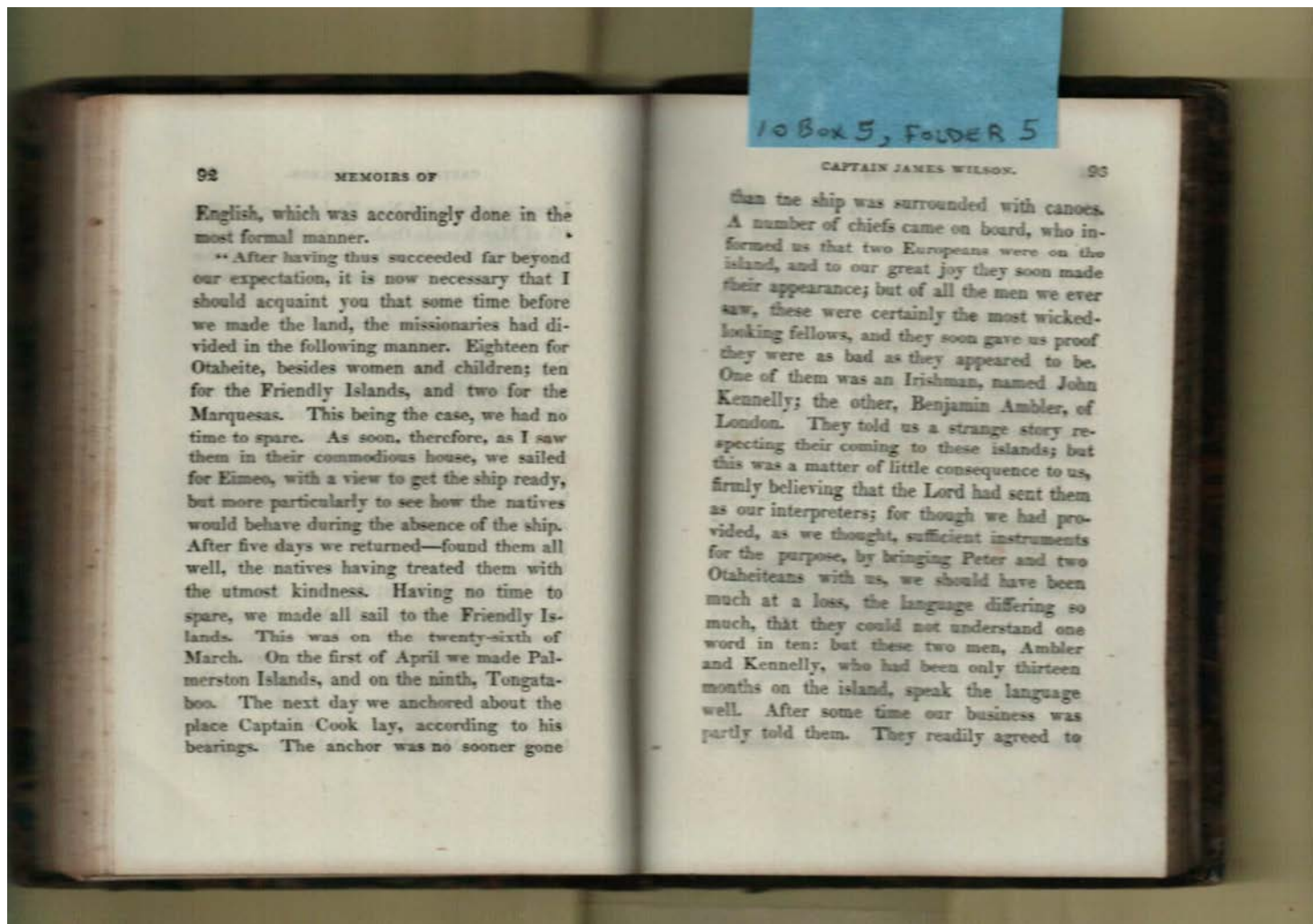




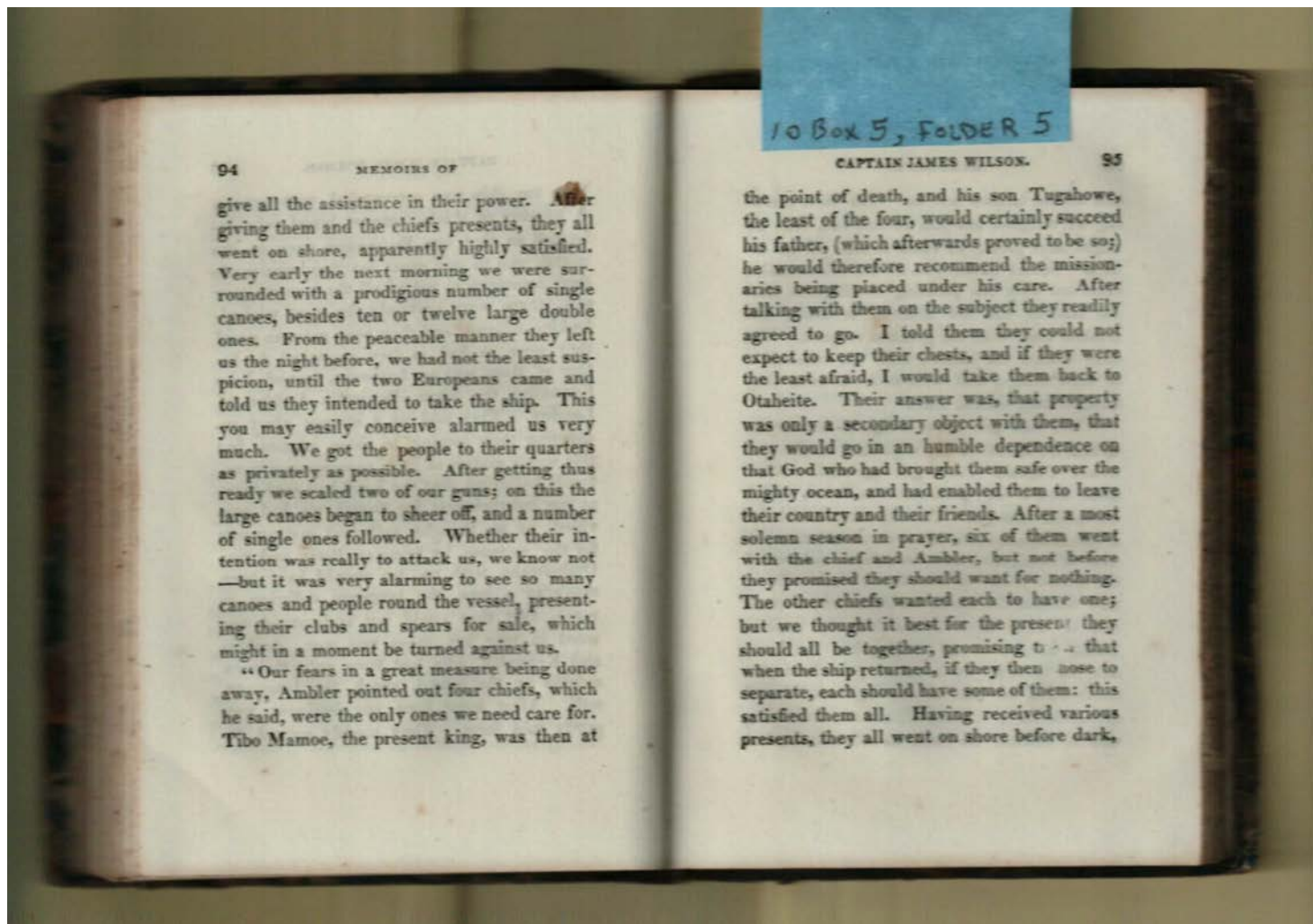
only the weather getting gradually colder. But the Lord showed us we were going the wrong way, by sending a severe gale from the south. We could now see that to beat round Cape Horn would be folly to attempt. After shipping several heavy seas, by which we lost some of our live stock, we bore up to go by the Cape of Good Hope. This was a great trial, being in latitude 30, and longitude 50 west, and having now a line to run of 262 degrees in longitude, besides latitude. However, we had soon reason to rejoice; for by the 24th of January, 1797, we were in longitude 133 east. Had we laid to another night, ere we bore away, we must have lost all our stock; instead of which, the missionaries had fresh meat twice a-week all the way, besides dining with me as before related; and though we had repeated gales we never had occasion to batten down our hatches once: add to this the inestimable blessing of the public ordinances of our God, and the missionaries every means of improvement. Thus were we carried along in a most pleasing manner. On the 30th of

January we rounded New Zealand, and on the 4th of March made Otahcite; but from various winds, we did not anchor in Matavia till the 6th, where we were received in the most friendly manner.

“Here mark the dealings of Providence: a large house which the natives had built for Captain Bligh, was just finished; the whole island in perfect peace (Pomarre and his son Otoo being absolute sovereigns of this island and of Eimeo,) thus our business was expedited; for instead of many chiefs as we expected, we had only to make our errand known to Pomarre. This we were fully able to do, our God having kept two Europeans for the purpose, the other having gone to Europe; one of them, whose name is Peter, had left the *Dardalus*; the other, named Andrew, was cast away in the *Matilda*, and had been five years on the island—both could talk the language fluently. Our reasons for coming were no sooner made known to Pomarre, than he said we should not only have the house, which is a hundred feet by forty, but that all Matavia should be given to the



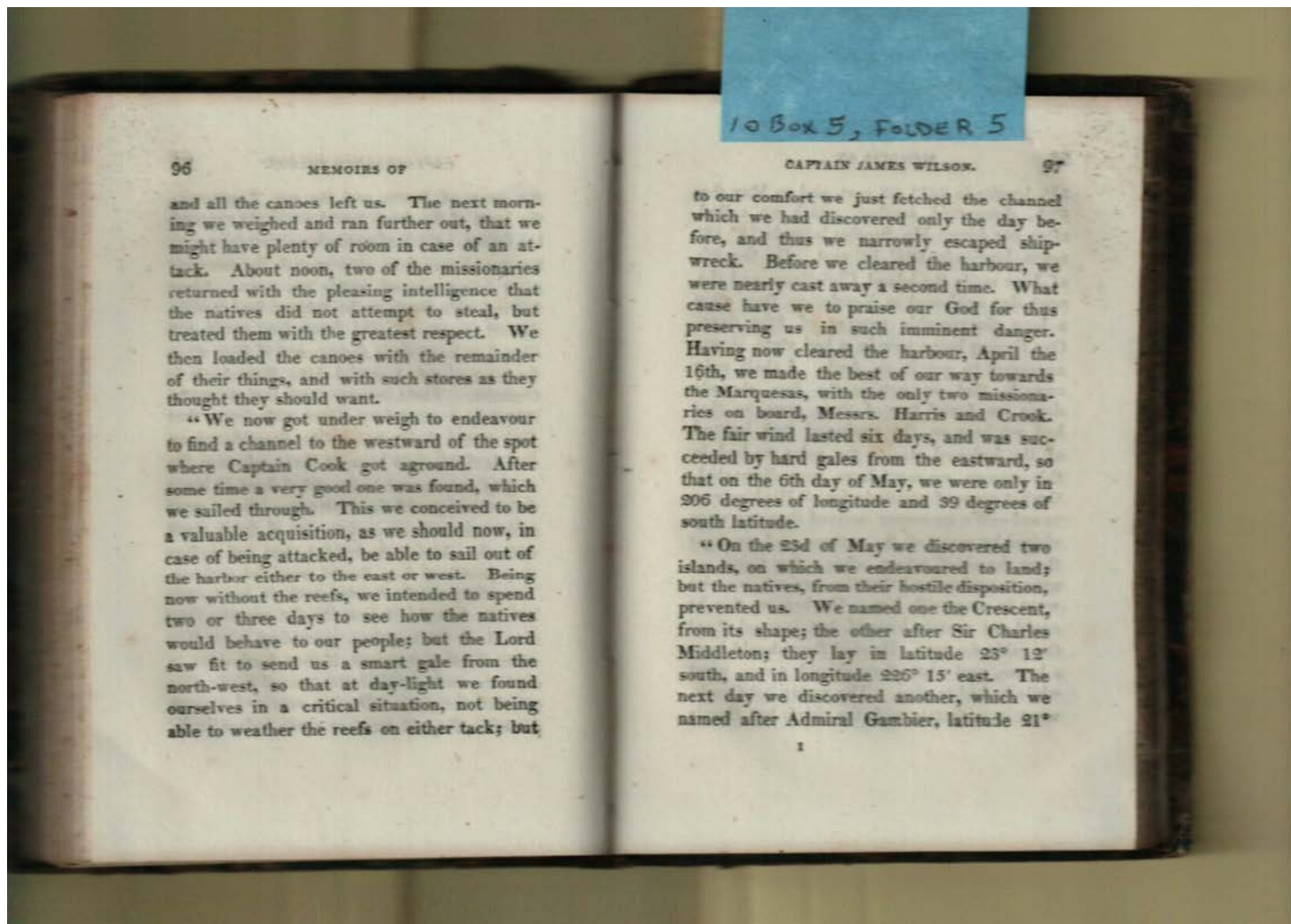




give all the assistance in their power. After giving them and the chiefs presents, they all went on shore, apparently highly satisfied. Very early the next morning we were surrounded with a prodigious number of single canoes, besides ten or twelve large double ones. From the peaceable manner they left us the night before, we had not the least suspicion, until the two Europeans came and told us they intended to take the ship. This you may easily conceive alarmed us very much. We got the people to their quarters as privately as possible. After getting thus ready we scaled two of our guns; on this the large canoes began to sheer off, and a number of single ones followed. Whether their intention was really to attack us, we know not—but it was very alarming to see so many canoes and people round the vessel, presenting their clubs and spears for sale, which might in a moment be turned against us.

