

Outside the Box

Transcript

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Queen of the South
Nov^r 2nd 1854

off Oporto

My dear Papa & Mama

I am beginning to write this letter in hopes of posting it at Malta where I believe we are to stop but, I should think you would have heard of the ship before this letter reaches you for we have spoken by signal to two or three already & they are all going to report that they have seen us. Now I will give you an account of our voyage on Thursday we started from Portsmouth and went as far as Spithead where we anchored till the evening we then went on

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but as the sea was very rough & almost all the soldiers were sick we put into Weymouth for a day & started again the next morning. I was rather seedy all that day & went to sleep almost all the time but the next day I got on better & managed to eat pretty fairly. They give us very good dinners on board We have had the most beautiful weather since we left Weymouth & now although it is the second of November it is just like the summer in England one feels the difference

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of climate very sensibly &
the nights are most beautiful.
Yesterday we saw some very
large fish but we are not certain
whether they were grampus
or small whales as they blew up
the water a good deal. We had our
revolvers out too yesterday and
practised at bottles 2 or 3 of which
were hung up at the yard arm
or stuck on sticks in different
parts of the vessel. We expect to
reach Gibraltar tomorrow or
next day I hope that we shall
pass it in the day time or some
time when we can see pretty well
we have seen loads of ships

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today and one came near enough
to speak to but we did not
stop a minute we have very
little to do except being officer
of the day & taking watches. 3
officers of the watch divide the
twenty four hours between
them. I believe that we are
going straight to Balaklava
however we shall hear at Constan
tinople We have not seen
any land since we left England
except last night when we
saw a light on the coast of
Portugal. We are all very

[cross-hatching on page 1]

anxious to see it to break the monotony
of the voyage a little but I am afraid that
we shall not see very much before we get
to Gibraltar. (Monday) At last we are in the
Mediterranean & I must tell you about our journey
scince [sic] I last wrote. The first land that we
saw was a one of a group of islands called

B[?]ur]ling somewhere off Lisbon we then ran
down the coast of Spain which was very
(I will not cross any more for fear you sh^d not
be able to read it)

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fine although we only saw one town
& that was Cadiz in the bay of that name
but we were a longish distance
off. On Saturday however we had
a splendid day & the coast was
more beautiful than before & we
passed pretty close to a small
& very nice looking town called
Tarifa within sight of Gibraltar
we also saw the African coast
which was very fine & mountainous
especially a great rock nearly opposite
Gibraltar which rises almost per
pendicularly out of the sea to
an immense height I was not
able to take a sketch of Gibraltar
while we were passing it but I
took a sketch in my mind with a
telescope which I have endeavoured

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to transfer to paper & I think
that it is pretty correct we [are]
now about a third of the way
to Malta from Gibraltar & I
believe that we mean to be there
on Thursday or Friday. I
never saw any colour so beau
tiful as the water of the Mediterr
anean & as we have got very
calm weather it is perfectly
delightful This morning it was
so hot that [I] have been driven
down to the saloon to keep myself
cool the other day when we
had the wind in our favour
(w[hic]^h was rather a wonder as we
have had headwinds ever

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scince [sic] we left England) we feathered
the screw & sailed for about four
or five hours but as the wind fell
they found it was no go & set the
old screw to work again. I had
to pay my footing on the rigging
the other night & I have got quite
expert at cutting up and down

the ladders. We have met two
or three vessels but have not
got any news at present but
if unless we meet a steamer
coming from Constantinople
I suppose we shall not hear
any thing till we get to Malta. If
we stop there a few days I am
[? specing] on having some

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glorious bathes. (Thursday) since [sic]
the last part of my letter we have
had very rough weather, the lamentable
effects of which were chiefly felt
at breakfast the other morning
when all the tea and coffee cups
simultaneously moved in the
same direction. Heaving the log
is a great amusement here,
& I can do it perfectly now. We
passed an island called Panta
laria between Cape Bon & Malta
last night during my watch
for I had the delightful duty of
moving out at 12 o'clock to keep
watch till 4. We expect to arrive
at Malta this evening about

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four or five o'clock. I shall feel
quite glad to set foot on dry land
again as it is just a fortnight since [sic]
we embarked. As I cannot tell where
we are going for certain I think
you had better direct

Royal Fusiliers
British Army
Light Division Turkey

I have now exhausted my stock
of news. I must wait till I get to
Constantinople to send you another
line. Give my very best love to all
at home & Believe me to remain
Y[ou]r ever affect[ionat]e Son
G H Waller

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Malta Nov^r 11

Rec^d Nov^r 17

[page 11 (on reverse of sketch of Gibraltar)]
This is the best sketch of it I can give
you at present as the motions of the
vessel will not permit me to do
a very nice one but I hope that
this will give you a pretty general
idea of the place I believe that
I promised a drawing of this to
Kitty so when you have all looked
at it well will you give it to her
I hope my photograph succeeded.
G H Waller

[page 7, last line: specing = speculating
(? young officers' slang)]