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CHARLOTTETOWN

WITH THE ISLAND CONTINGENT

Letters Written at Cape Town and on the Sardinian.

What the Island Boys Have Been Doing Since They Left Quebec.

The following letter is from one of the Charlottetown boys with the Canadian contingent.

S. S. SARDINIAN, Nov 16, 1899.

DEAR MOTHER,—After all my bustling to get letters ready in time to be mailed last Sunday at the Cape Verde Islands we quietly sailed past and the captain never even tried to send any mail ashore. However, we have been told that it is likely that letters delivered at St. Vincent might not reach Canada any sooner than those leaving the Cape, as there are no steamers running from the Islands to England and the only way mail could be forwarded would be by a passing steamer. The Cape Verde Islands, judging by what we saw of them, are simply solid rock. Port St. Vincent has a rather fine harbor, and the situation of its light house, on a solitary rock several hundred feet high, makes a very pretty piece of scenery. We passed through on Sunday forenoon and signaled our name and destination to a warship in the harbor. Mr. Fullerton said that in his opinion the fact of our having passed through would be announced in the Charlottetown churches that same evening. Of course we were all disappointed when it was found that nothing would be gained by mailing our letters there; but this morning a steamer from Cape Town to Liverpool came in sight about five o'clock. She really was sighted at 4.30 but we did not get on deck until five. I don't know the steamer's name but after sailing round us for a while we sent off a boat with the mail. Of course there was great excitement on our ship for a time and when our boat returned the war news which spread through the ship was wonderful. Stories to no end and all to the effect that the British were having the worst of it. These yarns were current all the forenoon until someone came along with the latest paper from Cape Town, dated October 28th, two days before we left Quebec. That settled all the talk.

There has been a change made in our daily programme since I wrote the last letter. "Show legs" now sounds at 5 a. m. half an hour earlier than before, and lights are out at 9 a. m. All the fellows who were sleeping in bunks one and two decks below us, are now spending the night on deck, and from lights out till reveille every inch of space up above is occupied. The weather is perfectly fine, but the heat is awful. At 10 o'clock this morning it was 106 in the shade and would be five or six degrees higher later on in the day.

We are not allowed to wear anything but shirt, pants and cap; shirt sleeves rolled above the elbows and pants above the knee. As a result scarcely a fellow on the ship is clear of blisters. Many of them are poulticed up while others simply rub on some oil. My own legs and arms are bad, but I have not done anything to them yet. You must also consider that the whole main deck is covered with burning hot steam pipes and it is hard work to go the length of it through the crowd without stepping on something too hot to be comfortable. Poor Bowassa seems to be having hard luck. To-day one of the officers horses nearly tore the first finger of his right hand off—smashed it up badly—and on his way back from the hospital where he went to have it fixed he stepped on a pipe and now his left foot is burned so badly that he can't let it touch the deck.

We are all growing to like this thing very much. Grub is improving slightly; but we are also getting more used to it. On two different days they gave us porridge, and I had four big plates of it each time. Then our drill is more interesting, and a great deal easier than formerly as we are in smooth water and the motion of

the ship does not interfere at all. I never imagined that the ocean could be so smooth. Some days there is not a sign of a wave, everything just like a big sheet of glass, but those are the days when the heat make itself felt. The captain says we will cross the line tomorrow or Saturday and after that it will gradually become less warm. But I don't mind the heat at all. A gang of men are now dyeing our helmets and haversacks with coffee. A light coffee color is what our khaki uniform will be, and the ship is properly decorated with long strings of them hanging up to dry. Forgot to mention that I sent my boots home from Quebec with some buttons inside one of them. Keep the buttons if you have not already given them away. To-day I have been on fatigue duty since nine o'clock, scrubbing and washing, carrying beer and liquor to the officers quarters and bringing up ship supplies. Twelve men are chosen every day for this work and to-day it was our turn. I will be on watch to-night for twelve hours, but with this sort of weather it is pleasant to be on deck all night even though they won't allow us sleep or smoke. Will stop now until another spare half hour comes.

SUNDAY, Nov. 19.

