

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05349-5 - Journal Kept during the Russian War: From the Departure of the Army from England in April, 1854, to the Fall of Sebastopol

Frances Isabella Duberly

Excerpt

[More information](#)

A JOURNAL
KEPT DURING
THE RUSSIAN WAR.

CHAPTER I.

THE VOYAGE.

“The sails were fill'd, and light the fair winds blew,
As glad to waft us from our native home;
And fast the white rocks faded from our view,
And soon were lost in circumambient foam.”

BYRON.

MONDAY, April 24th, 1854.—Left the New London Inn at Exeter at ten o'clock in the evening, with sad heart and eyes full of tears. The near approach of this long voyage, and the prospect of unknown trials and hardships to be endured for I know not how long, overwhelmed me at the last moment; and the remembrance of dear friends left behind, whom

B

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05349-5 - Journal Kept during the Russian War: From the Departure of the Army from England in April, 1854, to the Fall of Sebastopol

Frances Isabella Duberly

Excerpt

[More information](#)

I never more might return to see, made me shrink most nervously from the new life on which I was to embark. We reached the Royal Hotel at Plymouth at midnight, after a bitterly cold journey.

Tuesday, 25th.—After making a few purchases necessary for our comfort during the voyage, we embarked about three o'clock on board the "Shooting Star," lying in the Plymouth dockyard; and towards evening, amid indescribable hurry, confusion, and noise, we weighed our anchor, and dropped down the river, where we lay till three o'clock on Wednesday morning; and then, with a fair and gentle breeze, and every prospect of a prosperous voyage, we stood out to sea.

Friday, 28th.—The breeze, which had been gradually freshening during yesterday, increased last night. I, sick and almost helpless in my cabin, was told the disastrous news that both the mizen-top and main-top gallant-masts were carried away; that fragments of the wreck—masts, ropes, and spars—strewed the deck: one poor fellow was lying seriously injured, having broken his leg, and crushed the bone.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05349-5 - Journal Kept during the Russian War: From the Departure of the Army from England in April, 1854, to the Fall of Sebastopol

Frances Isabella Duberly

Excerpt

[More information](#)

SUNDAY AT SEA.

3

Saturday, 29th. — Weak and nervous, I staggered up on deck, to see it strewn with spars, ropes, and blocks. During the night, the gale had fearfully increased, and the morning sun found two of our poor horses dead. The groans of the boy, who was lying in one of the cabins, and the gloom caused by the death of our horses, threw us all into depressed spirits, which were not cheered by looking at the ugly, broken mast aloft. I heartily thank God, who brought us safely through last night's gale.

Although weakened almost to delirium by sea-sickness, and awed by the tremendous force of wind and sea, I could not but exult in the magnificent sailing of our noble ship, which bounded over the huge waves like a wild hunter springing at his fences, and breasted her gallant way at the rate of sixteen knots an hour.

Sunday, 30th. — How unlike the quiet Sundays at home! How sadly we thought of them — of pleasant walks to church, through sunny fields and shady lanes! After we had read the service, Henry and I went on deck, and sat there quietly. The wind had dropped to

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05349-5 - Journal Kept during the Russian War: From the Departure of the Army from England in April, 1854, to the Fall of Sebastopol

Frances Isabella Duberly

Excerpt

[More information](#)

a dead calm; and our good ship, as though resting after her late effort, dozed lazily along at barely two knots an hour. Towards evening, we saw several whales and porpoises, and phosphorescent lights gleamed like stars on the calm, dark sea.

Monday, May 1st. — The wind still very quiet, and our ship hardly making any way.

Tuesday, 2nd.—We signaled a vessel which, after much delay, replied that she was the “Blundel,” from Portsmouth, bound to Gallipoli. At ten o'clock to-night we arrived off Gibraltar. For some hours previously we were in sight of the Spanish coast; and, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, the clear atmosphere and brilliant moon enabled us to discern the town of Gibraltar and the Rock rising behind it. It was a cause of much disappointment to us that we had not passed it earlier, as we hoped to have conveyed to our friends at home the news of our safe arrival thus far. Another horse died from inanition, having eaten nothing since he came on board.

Wednesday, 3rd. — An almost entire calm. Our lazy ship scarcely vouchsafed to move

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05349-5 - Journal Kept during the Russian War: From the Departure of the Army from England in April, 1854, to the Fall of Sebastopol

Frances Isabella Duberly

Excerpt

[More information](#)

CLOSE CONFINEMENT OF HORSES. 5

at all. Such a glorious day, succeeded by a night which realised all one's dreams of the sweet south!—the Spanish and African coasts still visible, and on the former, mountains capped with snow. We put up an awning on the deck, as the heat was very great. During the night, however, a fresh breeze sprung up, filling our flapping sails, and bearing us on at the rate of fifteen knots an hour.

Thursday, 4th. — The breeze continued, and our good ship went cheerily on her course. A fourth horse died last night. They tell me he went absolutely mad, and raved himself to death. The hold where our horses are stowed, although considered large and airy, appears to me horrible beyond words. The slings begin to gall the horses under the shoulder and breastbone; and the heat and bad atmosphere must be felt to be understood. Every effort to alleviate their sufferings is made; their nostrils are sponged with vinegar, which is also scattered in the hold. Our three horses bear it bravely, but they are immediately under a hatchway where they get air.