“Our fears in a great measure being done away, Ambler pointed out four chiefs, which he said, were the only ones we need care for. Tibo Mamoe, the present king, was then at

the point of death, and his son Tugahowe, the least of the four, would certainly succeed his father, (which afterwards proved to be so;) he would therefore recommend the missionaries being placed under his care. After talking with them on the subject they readily agreed to go. I told them they could not expect to keep their chests, and if they were the least afraid, I would take them back to Otaheite. Their answer was, that property was only a secondary object with them, that they would go in an humble dependence on that God who had brought them safe over the mighty ocean, and had enabled them to leave their country and their friends. After a most solemn season in prayer, six of them went with the chief and Ambler, but not before they promised they should want for nothing. The other chiefs wanted each to have one; but we thought it best for the present they should all be together, promising that when the ship returned, if they then chose to separate, each should have some of them: this satisfied them all. Having received various presents, they all went on shore before dark,

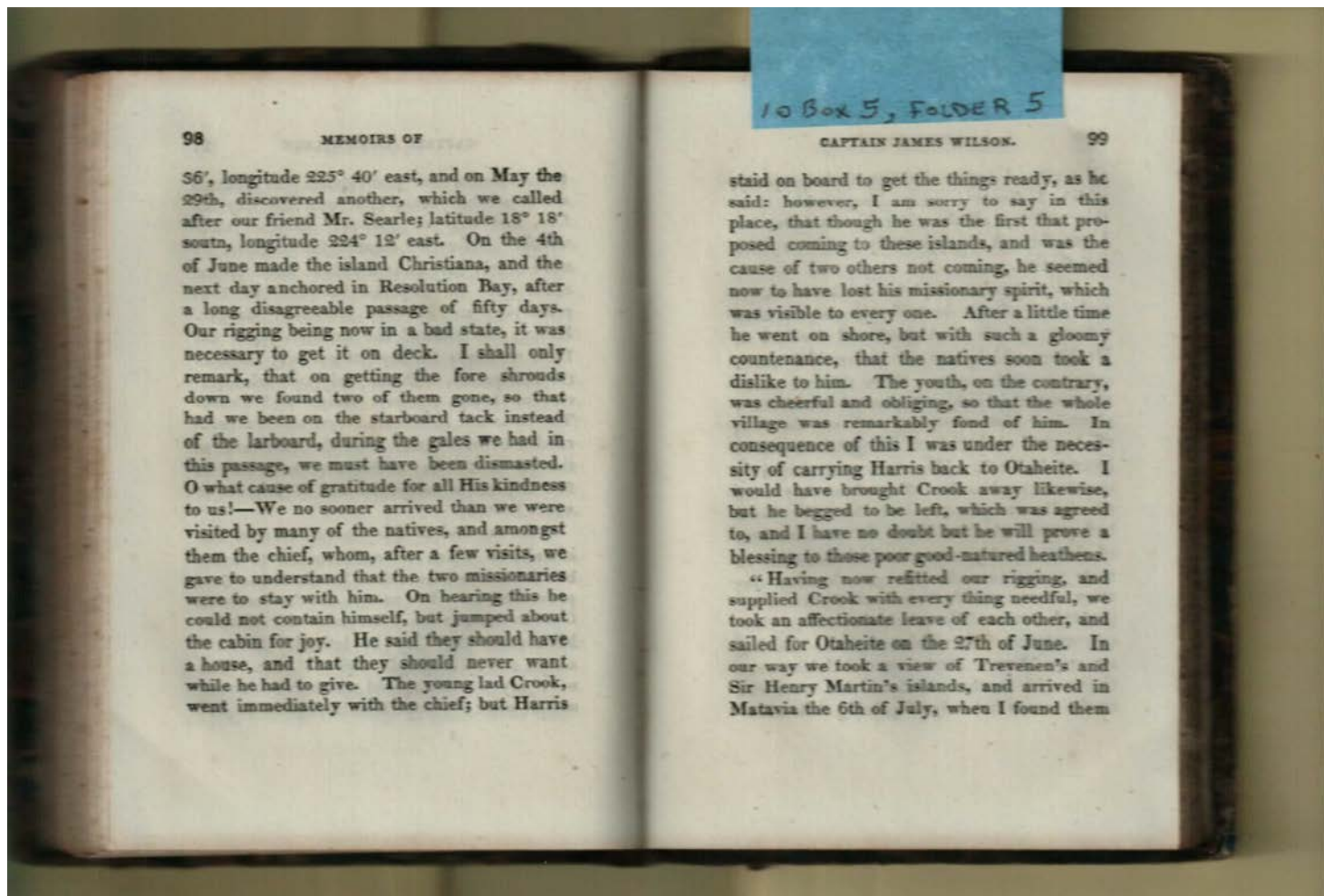


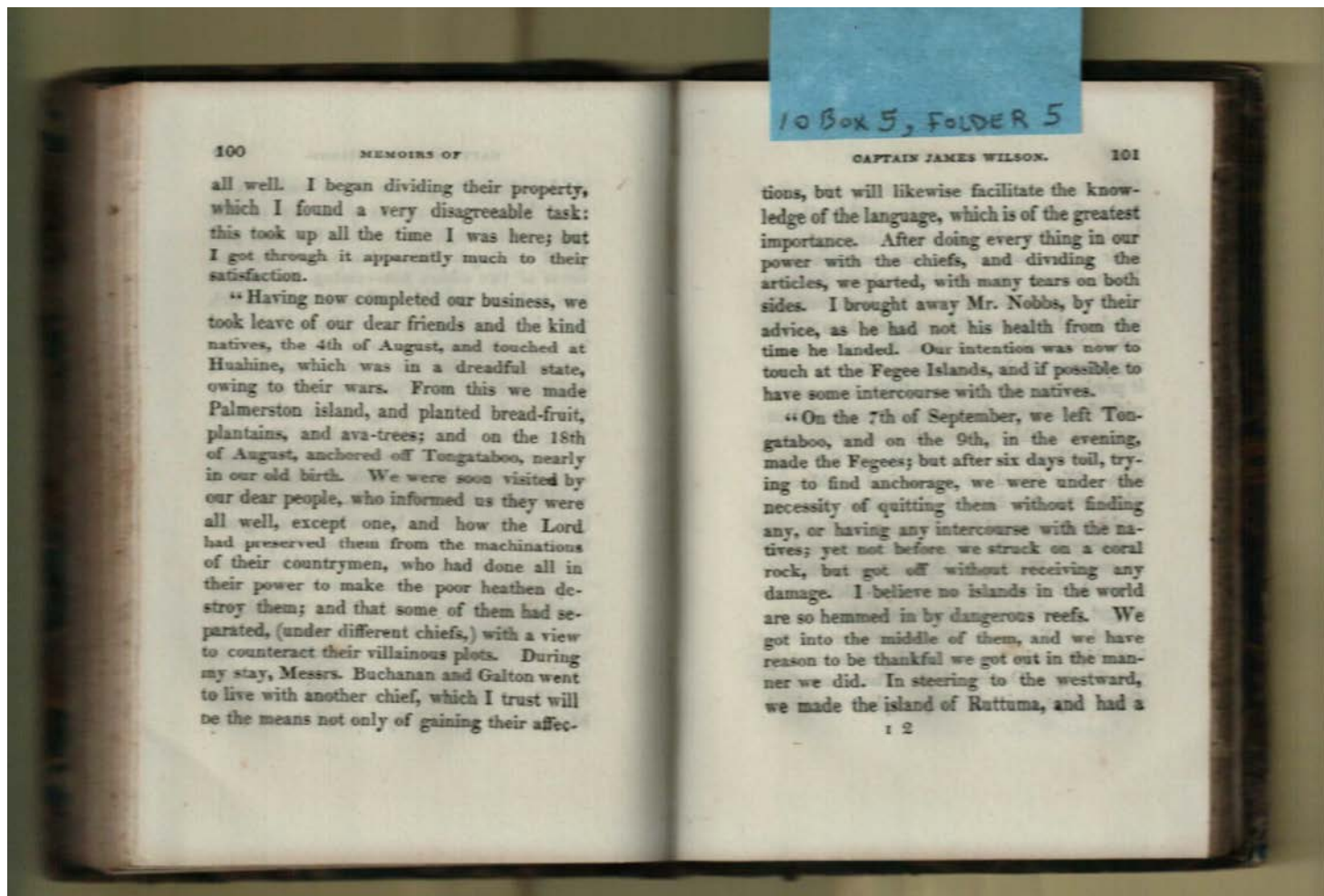
and all the canoes left us. The next morning we weighed and ran further out, that we might have plenty of room in case of an attack. About noon, two of the missionaries returned with the pleasing intelligence that the natives did not attempt to steal, but treated them with the greatest respect. We then loaded the canoes with the remainder of their things, and with such stores as they thought they should want.

"We now got under weigh to endeavour to find a channel to the westward of the spot where Captain Cook got aground. After some time a very good one was found, which we sailed through. This we conceived to be a valuable acquisition, as we should now, in case of being attacked, be able to sail out of the harbor either to the east or west. Being now without the reefs, we intended to spend two or three days to see how the natives would behave to our people; but the Lord saw fit to send us a smart gale from the north-west, so that at day-light we found ourselves in a critical situation, not being able to weather the reefs on either tack; but

to our comfort we just fetched the channel which we had discovered only the day before, and thus we narrowly escaped shipwreck. Before we cleared the harbour, we were nearly cast away a second time. What cause have we to praise our God for thus preserving us in such imminent danger. Having now cleared the harbour, April the 16th, we made the best of our way towards the Marquesas, with the only two missionaries on board, Messrs. Harris and Crook. The fair wind lasted six days, and was succeeded by hard gales from the eastward, so that on the 6th day of May, we were only in 206 degrees of longitude and 39 degrees of south latitude.

"On the 23d of May we discovered two islands, on which we endeavoured to land; but the natives, from their hostile disposition, prevented us. We named one the Crescent, from its shape; the other after Sir Charles Middleton; they lay in latitude 23° 12' south, and in longitude 226° 15' east. The next day we discovered another, which we named after Admiral Gambier, latitude 21°



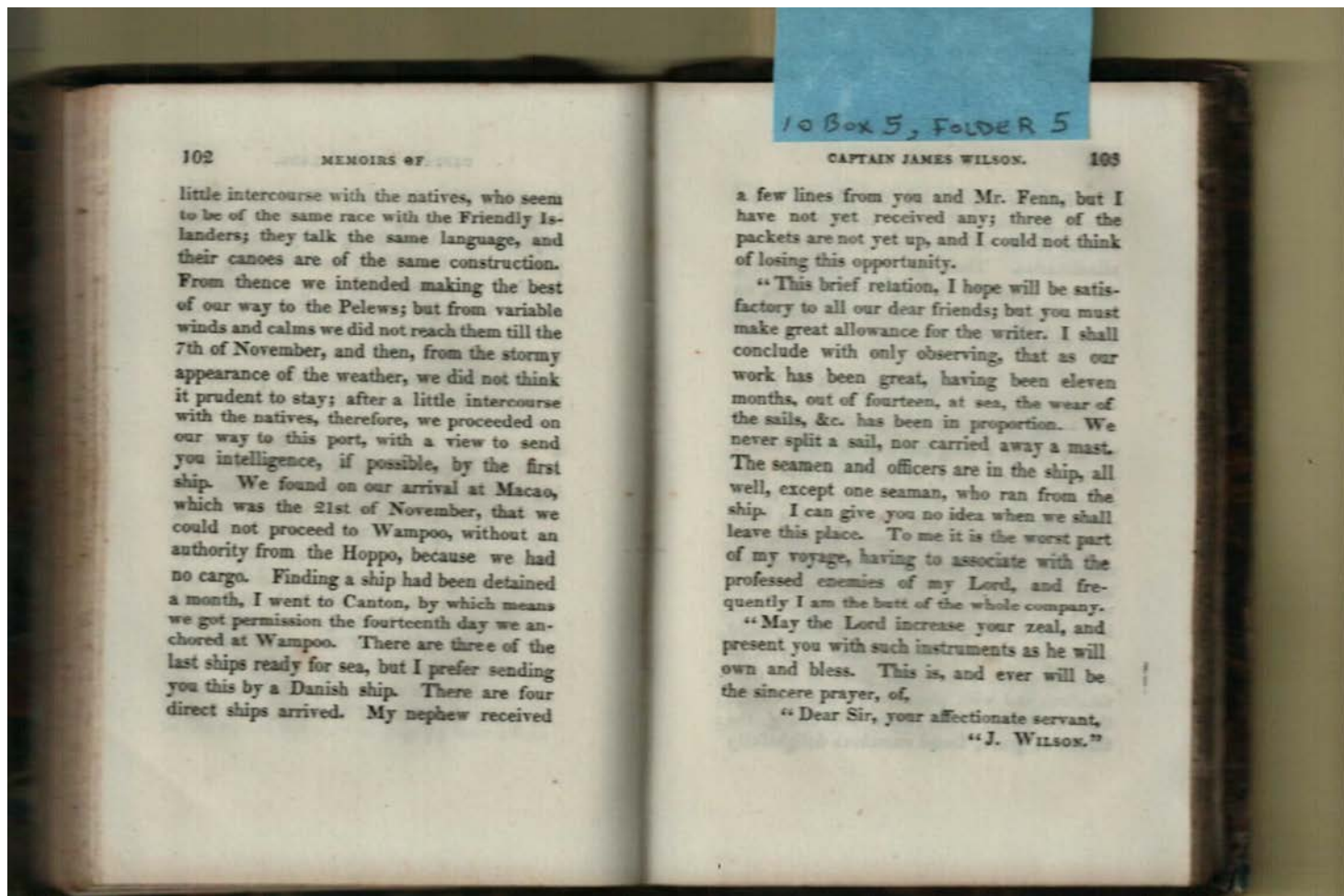


all well. I began dividing their property, which I found a very disagreeable task: this took up all the time I was here; but I got through it apparently much to their satisfaction.

"Having now completed our business, we took leave of our dear friends and the kind natives, the 4th of August, and touched at Huahine, which was in a dreadful state, owing to their wars. From this we made Palmerston island, and planted bread-fruit, plantains, and ava-trees; and on the 18th of August, anchored off Tongataboo, nearly in our old birth. We were soon visited by our dear people, who informed us they were all well, except one, and how the Lord had preserved them from the machinations of their countrymen, who had done all in their power to make the poor heathen destroy them; and that some of them had separated, (under different chiefs,) with a view to counteract their villainous plots. During my stay, Messrs. Buchanan and Galton went to live with another chief, which I trust will be the means not only of gaining their affec-

tions, but will likewise facilitate the knowledge of the language, which is of the greatest importance. After doing every thing in our power with the chiefs, and dividing the articles, we parted, with many tears on both sides. I brought away Mr. Nobbs, by their advice, as he had not his health from the time he landed. Our intention was now to touch at the Fegee Islands, and if possible to have some intercourse with the natives.

