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At Sea. June 21st. 1850 / About 900
10 days out - (miles from Liverpool)

Dear papa,

But you think it time that I began my diary to tell ~~our~~ wonderful adventure by sea? Especially ^{since} if our good winds continue we may be in Liverpool by Tuesday evening - I have been waiting to get my head firmly established on my ~~shoulders~~ ^{shoulders}, to feel that I had some control over my unsettled faculties, & for a more quiet day when I might be sure neither I, inkstand or portfolio should all go sliding to the other side of the cabin - We have had a remarkably short passage so far, though the Captain & Mate say there have been no high winds only fresh - But some of us less used to the sea would have been willing I think to have been two or three days longer & more quiet about it - But to begin at the beginning, & tell it all in order - The last I saw of dear home faces that Tuesday morning is still fresh & warm! Lizzie's pale face & earnest expression, and the dear group gathered round the carriage! I watched them as long as I could see & tears would rise when I thought how long it would be before I should see them again - After I lost sight of them I still could see the carriage & white horses & watched it turn round & leave the wharf - We had a pleasant sail down the harbor, the sun came out fresh & bright, & the islands looked beautifully bright & green - We passed the light & dismissed our pilot while we were at dinner - And after dinner though most of the ladies had disappeared I still felt quite bright & after we were on deck again Dr. Gray beginning to look very pale I quite triumphed over him & thought perhaps Lizzie would be disappointed & I should not be sick at all - Getting tired I went to my berth to get a nap

& to my great surprise suddenly found myself sick. And then trouble began - I kept my bunk very quietly all day Wednesday crawled on deck a little while on Thursday morning where most of the ladies were lying but came down to retreat soon to my berth again - And such grave reflections on the nonsense of coming to sea! Such sublime contempt for the joys of woman & innocence which had looked forward to a voyage with any idea of pleasure, as I indulged in: That that sea-sickness is a horrible there are many sicknesses much worse & ~~as~~ I did not get to the pitch of despondency at all that I wished to be thrown over-board on the contrary any idea of danger I was more than ever nervous about but the utter disgust at everything around you & for a sea-life: The the idea of rest! The absurdity of anyone's supposing there could be such a thing at sea with your bag bloody sunning backwards & forwards before you everything around in continual motion trying feebly to draw on a floor which has no bottom one foot up & other foot down, when one half hour of quiet would seem so enchanting: just to hold one's head still for five minutes such a treat: - Then the sailors' cries overhead the shifting steps the many feet tramping the indefatigable pedestrians who exercise on deck preferring the fun of your state-room to any other the talking in the cabin the setting table & clearing away & everything which can move & crash developing such capacity to the utmost. - As for quiet I think ship-board the very last place I should think of to find it in - Friday morning I went on deck again & I wish you could have read the picturesque pomp! You would have thought we were on a voyage of discovery for Virginia & Franklin by the clothing instead of sailing for England on the 14th. of June - Close under the stern lay the Commodore in a narrow colored brick channel then Brit Clark in the corner the Captain's two daughters & Mrs. Chapman & opposite leaning against the Companion way, Mrs. Caton & myself. Everybody & happy to have them in cloaks & hooded shawls & jackets

wollen flous, & pea-jackets, Fur cloaks, &c. &c. to lie on & wrap over us and then we were patient for a little sun to lap us warm. Such very forlorn & dismal countenances! So few words interchanged & people scarcely daring to look at each other - We were fortunate though in good winds & a steady progress & bright sunshine ~~through~~ ^{for} the first days the only sunshine almost that we have had - Friday afternoon I had so far improved as to be able to walk on deck a little & Friday Evg. I appeared at table & have ever since maintained my place at meals with great respectability. - But though the sea-sickness was over I had no idea that that was so little of the trouble of going to sea - The notion is so exceedingly confusing that it is a long time before one can read for more than 5 minutes together without your head swimming most uncomfortably even now I cannot write long or read more than an hour at a time and it seems to me if I were to sail round the world I should never become used & reconciled to this continual motion - It is not laziness which makes me idle that can be struggled against but the susceptibility of work - for some days I could not even begin to reading but for a few minutes - To go back through Dr. Gray's time had had his sickness & got over it most rapidly & was bright & well to help my tottering steps - Saturday he had made fine progress in the middle of the bank & a flock of the way across. Just at dinner time a steamer was announced in sight & dinner was postponed & we all gathered on deck the Capt. thought after looking through the glass that she could not be one of the Annapolis steamers & many were the speculations some thought her the steamer from Jersey but as she drew near we got ready our signals hoisted the flag prepared to get some newspapers in exchange for an American bundle, & to ask her to report us thinking how pleased you would be to hear how finely we were getting on, but to our disappointment she hoisted the French flag. The second mate felt as he thought Vermorel in her bow & then succeeded speculations as to what could be her destination - The gun went down to indicate a war steamer, & I suspected that Louis Napoleon was taking flight & the French were sending some Gen. Bress - I supposed