Friday, 5th. — A day of much sorrow and suffering to me, as I was awoke by our ser-

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05349-5 - Journal Kept during the Russian War: From the Departure of the Army from England in April, 1854, to the Fall of Sebastopol

Frances Isabella Duberly

Excerpt

[More information](#)

vant (Connell) coming to our door at seven o'clock, and saying that the "Grey Horse" — "Missus's Horse" — my own dear horse, was very ill. Henry ran to him directly, and after examining him, fancied his attack was different from that of the others, and that he might live.

How deeply one becomes attached to a favourite horse! Never was a more perfect creature, with faultless action, faultless mouth, and faultless temper.

Saturday, 6th. — My horse still lives, and they tell me he is a thought easier; but last night was most unfavourable to him, there being a fresh wind and rolling sea. During the forenoon I came on deck, heavy at heart. We passed the island of Galita, of volcanic formation and rocky appearance: it appears to be covered with a rusty brown moss.

During the afternoon we exchanged signals with vessels which had been respectively twenty-eight, seventeen, and fourteen days at sea. We have been ten.

Sunday, 7th. — A lovely morning, and a quiet sea. Although the "Shooting Star"

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05349-5 - Journal Kept during the Russian War: From the Departure of the Army from England in April, 1854, to the Fall of Sebastopol

Frances Isabella Duberly

Excerpt

[More information](#)

OFF MALTA.

7

makes but seven knots an hour, we hope to arrive at Malta by dark. Had the wind held, we should have been off the town in time for afternoon service. My letters are ready for S., W., and Mrs. F. Would that we could receive news from home! I hear we passed the Island of Pantelaria this morning, but was not on deck in time to see it; indeed, I had no heart for the distractions of outward objects, for my horse, though he still lives, is at the point of death.

Monday, 8th. — We were awoke at four o'clock by the sound of a matin bell, and knew by it that we were off Malta. Looking through the stern windows, we found ourselves at anchor in the harbour; the massive fortifications bristling with guns were close on either side of us, as we lay quiet and motionless on the waveless sea. At eight o'clock Henry went on deck, and soon after returning, put his arms round me, and I knew that my darling horse was out of pain!

Henry went ashore with Captain Fraser, and, amid the sultry heat, sweltered up the "*Nix mangiare*" stairs, and through the blinding streets of the town. At ten we received orders to

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05349-5 - Journal Kept during the Russian War: From the Departure of the Army from England in April, 1854, to the Fall of Sebastopol

Frances Isabella Duberly

Excerpt

[More information](#)

put to sea forthwith ; but the wind lay ahead of us, and at five we were barely moving out of port. Shortly after, when the calm evening was dressed in all the gorgeous colours of a southern sunset, and whilst the military calls were sounding those stirring notes he loved to hear, my good horse was lowered to his rest among the nautili and wondrous sea-flowers which floated round the ship.

A small French brig, containing a detachment of the *Chasseurs d'Afrique*, lay becalmed close to us. They told us that their vessel was one of 150 tons ; that they had twenty-eight horses on board, and had lost none, although they provided no stalls for them, but huddled them into the hold as closely as they could stow them away.

Tuesday, 9th. — Our orders are to proceed to Cape Matapan, where, if the wind should be against us, a steamer will tow us to Scutari. Some of our crew, having bought spirits from the bumboats off Malta, became mutinous, and several passed the night in irons.

Friday 12th. — Last night ominous banks of clouds loaded the horizon, and soon proved the truth of my quotation —

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05349-5 - Journal Kept during the Russian War: From the Departure of the Army from England in April, 1854, to the Fall of Sebastopol

Frances Isabella Duberly

Excerpt

[More information](#)

A GALE OF WIND.

9

“ There’s tempest in yon horned moon,
And lightning in yon cloud.”

A hurricane of wind thundered in our rigging, and a deluge of rain came down. Endeavouring to make head against the gale, Captain Fraser tried our good ship to the utmost, but was at last obliged to let her drive before the storm.

It was a fearful night to us who are unaccustomed to the sea; the rolling was very heavy and wearisome. Neither Henry nor I undressed all night. To-day has been a day of as much suffering as I ever wish to experience. Sick incessantly, too weak to turn, I was lying towards night almost unconscious, when I was roused by a most tremendous roll. The ship had heeled over till her deck was under water. Candlesticks, falling from the table, rolled at their leisure into the corners. Captain Fraser rushed on deck, Captain Tomkinson into the hold, where every horse was down, one being pitched half over the manger. I was shot from the stern locker, on which I was lying, to the far corner of my cabin, and every box and portmanteau came crushing over me.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05349-5 - Journal Kept during the Russian War: From the Departure of the Army from England in April, 1854, to the Fall of Sebastopol

Frances Isabella Duberly

Excerpt

[More information](#)

Saturday, 13th.—Happily, the violent motion abated during the night, though the thunder and lightning were terrific. And this is the “Sweet South! whose sky rains roses and violets, and whose weary, fragrant heat, combined with gorgeous colours, dazzles the senses so that one feels like a phœnix burning on spice wood.” This is all very fine, but Singleton Fontenoy must have been more fortunate in his time of year. To me, for the last three days, the Mediterranean has been arid and sickly as the first approach of fever — heaving, nauseating, as the deadly approach of plague. Those who are good sailors may linger over it if they will. Give me the smallest house in England, with a greenhouse and a stable, and I will sigh no more for the violet waves of a Mediterranean sea, nor the brilliant stars of a sometimes golden heaven.

Sunday, 14th.—Ran on deck to take my first longing look at Greece. We were close under the Arcadian shore, about four miles from the Island of Stamphane. The high, bold coast lay hazy and crowned with misty clouds in the early sunlight. I watched for