"On the 7th of September, we left Tongataboo, and on the 9th, in the evening, made the Fegees; but after six days toil, trying to find anchorage, we were under the necessity of quitting them without finding any, or having any intercourse with the natives; yet not before we struck on a coral rock, but got off without receiving any damage. I believe no islands in the world are so hemmed in by dangerous reefs. We got into the middle of them, and we have reason to be thankful we got out in the manner we did. In steering to the westward, we made the island of Ruttuma, and had a



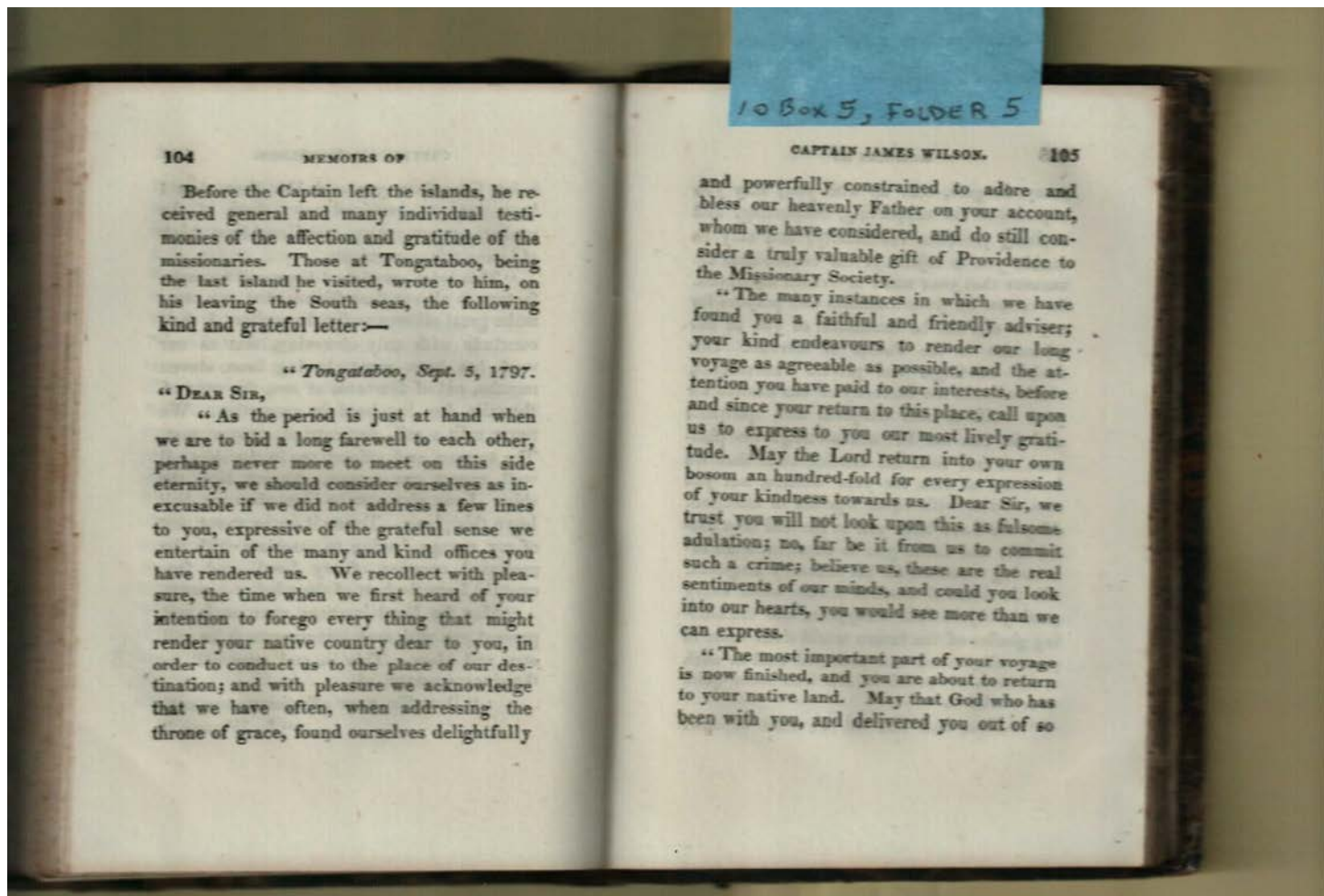
little intercourse with the natives, who seem to be of the same race with the Friendly Islanders; they talk the same language, and their canoes are of the same construction. From thence we intended making the best of our way to the Pelews; but from variable winds and calms we did not reach them till the 7th of November, and then, from the stormy appearance of the weather, we did not think it prudent to stay; after a little intercourse with the natives, therefore, we proceeded on our way to this port, with a view to send you intelligence, if possible, by the first ship. We found on our arrival at Macao, which was the 21st of November, that we could not proceed to Wampoo, without an authority from the Hoppo, because we had no cargo. Finding a ship had been detained a month, I went to Canton, by which means we got permission the fourteenth day we anchored at Wampoo. There are three of the last ships ready for sea, but I prefer sending you this by a Danish ship. There are four direct ships arrived. My nephew received

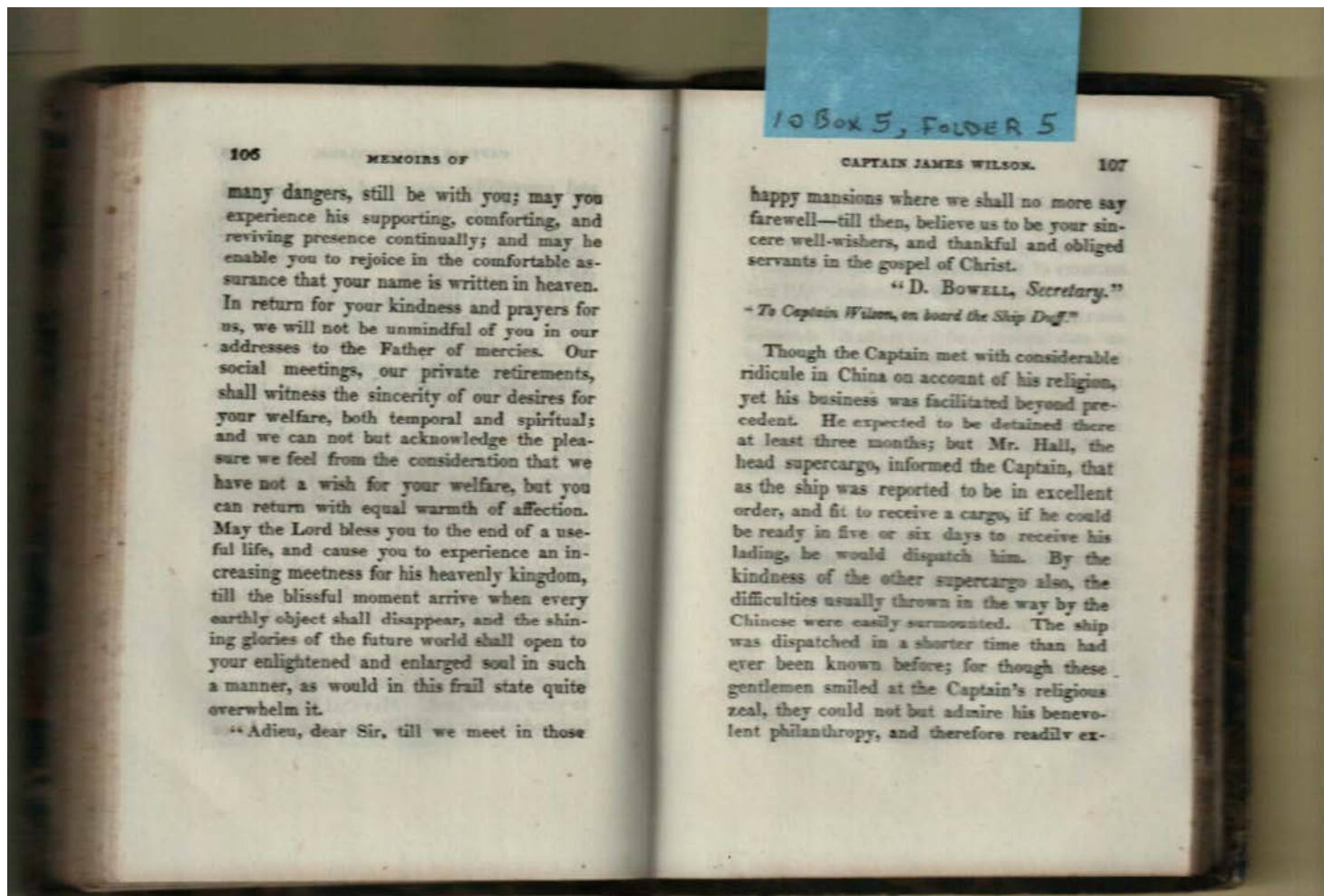
a few lines from you and Mr. Fenn, but I have not yet received any; three of the packets are not yet up, and I could not think of losing this opportunity.

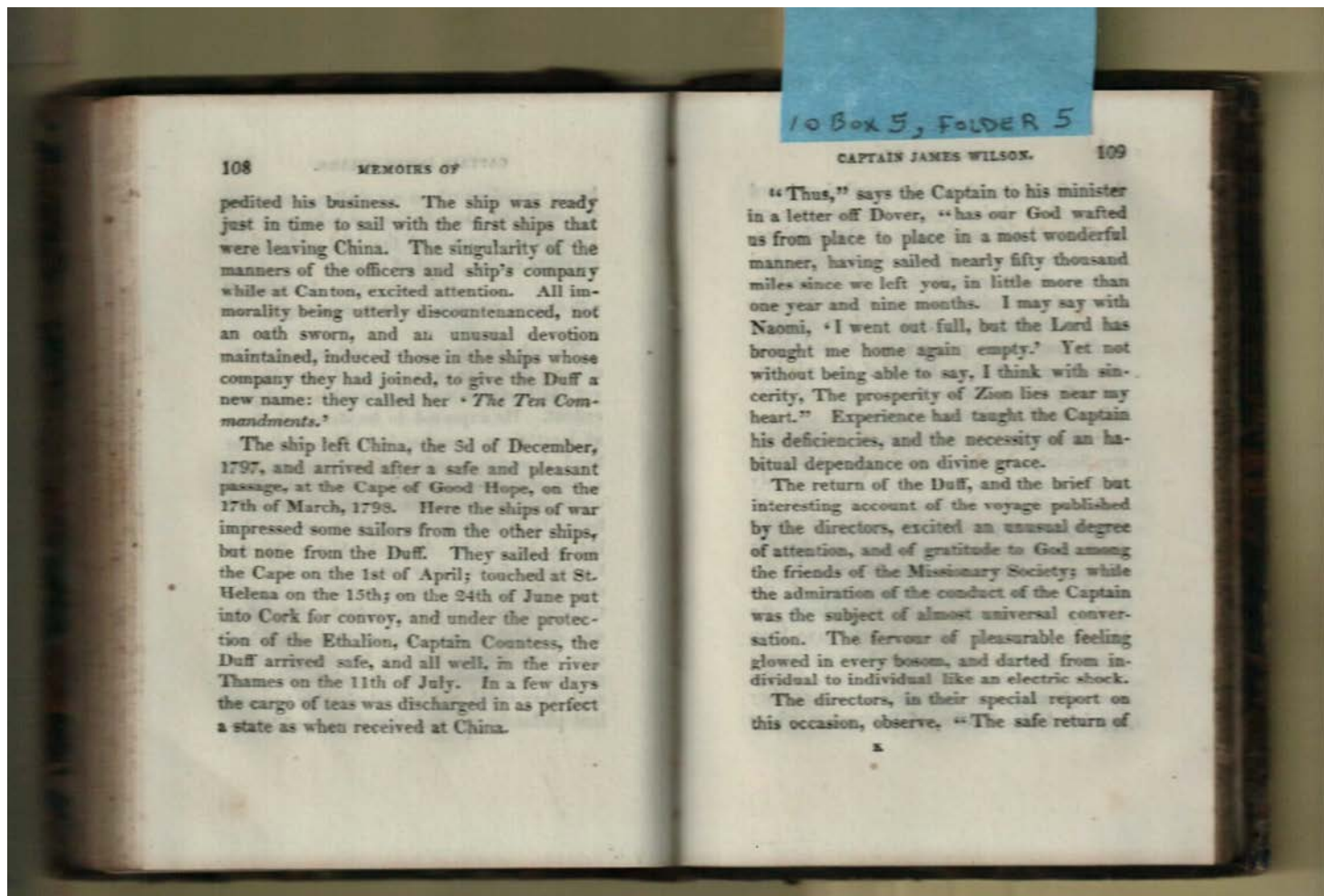
"This brief relation, I hope will be satisfactory to all our dear friends; but you must make great allowance for the writer. I shall conclude with only observing, that as our work has been great, having been eleven months, out of fourteen, at sea, the wear of the sails, &c. has been in proportion. We never split a sail, nor carried away a mast. The seamen and officers are in the ship, all well, except one seaman, who ran from the ship. I can give you no idea when we shall leave this place. To me it is the worst part of my voyage, having to associate with the professed enemies of my Lord, and frequently I am the butt of the whole company.

"May the Lord increase your zeal, and present you with such instruments as he will own and bless. This is, and ever will be the sincere prayer, of,

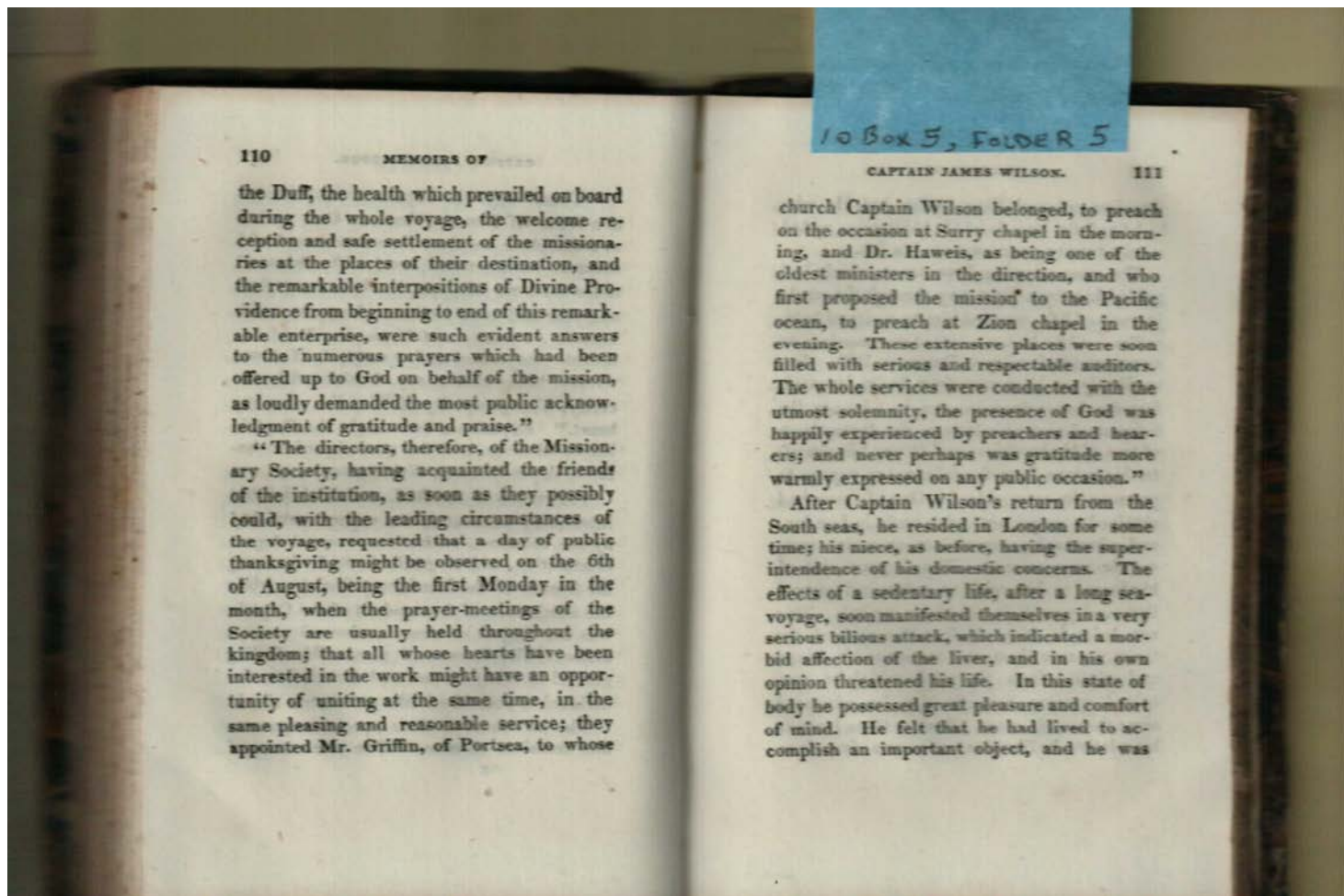
"Dear Sir, your affectionate servant,  
"J. WILSON."