She is an old story to you all by this time - Dr. Gray suggested
that she was "Prometheus bound" - where we did not know -
The mist which had been gathering all day grew thick around us
& after dinner when Dr. Gray was on deck suddenly a cry of "Sail"
& we had just time to step off & they from us; some large vessel, a
Philadelphia Packet the mate thought; but we could only sweep by each
other in the mist & see nothing more - Sunday was raining, we made
very slight progress, & it was uncomfortable she shut up in the Cabin -
There don't seem to be any very comfortable place to be on ship-board,
unless the sunshines & one can be on deck. For there are no very easy
seats in the cabin & the state-rooms seem close & dark - Though we are very
fortunate after all in having our state-rooms so well ventilated by the little
windows & the open-work into the cabin - I began to make acquaintance
& find out who our Cabin-passengers were - We are very fortunate in
them for they are all quite pleasant people & no disagreeable person among
them - The only thing that troubles me much is one gentleman's
voice & fortunately he don't talk much - To begin at the beginning
& take them in the order they sit at table will be easiest - First our
Captain very pleasant, good-natured & accommodating, & apparently sensible
& well-informed - On his left his two ~~daughters~~ ^{daughters}, the youngest very
quiet & not much to be found out about her the oldest has been before
& is very pleasant & sensible & well-informed then Mrs. Patterson next poor
woman she has been sea-sick every day & after every meal but the quantity
& variety of things she eats to settle her stomach make me open my eyes
in private - I suggested to her husband the other day when he spoke of her
continued sickness that perhaps if she would only eat for a day or two
a very little simple food she might get her stomach in tones & get
over the sea-sickness but she still continues the same course - Her husband
is from Lowell where he is interested in the carpet-business, they are going to Scotland
on a visit to his friends for he is Scotch - He is one of those quiet men who
get up at 4 o'clock in the morning & go on in patient regular routine however he
delights Dr. Gray's heart by playing chequers with him - An infallible resource -
Then comes Mr. Strane, as far as I can make out the name - an Irishman
nothing remarkable in any way except his distressing voice - Then the Crown
nushields - Caspar seems pretty much the same as other boys nothing particularly
interesting, but little Cora is a charming little thing - So resolute &

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with so much character, & yet so good-natured & happy all the time, laughing at every thing & never except for an especial aggravation out of sorts, & then only for a moment - With apparently nothing to play with, she has amused herself & everybody else the whole voyage, & yet is most promptly obedient, & takes a check from her father or a call to sit quietly at his side in the midst of a frolic, as good-naturedly & pleasantly as when a sudden roll throws her down, & she gets up laughing, & says "the boat threw me down!" - She has taken a great fancy to Dr. Gray, & the way they romp on the deck together makes even the sailors laugh - He was amazingly amused by one of her frank observations to me the other day - She was questioning which would weigh the most, & on my saying "why I thought I should," she answered, "Why you are as thin as a poker!" - Mr. Crowninshield is very pleasant - is sensible & agreeable, & bears his sickness most patiently - The damp days trouble him very much - Mrs. Crowninshield keeps her state-room entirely, only coming on deck the pleasant days, where she sits with a green veil over her face, so that there is no opportunity of seeing her - Mrs. Crowninshield says she is always sick on board ship - From the glimpses I have caught of her face now & then she looks very sick - Up now the other side of the table - The first mate is opposite Mr. C. a son of the Captain's & a pleasant & sensible quiet young man - Then four humble servants, Dr. & Mrs. Gray; Dr. Gray is decidedly I think, the father - Then Miss Clark & her brother, both of whom I like very much - They go from Liverpool to Harre, thence to Paris, & thence to Switzerland, where we hope to join them during our tour there - Then Mrs. Chapman comes to table when the weather is quiet, but as soon as it is ^{at} all rough she is obliged to take to her berth again having suffered more from sea-sickness than anyone - She is lady-like, quiet, & interesting, but unfortunately a little deaf - Her little boy puts me in mind of Charlie from his memory for rhymes, but seems to be pretty much under the care, from his mother's sickness & deafness, of his nurse Kitty who is rather capricious in her control - He is an uncommonly pretty child, with beautiful golden curls - That completes the list of Cabin Passengers -

Sunday after tea the clouds began to lighten & it cleared sufficiently to give us a splendid sunset, the only one I have seen on board ship -