Shortly after I stopped writing on Thursday we were alarmed by the whistle blowing for about ten minutes. On trying to find out what the trouble was we were told that the equator was in front of us. A number of bombs were exploded, hand-painted and flags run up. At night the ship's crew indulged in the old game of introducing greenhorns to Father Neptune. Several of them dressed up, and one who acted as barber shaved quite a number, using a bucket of water, a tar brush and piece of iron hoop. Many of the boys gave him a job and paid 10 cents per shave, thus letting the crew earn a little extra money. Instead of being on watch on Thursday night I was on guard. The difference is that while the watch only have to hang round deck and see that nothing goes wrong, the guards are posted and must not move from their places. Watch is a twelve-hour duty and guard is twenty-four, two hours on and four off. Today we are three hundred miles east of Ascension Island, and consequently about a thousand from Africa. The captain expects to reach Cape Town on Wednesday week, ten days from now. We were at noon today just 4,777 knots from Quebec, and have still 2,253 knots to go. It seems quite a long distance from home, but the most of it is over. Our colonel thinks we will not be at Cape Town more than a few hours. He also says we are going to see service, but none of the other officers agree with him. One thing that amused me much on Thursday night was the dropping of a burning match by someone from the main deck and it flew into Otter's room, where a lot of very flimsy stuff like cheese-cloth was piled. Mr. Fullerton says they had quite a time putting out the blaze. But since then they have been springing fire drill on us every possible chance. It seems funny to do this when our voyage is almost over, especially when Hutton ordered it to be done at the very start. The latest orders are that hammocks have to be stowed at 5 o'clock, though I don't see any sense in it, as reveille does not sound any earlier.

Mr. Fullerton is the best "chap" in the ship, for he comes down every day when any of us are on duty and gives us all the news about what is going on. Weeks is acting like a chump, and when we get home you won't hear very many of the boys call him "Our gallant commander." He never shows his nose around our quarters, and seldom

speaks to any of the boys, unless it is to abuse them, while all the officers of the other companies are continually round among their men. Our lieutenants are fairly good, but we expected Weeks to act at least like any other officer.

Tuesday, Nov. 21.—We had our turn shooting yesterday, and the Island boys made an average of 35 out of a possible 40. My score was 36, just high enough to class me with the best shots who are to have the first chance if we do any scurrying. Although we are kept pretty busy there is nothing to write about. If we were in a town I might be able to tell you something interesting; but here it is the same thing over and over every day. Then again, a fellow can't write a decent letter when he has to do just a few lines at a time, and is, moreover, always sleepy. You will probably not receive this until the end of the year, so I will close by wishing you all a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year, and will wish myself as good a dinner as you will have.

Nov. 27.—Almost another week has gone since I wrote this letter, and now we are within a respectable distance of Cape Town. In the last 24 hours we went nearly 300 miles, and are doing fairly well to-day. Expect to see land tomorrow morning, and to anchor on Wednesday. Drill has been almost dropped lately—only the absolutely green ones have to turn out. The rest of us have been busy at other things. On Wednesday we had a kit inspection, when every man had to account for everything given to him. Anything missing must be paid for, and it was amusing to see fellows borrowing whatever they were short of. After that we had to pack our kit bags, valises and haversacks as ordered. It is quite interesting work, for now we are able to get anything we may happen to need without disturbing the rest of the stuff. We have received another pair of heavy boots pugarees for our helmets, badges for helmet and tunic, bandolier or cartridge belt, another suit of underwear, shirt, pair of socks, towel and soap. Then they have lately been finding more stuff for us and are serving out lots of tobacco—big pound tins of good smoking, Mero's chewing, McDonald's and lots of other brands. We get two cigars daily, preserves of some sort every two days, and yesterday we actually had sardines and mince meat. On Thursday we signed the pay-roll and got our money, part in English gold and the rest in Canadian silver. The Island boys received \$14.40, which is 40 cents per day for 36 days or to the end of this month. The evenings now are getting quite cool and there is great fighting for blankets in the room where the hammocks are stowed and also all round where we sleep. The usual plan now is to get a hammock right after supper and carry it around until bedtime. But it does not always work, for yesterday Alf. Riggs got one at two o'clock, and after all his watching it was stolen from him at 9.30 when he turned around to hang up his coat. We often get up on deck in the evenings to look at the stars and there are some very pretty constellations down here. By far the best is the Southern Cross which at all corresponds to our "dipper." We see it every evening and often try to work out other constellations from the rest of the stars. The Maxim gun squad are just doing their first firing exercise on the quarter deck, and of course everyone is up looking at them. I nearly forgot to mention that I firmly believe this voyage is going to help my eyes more than all the doctors in the country. The spectacles are stowed away and I sometimes feel like rooting them out for a while so that I may see things a little better, but the headaches are wonderfully improved and hardly bother me at all. We never do much now by artificial light and that along with the long distance probably accounts for it. One evening I wrote a letter and was stupid next day, but the headaches are very tame affairs compared to what they were two months ago. Of course now and then it gets pretty bad but does not last long, and I believe another month like the last one would make a perfect cure, and I am getting as fat as a pig. But that is only natural for the grub suits us now and we eat like hogs. No work at all to speak of, but just lie around all day or else be fixing up our kit which is not work but only one way of putting in time. Nearly all the boys are fattening up and if we are not set at very hard work at the Cape we will be in fine condition. Of course drilling hard at the very beginning would kill us as we are pretty soft now; but almost every man on board is in perfect health and by going slowly at first will be able to stand almost anything.