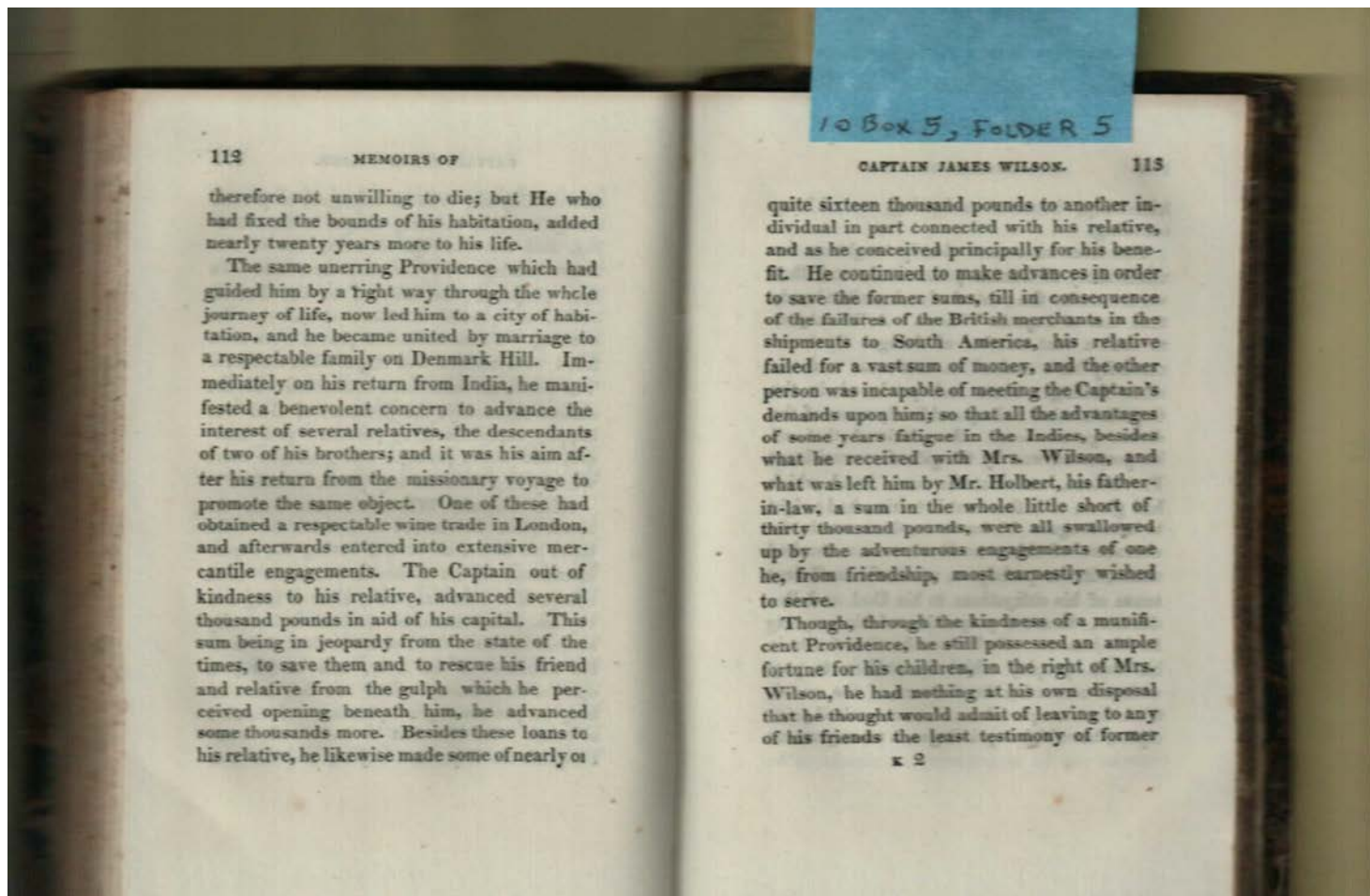










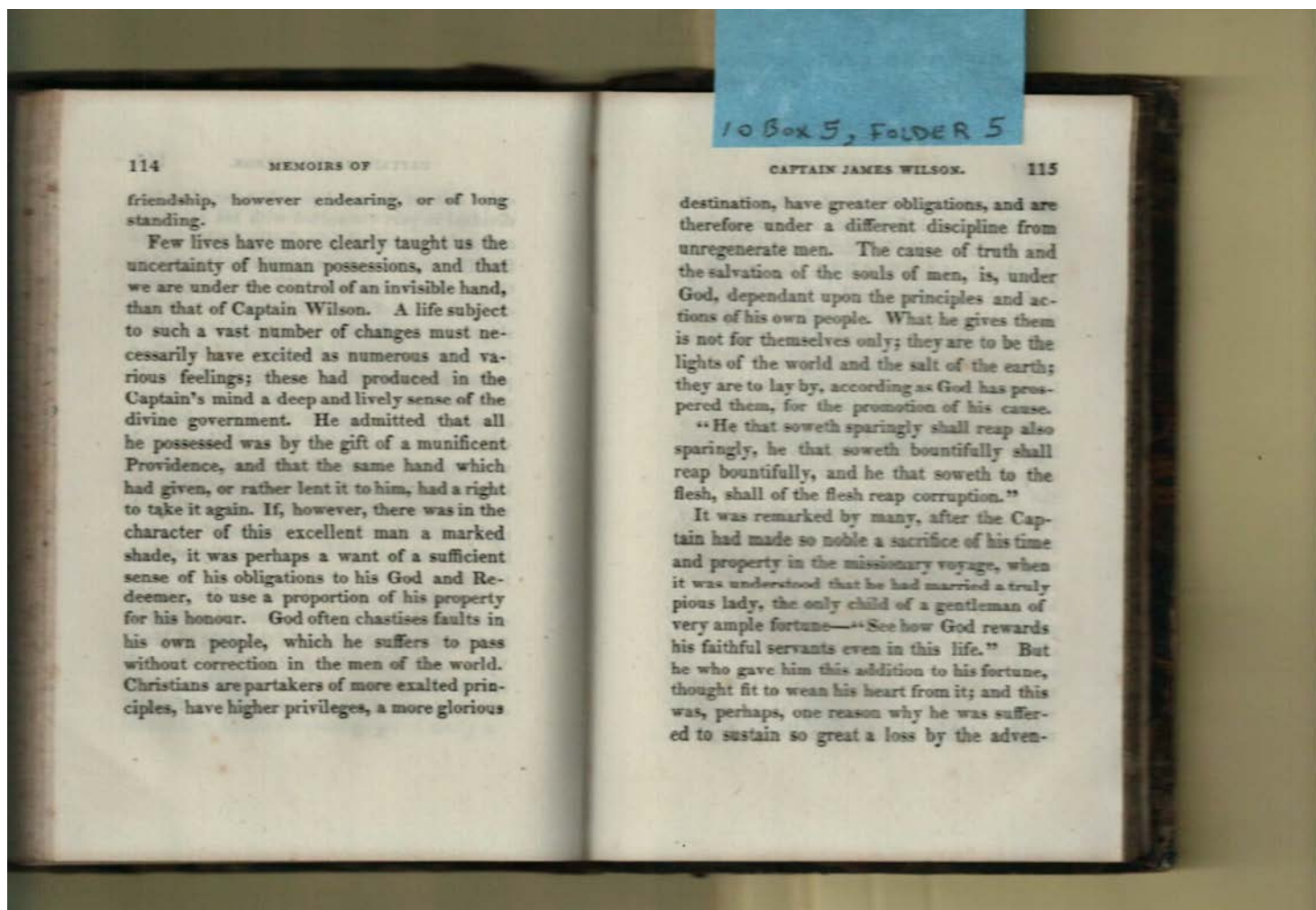


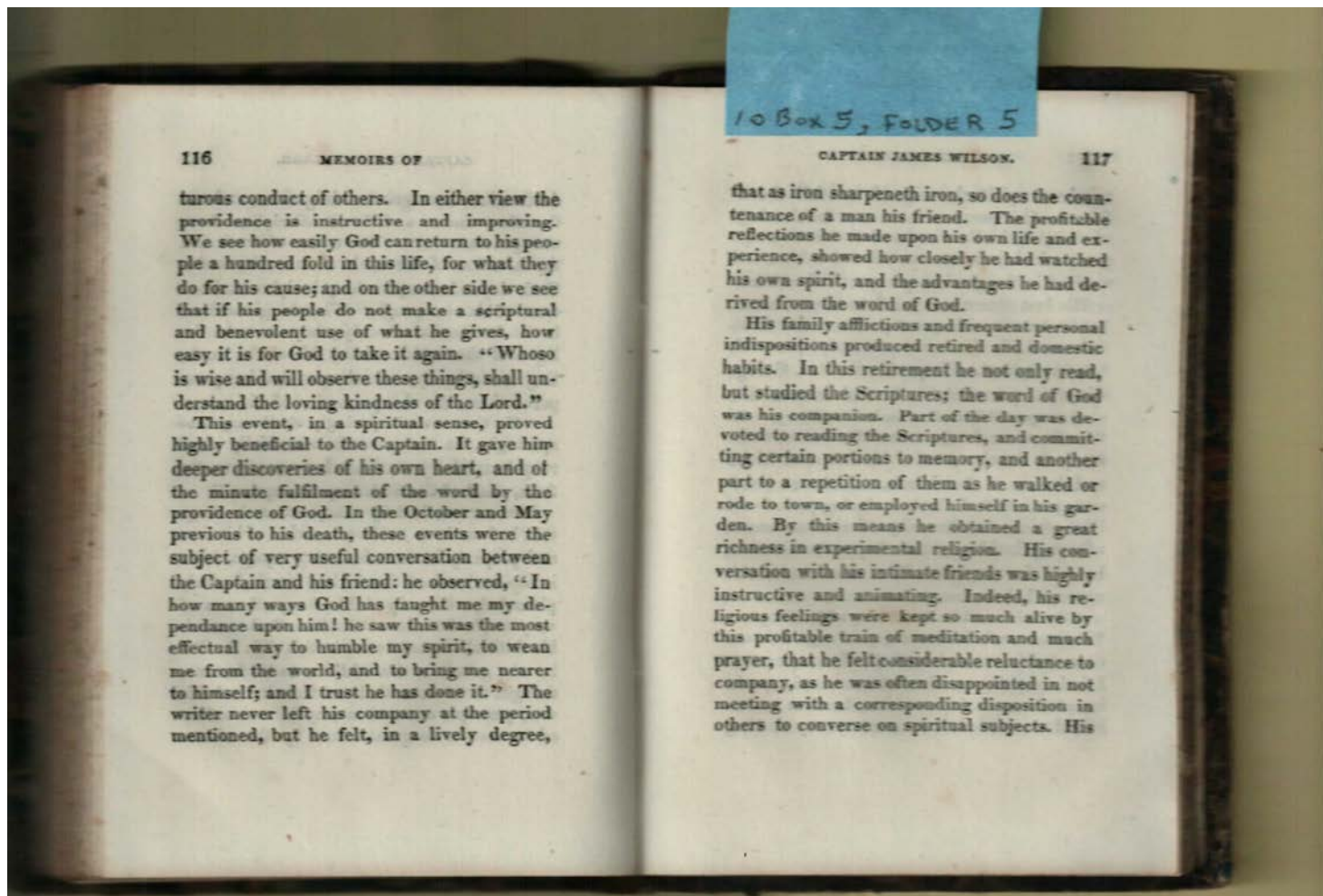
therefore not unwilling to die; but He who had fixed the bounds of his habitation, added nearly twenty years more to his life.

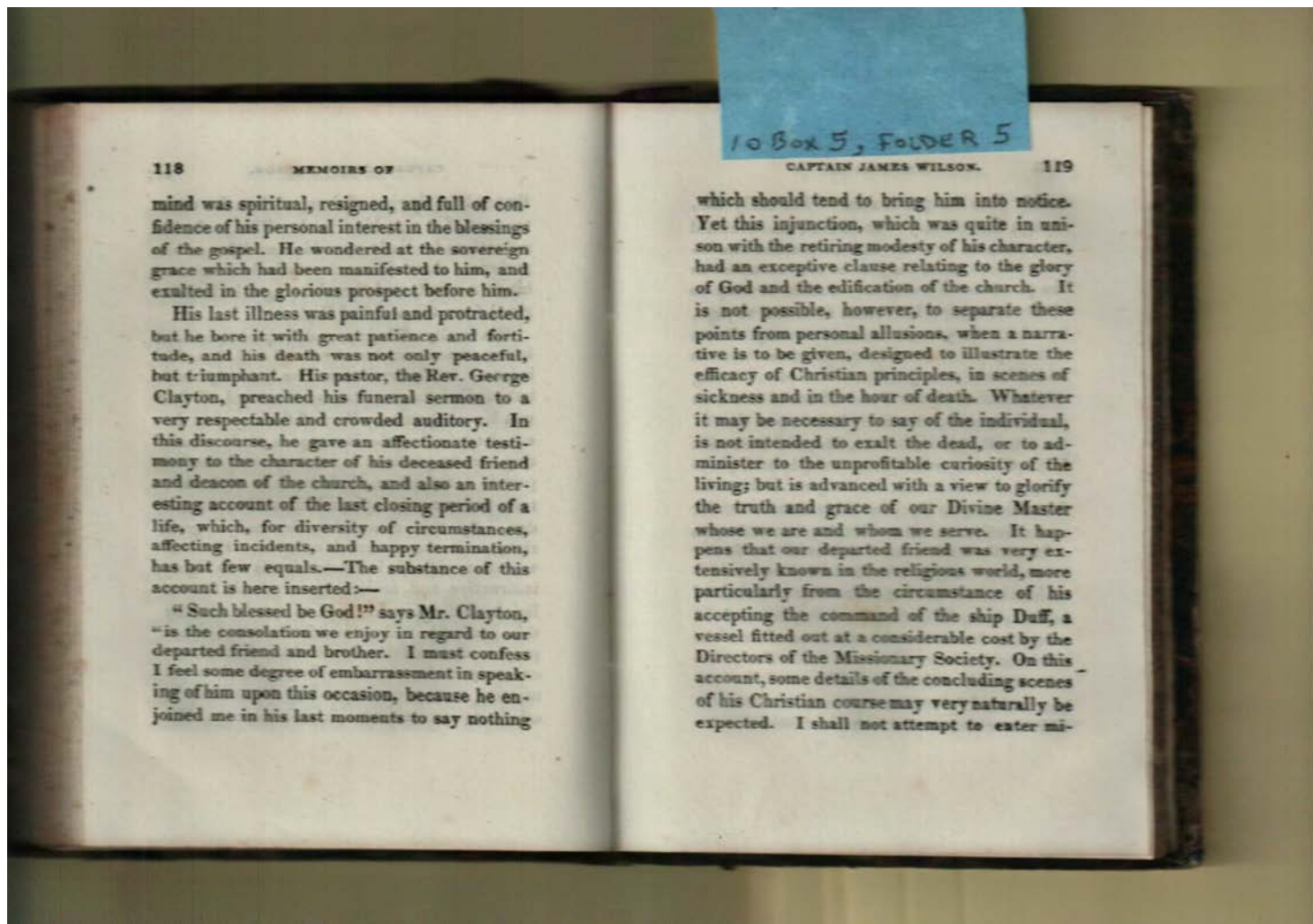
The same unerring Providence which had guided him by a tight way through the whole journey of life, now led him to a city of habitation, and he became united by marriage to a respectable family on Denmark Hill. Immediately on his return from India, he manifested a benevolent concern to advance the interest of several relatives, the descendants of two of his brothers; and it was his aim after his return from the missionary voyage to promote the same object. One of these had obtained a respectable wine trade in London, and afterwards entered into extensive mercantile engagements. The Captain out of kindness to his relative, advanced several thousand pounds in aid of his capital. This sum being in jeopardy from the state of the times, to save them and to rescue his friend and relative from the gulph which he perceived opening beneath him, he advanced some thousands more. Besides these loans to his relative, he likewise made some of nearly or

quite sixteen thousand pounds to another individual in part connected with his relative, and as he conceived principally for his benefit. He continued to make advances in order to save the former sums, till in consequence of the failures of the British merchants in the shipments to South America, his relative failed for a vast sum of money, and the other person was incapable of meeting the Captain's demands upon him; so that all the advantages of some years fatigue in the Indies, besides what he received with Mrs. Wilson, and what was left him by Mr. Holbert, his father-in-law, a sum in the whole little short of thirty thousand pounds, were all swallowed up by the adventurous engagements of one he, from friendship, most earnestly wished to serve.