Monday was the finest day as to weather which we have had - Clear,
fresh, bright & invigorating, & such appetites as we all had - We began
joyously our reading of Macaulay, & I found I could knit a little
& read myself for a few minutes. But it was very cold, we could
scarcely keep warm - Ever since we sailed we had fires occasionally,
when the stove could be made to burn, but that generally began with
being smoked out first - But as long as we had sun-shine we could
bear the cold - Tuesday was again a pleasant day & rather milder.
The water was more beautifully blue than any time I have seen it,
& sprinkled with white caps. But I am exceedingly disappointed
in the grandeur of the view. The horizon is so small that we see from
the deck, that you persuade yourself an hour's sail or two will bring
you to the shore which only is just beyond - I really do not think
the impression of the sea half so grand as from the shore, for there
is nothing but your own vessel to compare it with, which more than
reaches the horizon all round as you look from it, & being off the deck
as much as we are, we do not realize how we may have sailed day
after day without seeing land - Wednesday came heavy mist again, &
a foggy mist, which made the vessel roll & tip a good deal as I
thought, & I had an ugly dyspeptic day of it. But at four rather after-
noon morning I was awakened by my knitting hopping from the
seat into the lap-pail & with difficulty clambering up the step-ladder
which lay from my berth to the other side of the state-room I picked
it out fortunately the pail was empty. But all night the vessel
had rolled so, I dreamed either that I was climbing the Alps or
myself up stairs & awakened to find myself rolling down hill - Such
work as it was to dress! - Standing on the step-side of a roof with
occasionally a sudden pitch the other way! - Trying to look in the glass,
& finding myself sliding down to my berth, up & down up & down till
I was quite in despair! - Three who came to table from one side came
laboriously up hill I found myself nearly embracing the stove from
slipping down - Something that could move showed a most decided
tendency to one side - At meals suddenly away dropped knife and spoon
& everything light unless you kept right hold of them - The water from

the cistern were judiciously taken out & laid on one side, & mustard
was brought when called for - Notwithstanding all judicious arrange-
ments I could make, endeavoring to keep up things, they would per-
fectly all get in a mass in one corner again - I got almost bored
& out of patience - And was to tired by night to keep on to keep still,
& tired by thinking against things, & wearied in the morning
with rolling about in my berth! - However at day & the Captain
lurged it highly, for we were making a very fine run - Mr. Brown
wished I hoped we had rather be a day or two longer, & get on a
little more quietly -

Monday - June 24th - In sight of the Irish Coast - (13 days out this storm)

I have been ^{very} occasionally as I could for I find writing
troubles my head somewhat, though to day is charmingly still -

Thursday & day suffered from a violent head-ache, & was in his berth
pretty much all that day & the rest so that Macaulay was barely
interrupted. And we made such a very good day's run, & were getting
on & quickly with our voyage, that to get through the first volume seemed
all ^{that was} possible - By Saturday noon we had made the fastest run the
Captain ever made in one day, & he was anticipating a wonderful
passage to Liverpool - But the wind went down, & must pass whither,
& yesterday & this morning we ^{most likely} ~~will~~ ^{are} ~~now~~ ^{going} ~~to~~ ^{be} ~~driven~~ ^{back} ~~along~~ - The ladies consider
it much more comfortable & prefer a slower progress to tumbling about,
but the Captain is quite disappointed - I began to get quite sick of the
sea & do not think I could ever reconcile myself to an India voyage
through the motion today is very gentle - But best would be to charmings!
Last week when the vessel tilted so Dr. Clark told the Captain she
thought at night to be called the Myrmidon to Clack instead of Myrmidon
to Clack! - But he laughs at the idea of anything rough when studying
sails & ropes have not been in more than an hour or two since we
left Boston Bay - Yesterday we enjoyed some sea-sight - Plenty of
porpoises leaping about, & darting through the water close to the ship;
I was surprised to see them so light & brown, & their motions are very
quick & graceful - After dinner a hump whale, quite a little fellow,
leapt about an elbow under the side some of the time - He could see
him very distinctly - The white fin & tail flashing through -

This morning at breakfast the Captain promised us land before dinner, & scarcely was breakfast through when the report of it was brought down stairs, & we have been all the morning watching the high rocks ^{islets} of the Irish Coast to the West of Cape Clear. I really begin to realize how how far away from home I am, seeing so for the first time foreign shores -

I do not feel as if I had given a good account of our voyage, but you must remember you promised to take my diary for letters, & so it will sometimes seem spun out - But I have said nothing of the lively discussions & agreeable conversations at times, though on the whole I think we have been a very quiet company - We have been as comfortably accommodated as possible - I do not know when I have seen so good meats so better cooked, & all very obliging from Captain to stewards - But I am not in love with the sea, & shall be very glad to get on shore - I think a voyage a very good preparation for the journey, for anything will seem bearable with a steady floor under foot -