Though, through the kindness of a munificent Providence, he still possessed an ample fortune for his children, in the right of Mrs. Wilson, he had nothing at his own disposal that he thought would admit of leaving to any of his friends the least testimony of former





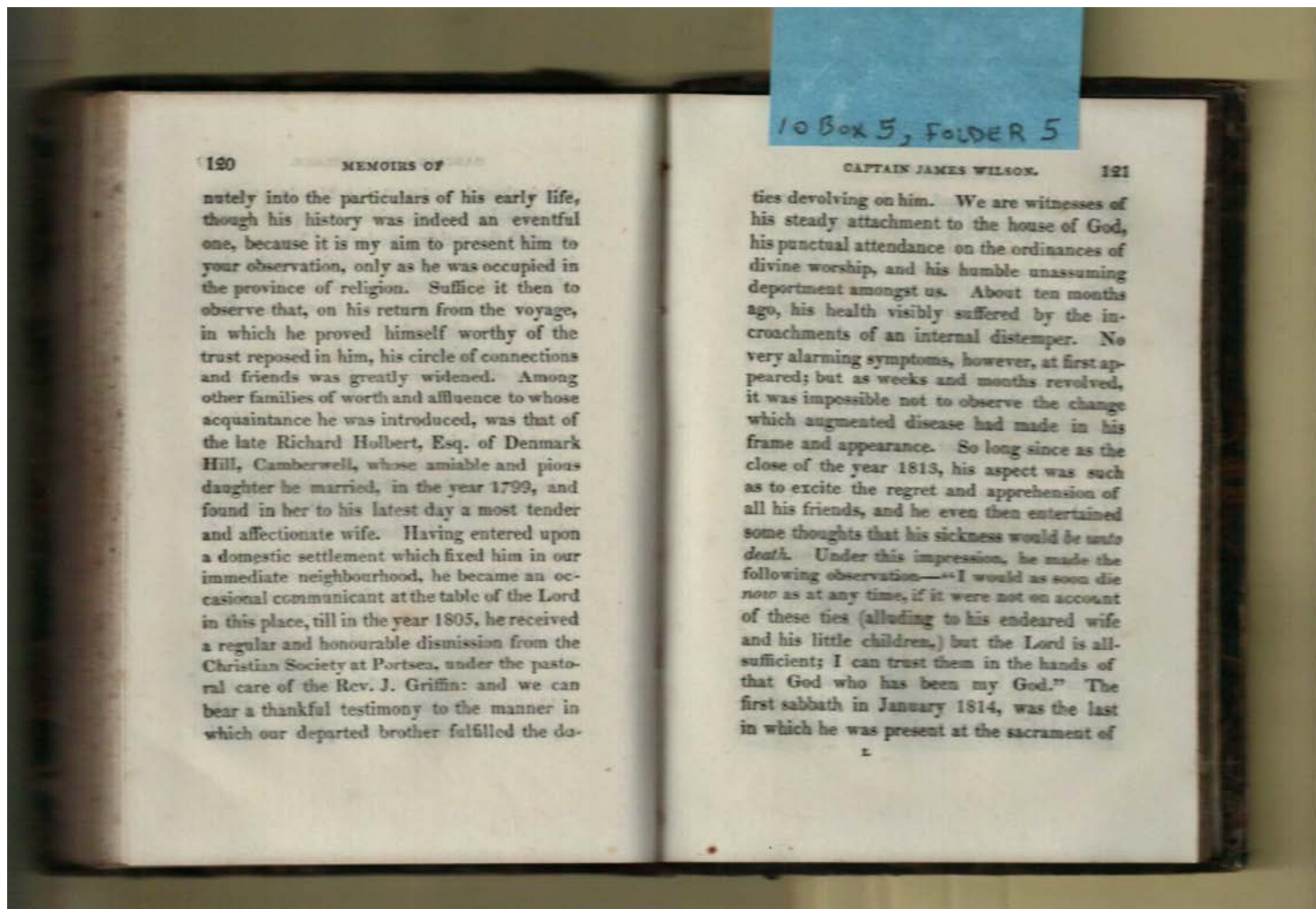


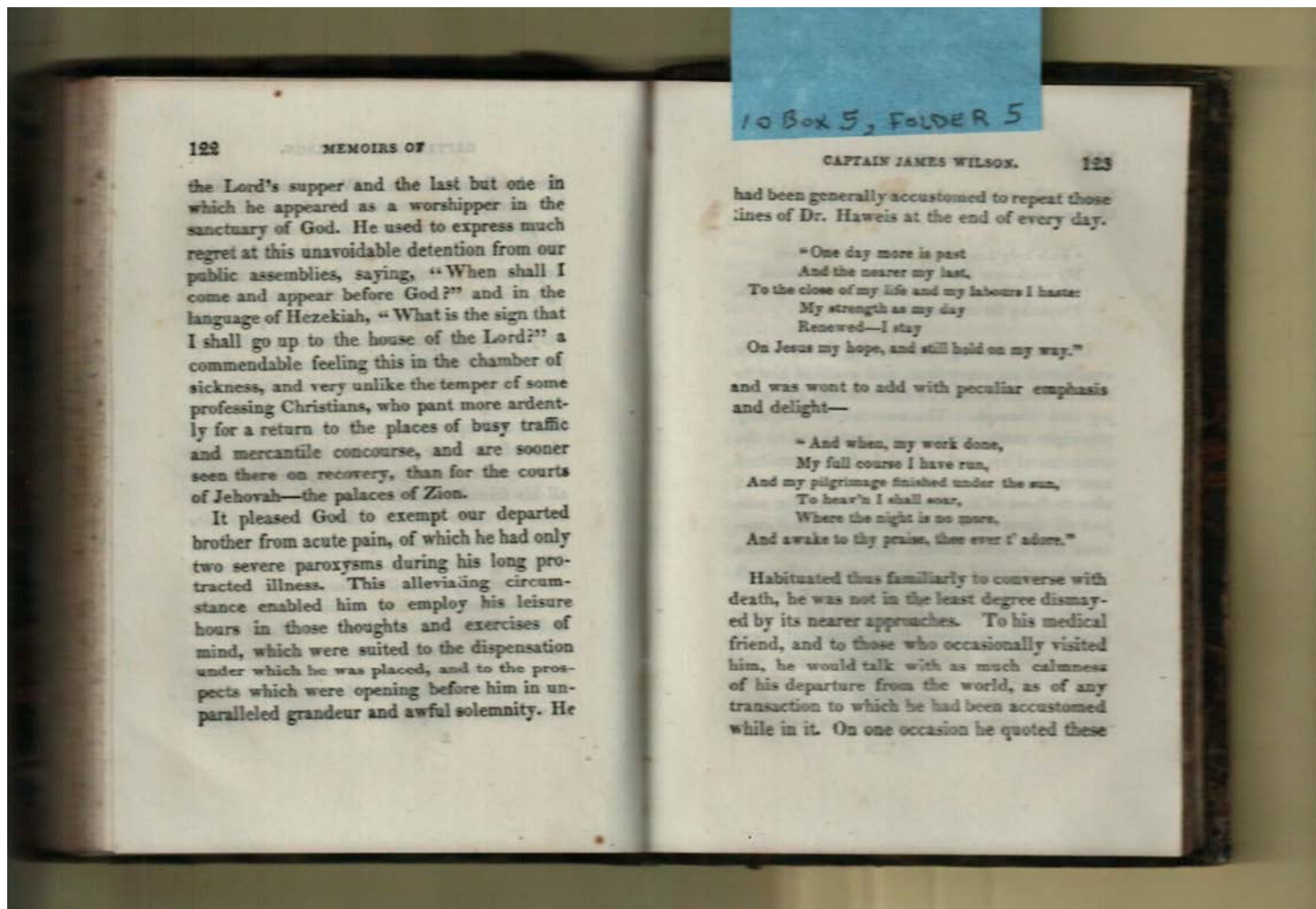
mind was spiritual, resigned, and full of confidence of his personal interest in the blessings of the gospel. He wondered at the sovereign grace which had been manifested to him, and exalted in the glorious prospect before him.

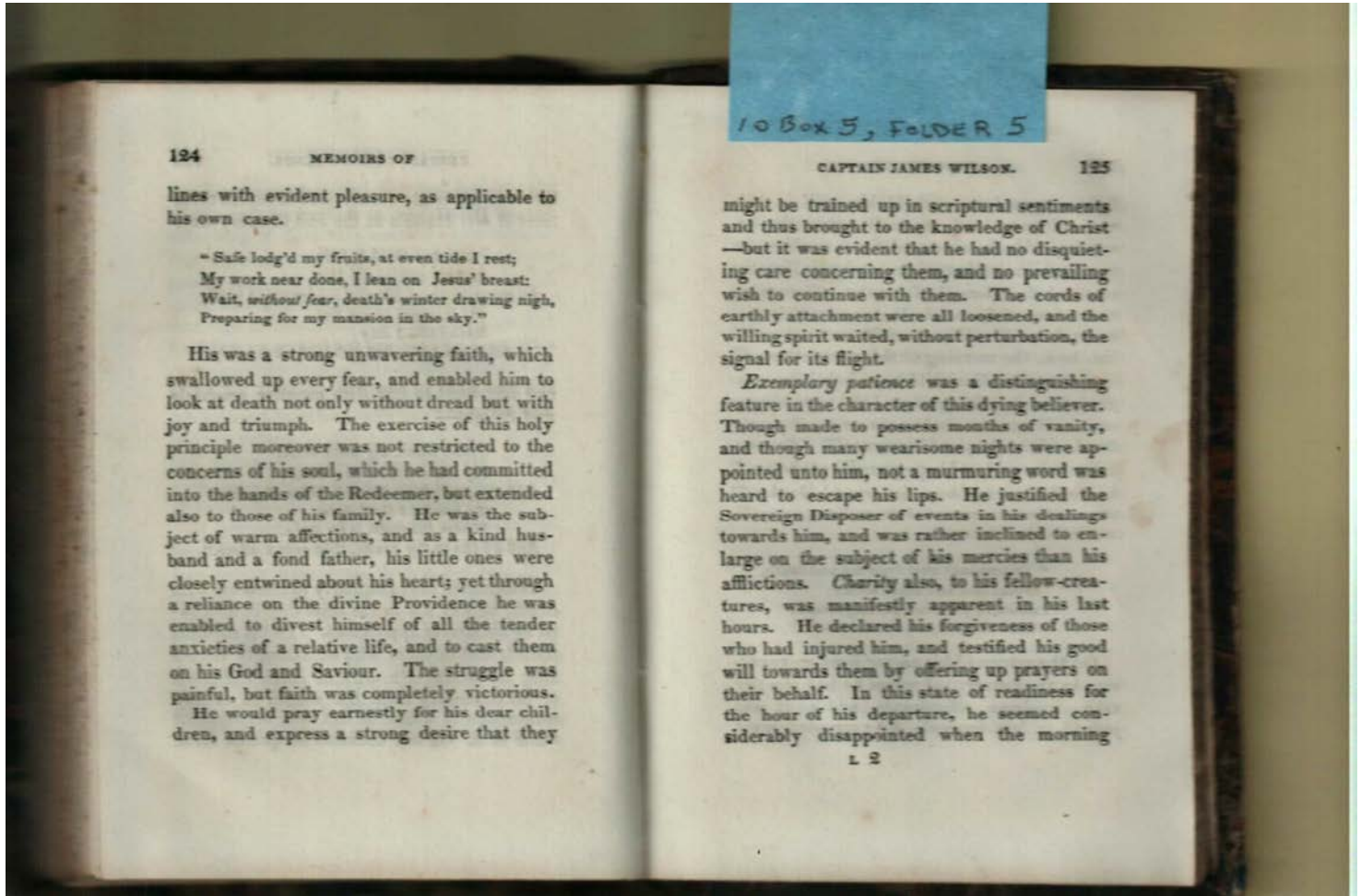
His last illness was painful and protracted, but he bore it with great patience and fortitude, and his death was not only peaceful, but triumphant. His pastor, the Rev. George Clayton, preached his funeral sermon to a very respectable and crowded auditory. In this discourse, he gave an affectionate testimony to the character of his deceased friend and deacon of the church, and also an interesting account of the last closing period of a life, which, for diversity of circumstances, affecting incidents, and happy termination, has but few equals.—The substance of this account is here inserted:—

"Such blessed be God!" says Mr. Clayton, "is the consolation we enjoy in regard to our departed friend and brother. I must confess I feel some degree of embarrassment in speaking of him upon this occasion, because he enjoined me in his last moments to say nothing