My head too seems so light, that I feel as if I had written very carefully & at random, and shall not try to read it over till on shore -

June 11	Sailed	
" 12	150 miles	
" 13	247	
" 14	228	
" 15	190	
" 16	144	
" 17	198	
" 18	160	
" 19	231	
" 20	223	
" 21	213	
" 22	289	
" 23	190	
" 24	Made land at breakfast	

The sun has been very slow in his visits, few & far between - He had ^{noon} observation from Tuesday noon until today noon, & now he is gone again, so that we have had comparatively little time ^{with} on deck - I have managed to get walks every day & as to health am improved - Stronger, & not much dyspepsia - But I can tell better how I am when we get on shore - We may reach Liverpool Wednesday noon - We are now 3 1/2 hours or more ahead of you - how strange it seems! -

We should have had a surprisingly short passage had our wind continued - And I fancy our good Captain is very much disappointed - But the short passage is of course reason enough that very little of our reading is accomplished - To say nothing of the light head the sea gives -

Friday, June 28th (18 days out this afternoon & about 60 miles from Holyhead)

What an ominous conclusion to so triumphant a commencement! To be about as long going from Cape Clear to Liverpool, as from the Grand Banks to Cape Clear! - One 2,000 miles, the other 300! - Ah! the inconstant wind! - But to continue the diary from Monday - The sailed gently along, & gradually the mists drew up, & the shore lay before us, very bold & rocky - The rocks looked jagged through the glass, & straight up & down, with no ledge at the foot, but the ocean dashing directly in on them! - The hills above looked still brown, though we could see the marks of cultivation through the glass, & could see ruins, houses &c. - The wind gradually died away, & we lay quite becalmed; but it was a lovely afternoon, the shore looked very picturesque, & it was mild & pleasant - A pilot boat passed near, with tanned sails which looked very queerly, & told us the land we saw was Sheep's-head, Three Castle Point, & Mizen Head, land lying west of Cape Clear - Presently a row boat came along, said they were from Crookhaven, & offered some London papers of the 14th & 19th - One of the men came ~~on board~~ & the Captain went to write a letter to send by them to the Post Office - They were offered a bottle of brandy for their papers, Dr. Gray gave them a quarter for one, & sundry things were given; the Captain's letter was handed to them, but still the man hung round begging, first this, then that, the more he had the more he wanted. At last after he had asked for some tea & sugar the Capt. said he would give it if he would not ask for anything more. - The man turned to the mate & asked to see the Dr. The mate said they had none. "Oh!" cried he, "I wanted to see him, & see if I could not get a dose of castor-oil for my little boy who is sick at home!" "Where would you get a bottle says the mate?" "Oh! I think perhaps I could borrow a bottle!" - At last he departed - There in that boat were a good looking set of men, but some another boat came with some fish, & they were a miserable, poverty looking set! The Captain saw them not very willing to give it up -

Saturday morning June 29. - 20 miles from Liverpool.

Dear Papa. I have attempted to write the above two days ago, when we were beating up the English Channel against a head wind - & it gave her a headache - So she will not attempt to finish the sheet this morning, as the water is not as smooth as it has been; and it is still uncertain whether we reach Liverpool to-day in time to send our letters on board the Cunard steamer that leaves at 2 o'clock. - Certainly we are too late to send them thro. the P. O. so excuse our not prepaying postage this time. I have told you how near we came to making a splendid passage. But since Monday we have been either nearly becalmed or beating up against a head wind. Last night, for the first time this week, we got a fair wind, which we still hold. Jane has borne the voyage wonderfully well, and when the water is quite smooth enjoys the sea very much; but is glad enough to get on shore again. She is better, I think, in all respects than when she started, and has had few & slight twinges of dyspepsia, and, on the whole a very good digestion. When on land we shall see the whole improvement. We shall write by the Atlantic, from Liverpool; and remembering how near Tuesday is, and that the circle will be completed by a most precious link before this reaches ~~land~~ home, we send tenderest love to all, and especially to Papa & Mamma. Ever thine A.G.

Mr. Williams.
Steamer July 27th.

Charles G. Downing Esq.

Proctor

N. J. S.

Alas! & Alas! we sailed up the harbour as the steamer
came down, about 1/2 an hour too late - But as Dr. Gray
had finished this letter so satisfactorily, I thought it best
to send it as it was, & the letter to Sue contains the
continuation -



Gray, Jane Loring. 1850. "Gray, Jane June 21, 1850 [to Loring]." *Asa and Jane Gray travel correspondence*

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