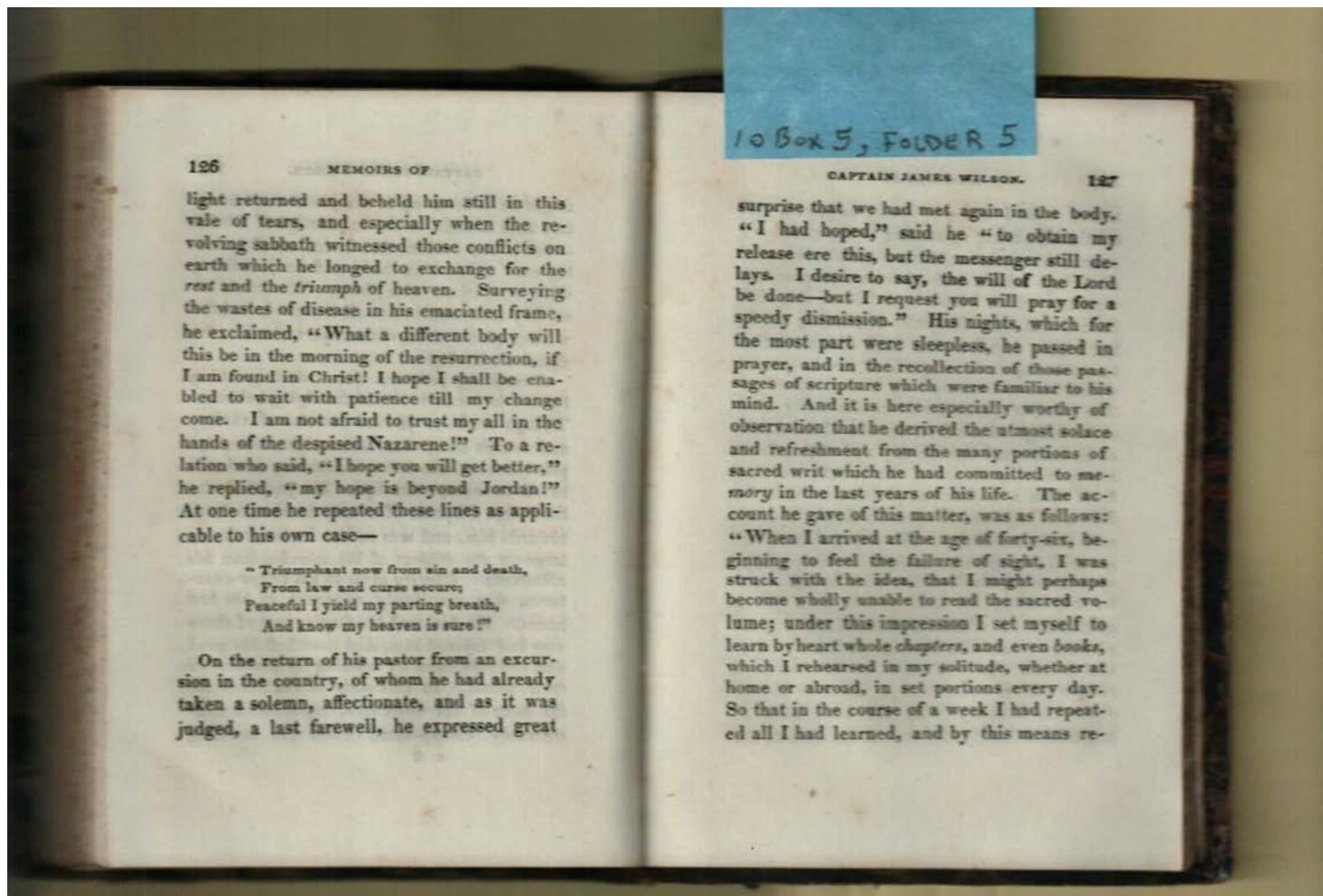
which should tend to bring him into notice. Yet this injunction, which was quite in unison with the retiring modesty of his character, had an exceptive clause relating to the glory of God and the edification of the church. It is not possible, however, to separate these points from personal allusions, when a narrative is to be given, designed to illustrate the efficacy of Christian principles, in scenes of sickness and in the hour of death. Whatever it may be necessary to say of the individual, is not intended to exalt the dead, or to administer to the unprofitable curiosity of the living; but is advanced with a view to glorify the truth and grace of our Divine Master whose we are and whom we serve. It happens that our departed friend was very extensively known in the religious world, more particularly from the circumstance of his accepting the command of the ship Duff, a vessel fitted out at a considerable cost by the Directors of the Missionary Society. On this account, some details of the concluding scenes of his Christian course may very naturally be expected. I shall not attempt to enter mi-









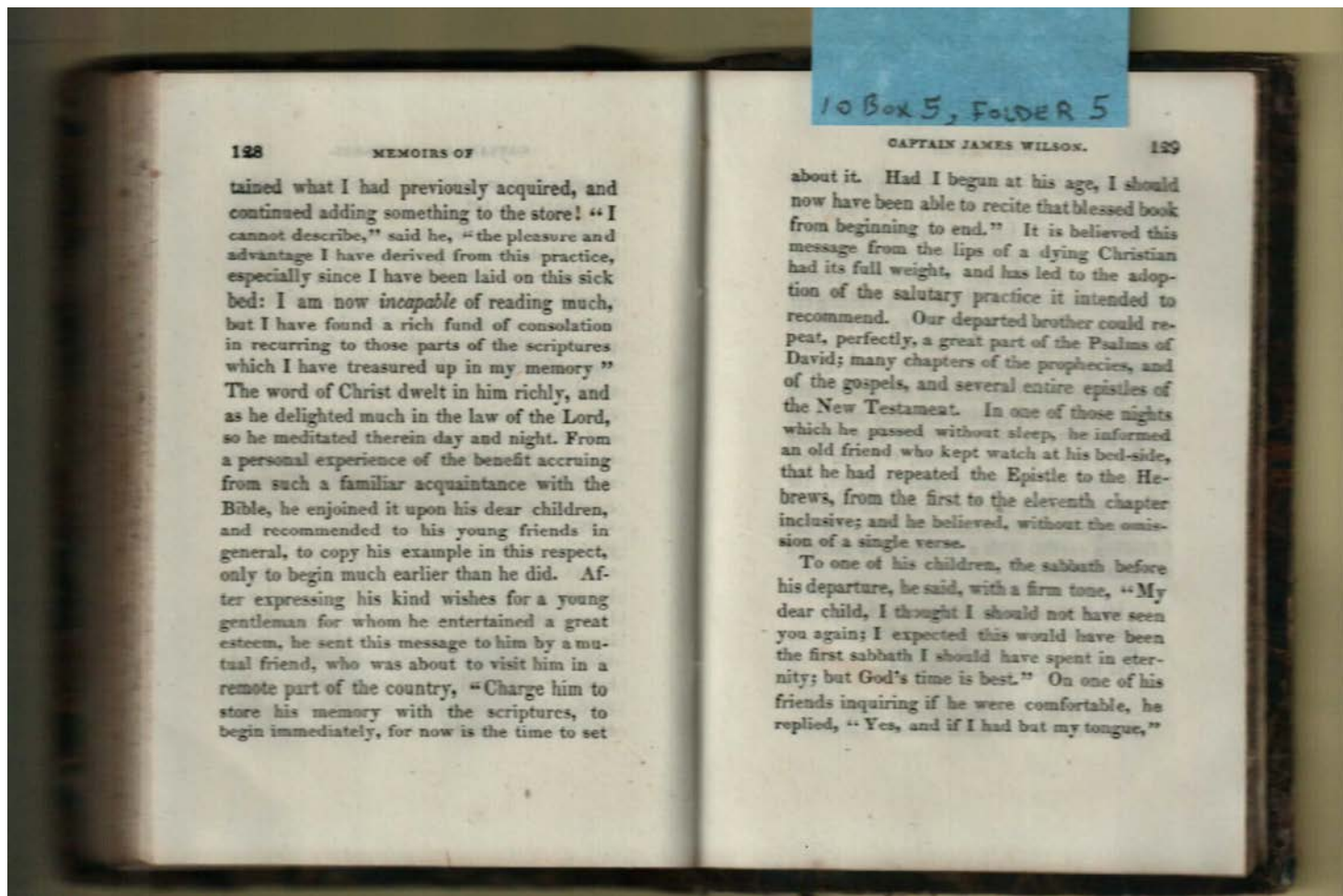


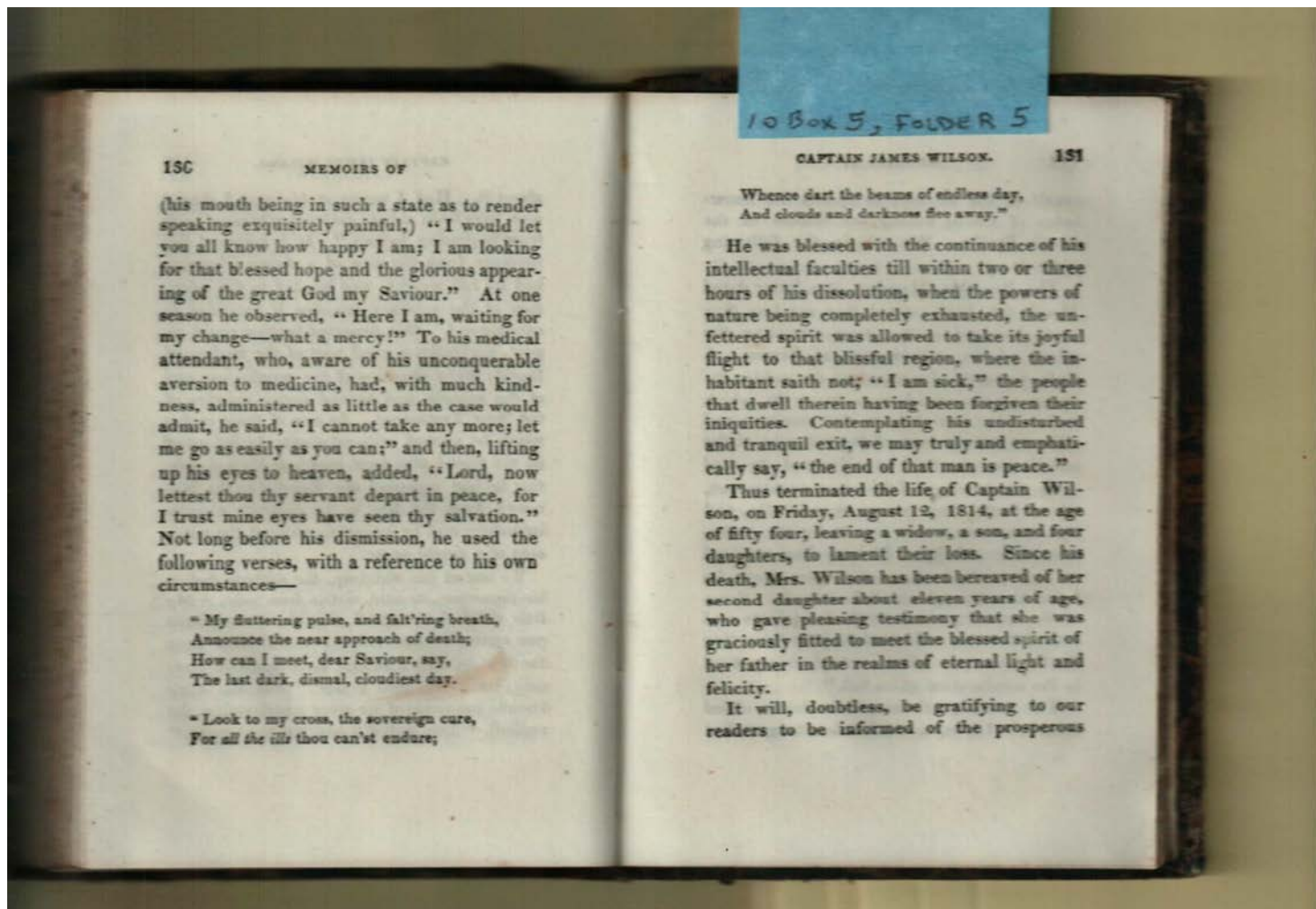
light returned and beheld him still in this vale of tears, and especially when the revolving sabbath witnessed those conflicts on earth which he longed to exchange for the rest and the triumph of heaven. Surveying the wastes of disease in his emaciated frame, he exclaimed, "What a different body will this be in the morning of the resurrection, if I am found in Christ! I hope I shall be enabled to wait with patience till my change come. I am not afraid to trust my all in the hands of the despised Nazarene!" To a relation who said, "I hope you will get better," he replied, "my hope is beyond Jordan!" At one time he repeated these lines as applicable to his own case—

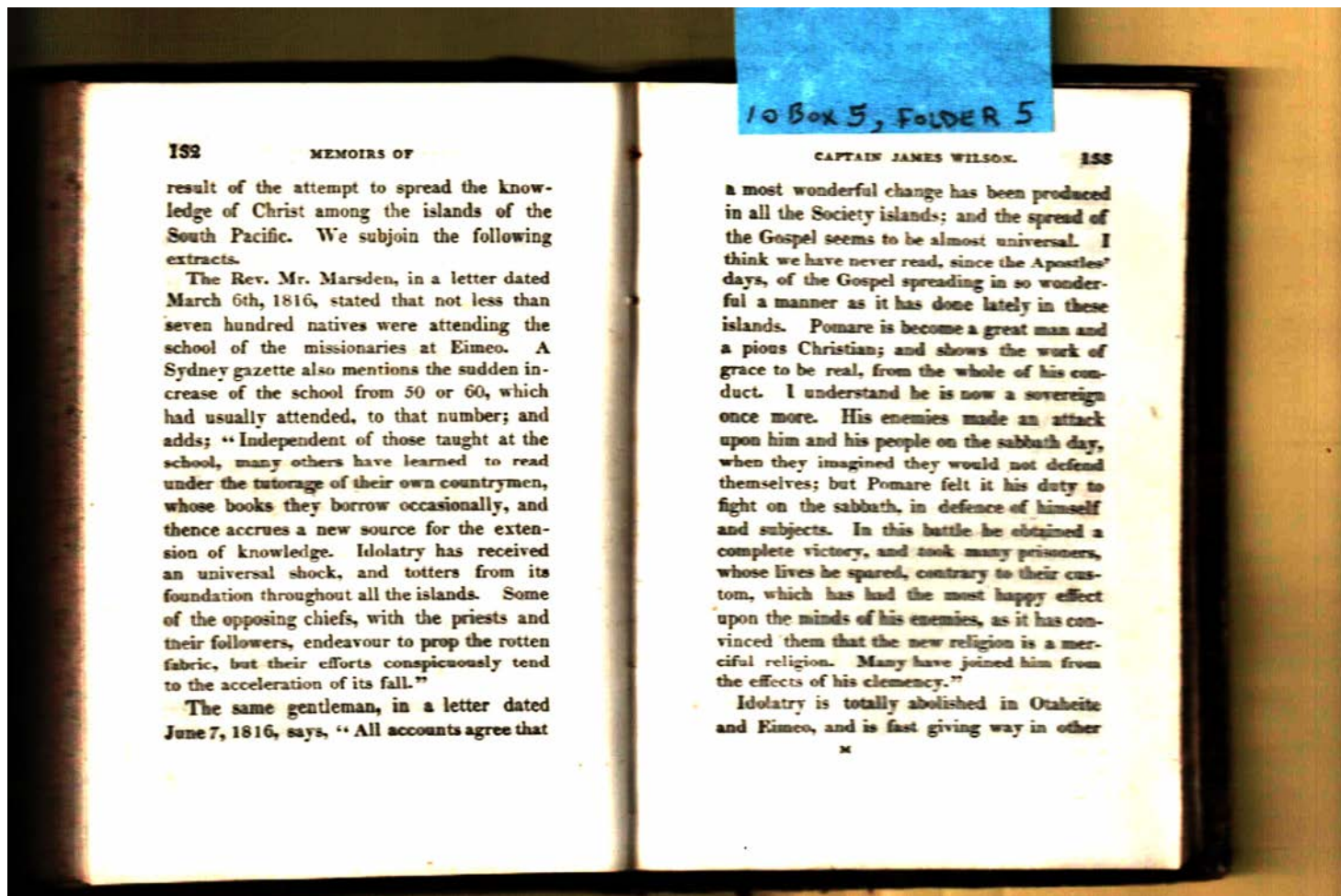
"Triumphant now from sin and death,  
From law and curse secure;  
Peaceful I yield my parting breath,  
And know my heaven is sure!"

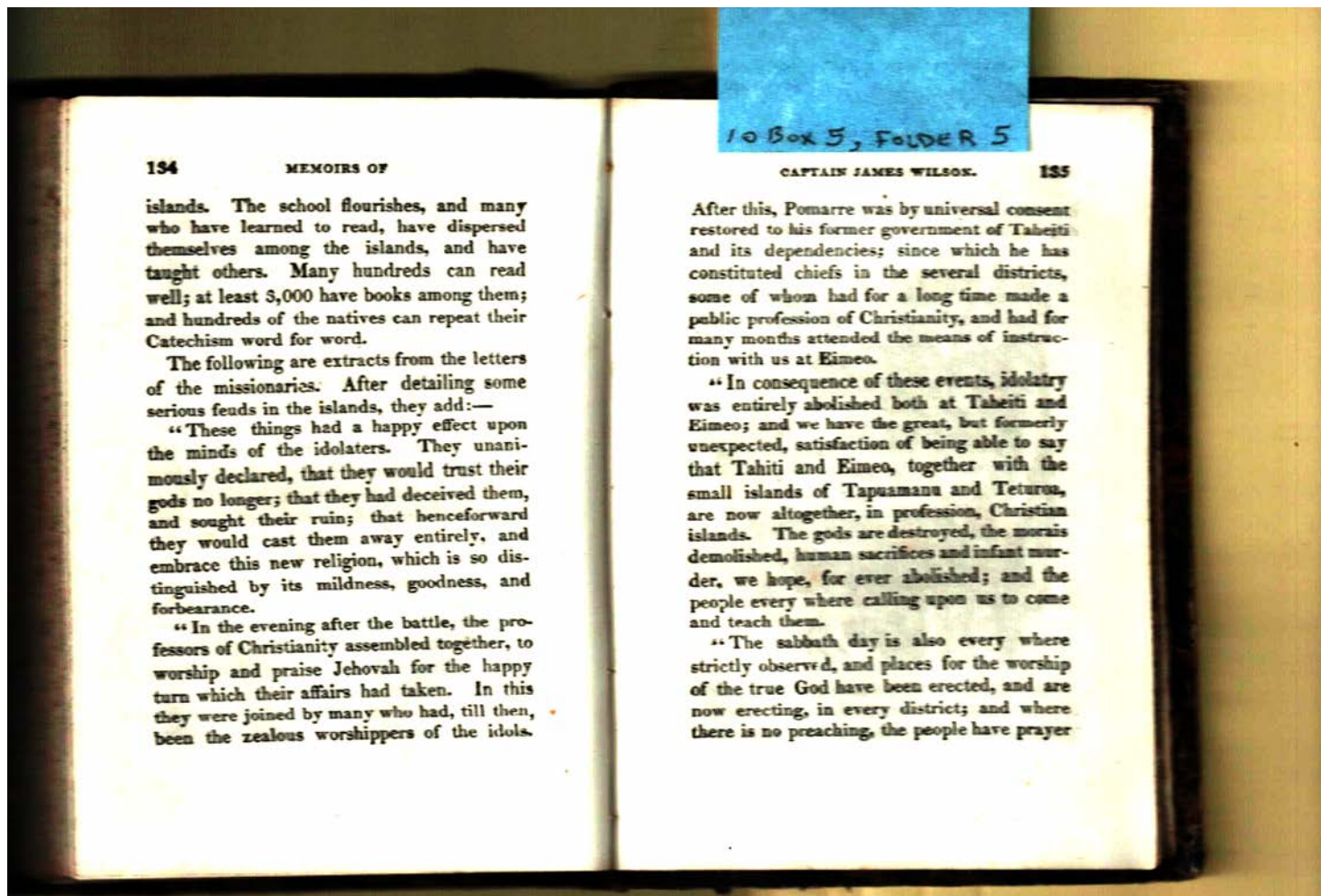
On the return of his pastor from an excursion in the country, of whom he had already taken a solemn, affectionate, and as it was judged, a last farewell, he expressed great

surprise that we had met again in the body. "I had hoped," said he "to obtain my release ere this, but the messenger still delays. I desire to say, the will of the Lord be done—but I request you will pray for a speedy dismissal." His nights, which for the most part were sleepless, he passed in prayer, and in the recollection of those passages of scripture which were familiar to his mind. And it is here especially worthy of observation that he derived the utmost solace and refreshment from the many portions of sacred writ which he had committed to memory in the last years of his life. The account he gave of this matter, was as follows: "When I arrived at the age of forty-six, beginning to feel the failure of sight, I was struck with the idea, that I might perhaps become wholly unable to read the sacred volume; under this impression I set myself to learn by heart whole chapters, and even books, which I rehearsed in my solitude, whether at home or abroad, in set portions every day. So that in the course of a week I had repeated all I had learned, and by this means re-









islands. The school flourishes, and many who have learned to read, have dispersed themselves among the islands, and have taught others. Many hundreds can read well; at least 3,000 have books among them; and hundreds of the natives can repeat their Catechism word for word.

The following are extracts from the letters of the missionaries. After detailing some serious feuds in the islands, they add:—

“These things had a happy effect upon the minds of the idolaters. They unanimously declared, that they would trust their gods no longer; that they had deceived them, and sought their ruin; that henceforward they would cast them away entirely, and embrace this new religion, which is so distinguished by its mildness, goodness, and forbearance.

“In the evening after the battle, the professors of Christianity assembled together, to worship and praise Jehovah for the happy turn which their affairs had taken. In this they were joined by many who had, till then, been the zealous worshippers of the idols.

After this, Pomarre was by universal consent restored to his former government of Tahiti and its dependencies; since which he has constituted chiefs in the several districts, some of whom had for a long time made a public profession of Christianity, and had for many months attended the means of instruction with us at Eimeo.

“In consequence of these events, idolatry was entirely abolished both at Tahiti and Eimeo; and we have the great, but formerly unexpected, satisfaction of being able to say that Tahiti and Eimeo, together with the small islands of Tapuamau and Teturoa, are now altogether, in profession, Christian islands. The gods are destroyed, the morais demolished, human sacrifices and infant murder, we hope, for ever abolished; and the people every where calling upon us to come and teach them.

“The sabbath day is also every where strictly observ'd, and places for the worship of the true God have been erected, and are now erecting, in every district; and where there is no preaching, the people have prayer

meetings every Sabbath, and every Wednesday evening, all round Tahiti and Eimeo.

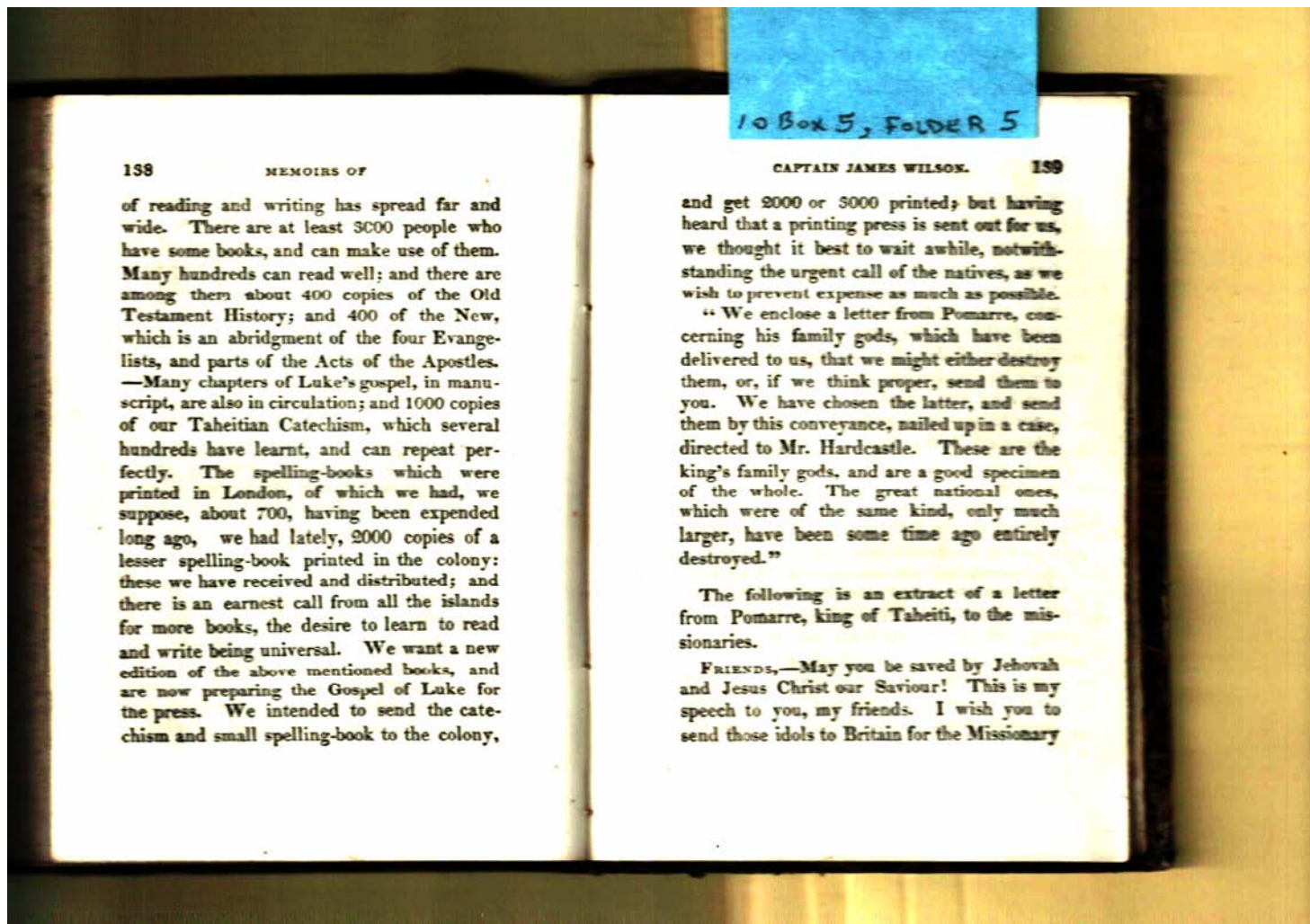


“But this is not all; we have also good news to communicate about the Leeward islands. Tamotoa, or as he is now called Tapa, the

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principal chief, has also publicly renounced idolatry, and embraced Christianity. His example has been followed by most of the other chiefs, and a large majority of the people throughout the four Society islands; namely, Huahine, Raiatea, Taha, and Borabora. Two chiefs of Borabora, named Tefanora and Mai, have distinguished themselves by their zeal in destroying the gods, and erecting a house for the worship of the true God. The chiefs of these islands have sent letters and repeated messages to us, earnestly entreating us to send some of our number to them, to teach them also: and Mai sent us a letter to remind us that Jesus Christ and his apostles did not confine their instructions to one place or country.

“The school, notwithstanding former discouragements, has prospered exceedingly, and continues to prosper; though at present many hundreds of the scholars are scattered through the neighbouring islands, some of whom are teaching others in the different islands and districts where they reside; and thus, through their means, some knowledge



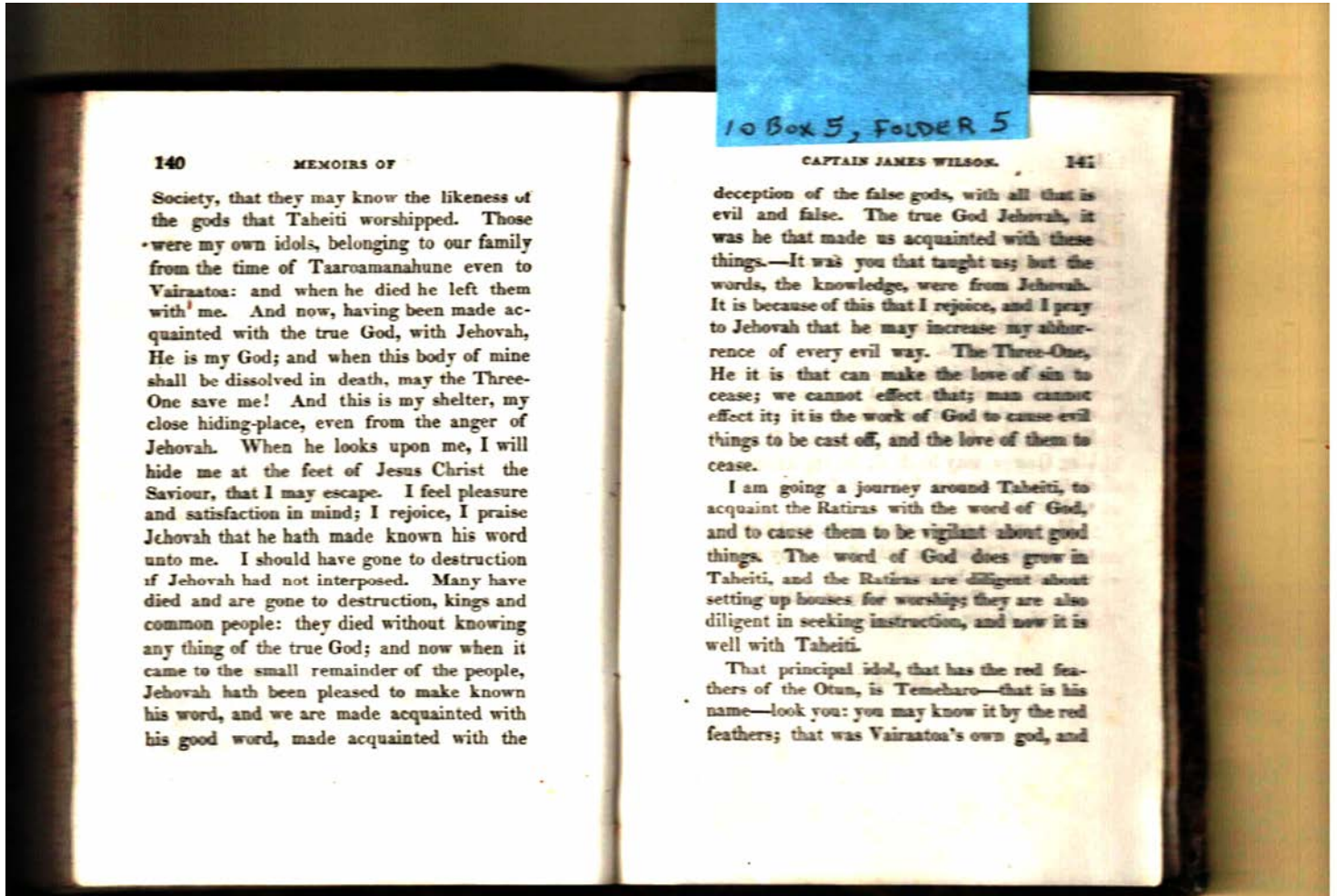
of reading and writing has spread far and wide. There are at least 3000 people who have some books, and can make use of them. Many hundreds can read well; and there are among them about 400 copies of the Old Testament History; and 400 of the New, which is an abridgment of the four Evangelists, and parts of the Acts of the Apostles. —Many chapters of Luke's gospel, in manuscript, are also in circulation; and 1000 copies of our Tahitian Catechism, which several hundreds have learnt, and can repeat perfectly. The spelling-books which were printed in London, of which we had, we suppose, about 700, having been expended long ago, we had lately, 2000 copies of a lesser spelling-book printed in the colony: these we have received and distributed; and there is an earnest call from all the islands for more books, the desire to learn to read and write being universal. We want a new edition of the above mentioned books, and are now preparing the Gospel of Luke for the press. We intended to send the catechism and small spelling-book to the colony,

and get 2000 or 3000 printed; but having heard that a printing press is sent out for us, we thought it best to wait awhile, notwithstanding the urgent call of the natives, as we wish to prevent expense as much as possible.

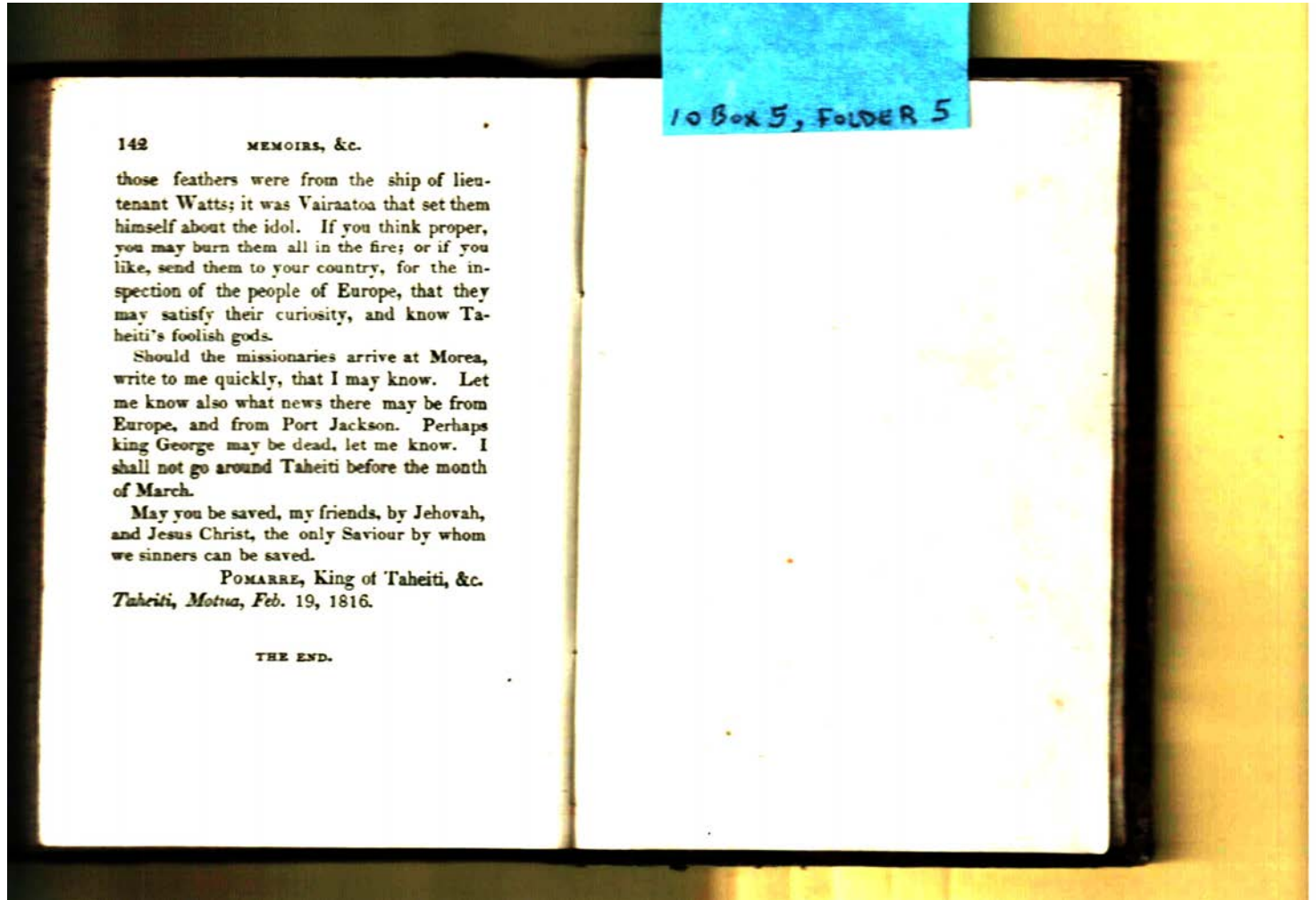
“ We enclose a letter from Pomarre, concerning his family gods, which have been delivered to us, that we might either destroy them, or, if we think proper, send them to you. We have chosen the latter, and send them by this conveyance, nailed up in a case, directed to Mr. Hardcastle. These are the king's family gods, and are a good specimen of the whole. The great national ones, which were of the same kind, only much larger, have been some time ago entirely destroyed.”

The following is an extract of a letter from Pomarre, king of Tahiti, to the missionaries.

FRIENDS,—May you be saved by Jehovah and Jesus Christ our Saviour! This is my speech to you, my friends. I wish you to send those idols to Britain for the Missionary







those feathers were from the ship of lieutenant Watts; it was Vairaatoa that set them himself about the idol. If you think proper, you may burn them all in the fire; or if you like, send them to your country, for the inspection of the people of Europe, that they may satisfy their curiosity, and know Taheiti's foolish gods.

Should the missionaries arrive at Morea, write to me quickly, that I may know. Let me know also what news there may be from Europe, and from Port Jackson. Perhaps king George may be dead, let me know. I shall not go around Taheiti before the month of March.

May you be saved, my friends, by Jehovah, and Jesus Christ, the only Saviour by whom we sinners can be saved.

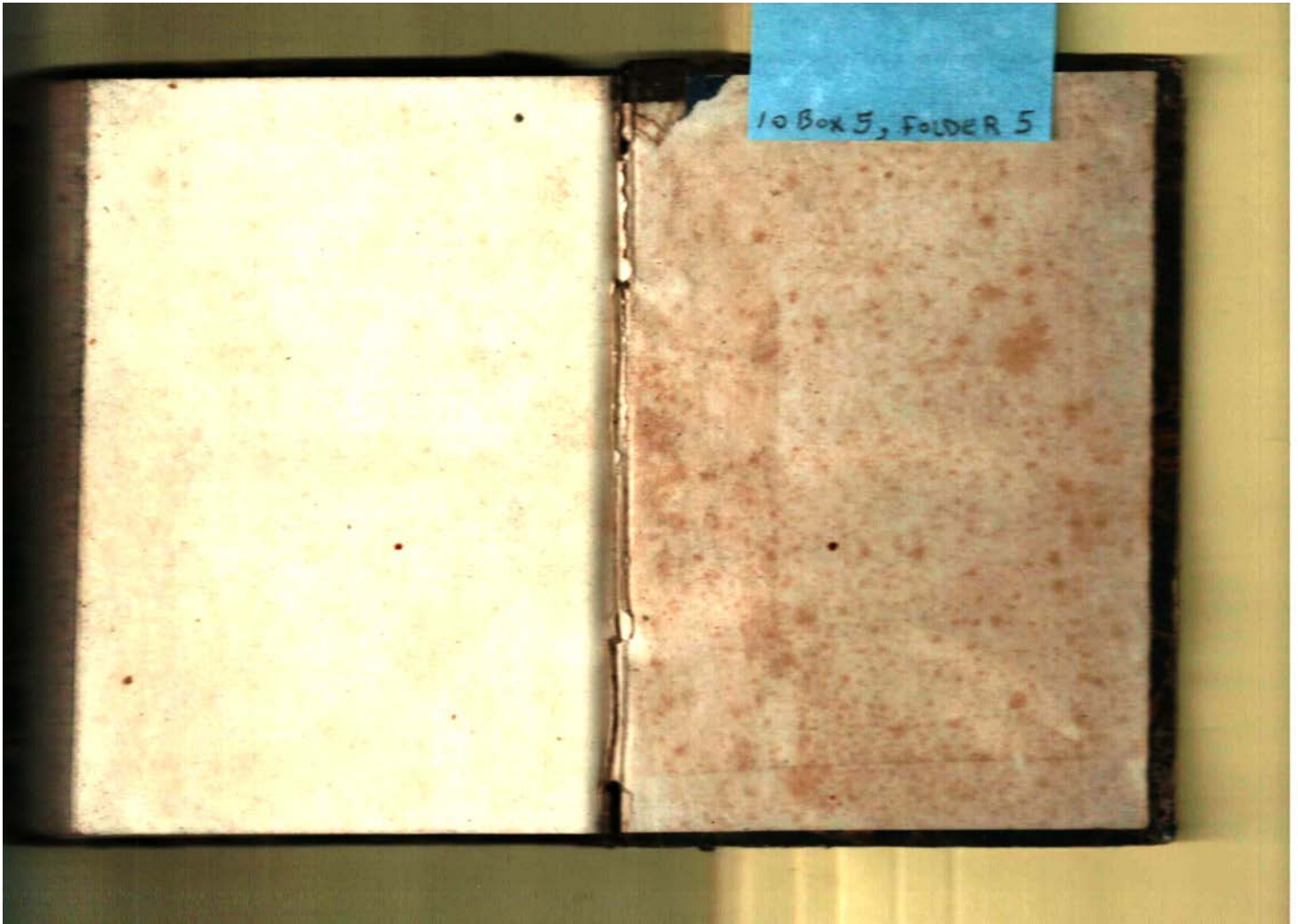
POMARRE, King of Taheiti, &c.  
*Taheiti, Motua, Feb. 19, 1816.*

THE END.

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"Memoirs of Captain James Wilson," Compiled for the American Sunday School Union by Tappan, W. B

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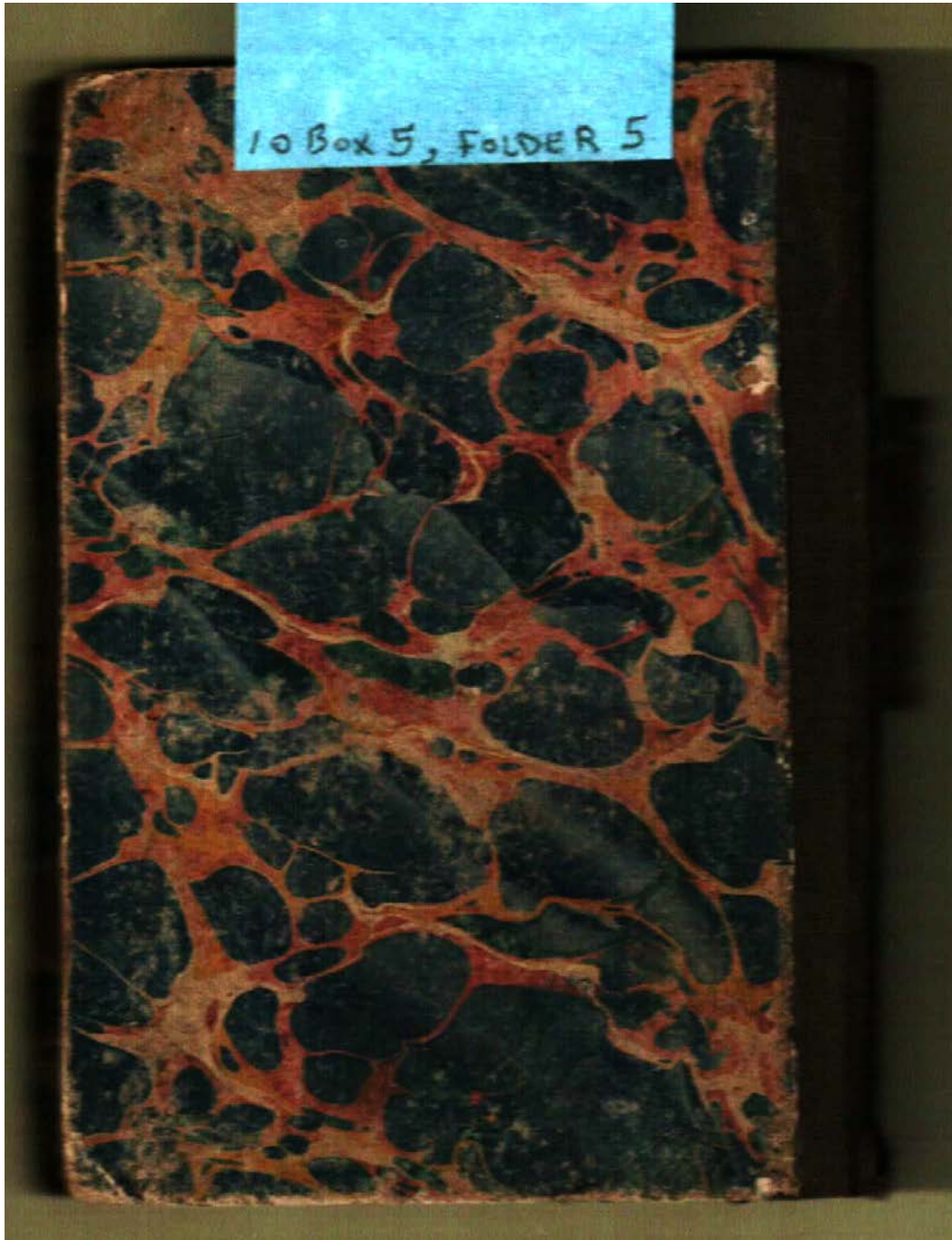


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**"Memoirs of Captain James Wilson," Compiled for the American Sunday School Union by Tappan, W. B**

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# Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection

**Preferred Citation:** Frances Cabaniss Roberts Collection, Archives and Special Collections, M. Louis Salmon Library, University of Alabama in Huntsville, Huntsville, AL.

**Collection Scope and Content:** The Collection of 114 Linear ft. includes a total of 156 Archival Boxes. The Frances Cabaniss Roberts collection covers the historical records of the Cabaniss Roberts family. This collection contains extensive correspondence records of the Cabaniss Roberts family circa 1830 to 1930.

**Archives/Special Collections Access Restrictions:** None

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