Mr. T. C. James has kindly permitted us to extract the following from a letter received by him from Rev. T. F. Fullerton:—

S. S. SARDINIAN, Nov. 29, 1899.—We are just off South Africa, although after a stare of an hour I cannot even detect the land. This means a great deal to us as we have seen land only once since leaving the St. Lawrence. We expect to anchor in Table Bay today and to disembark tomorrow, but the latter is uncertain. The Allans made two contracts with the Dominion Government, one to Cape Town the other from Cape Town to Durban.

Of the voyage I can only say that it has lacked interest from the standpoint of variety—internally, however much could be related. Three papers in Canada will give the routine in a very full manner accompanied by realistic illustrations if the films are not destroyed in transit, the Montreal Star, Toronto Globe and Toronto Mail.

My duties have all been performed under the most disagreeable conditions. There is no place for service, and no matter how hard it blows the troops are assembled for worship. They have, however, been comparatively light. Fortunately for all concerned there has been no rough weather, and the coolness of the atmosphere has astonished the captain beyond measure.

the men would have been batted down an epidemic of some kind would assuredly have broken out. As it is we have a clean bill of health. This is a great thing to say, as all are agreed that we are carrying 1200 souls, when our accommodation is only equal to half the number. My own health with a slight abatement, has been exceptionally good all through the voyage.

The Island boys are all well. I should say, not only of them, but also of a great part of the contingent, that the "romance" of the expedition has largely gone into the past, and all are beginning to realize that this is not a game of citizen soldiery but the genuine "Tommy Atkins."

What my course may be at present moment I cannot say. The kirk is always with me. I trust all are well and all going on well. If I get time and quiet in camp in Cape Town, I shall write you fully, as by that time, I shall know what I have to do. Give my kind regards to all enquiring friends. With best wishes I am yours sincerely,

T. F. FULLERTON,
P. S.—We are all writing to catch the English mail, and the racket is something undecipherable.

T. F. F.
It is evident that the letters were sent direct from the Sardinian to the mail which was just leaving when the steamer got in. Letters from the contingent may now be expected weekly or fortnightly, according to the despatch of mails from the Cape.

Mrs. Weeks, wife of Major Weeks, has received a letter from her husband dated at Cape Town on the 30th Nov. at 4.30 a. m. She has kindly permitted THE EXAMINER to make the following extract from the letter:—

"We arrived yesterday afternoon, all well, after being on the water for 30 days. I went up town with Rev. Mr. Fullerton, as soon as we were permitted, to send you a cablegram "All Well," but when we got up the office was closed to the public and I had no further opportunity to cable you.

"We had a splendid voyage after leaving the banks of Newfoundland. I was not seasick for an instant.

"Last night we learned that we had to march to the front at once with the Black Watch and the Seaforth Highlanders, a great compliment to the Canadiana which all on board appreciated.

"I intended writing you a long description giving details of our voyage, but being hurried off so quickly I cannot do so this morning. I will write you a long letter before we go to the front telling you all that happened on the way out. I have been so busy for the past few days on board that I had to put off writing until we landed, and now that we have arrived time is more precious still.

"I enclose you a coin with Oom Pau's head on it, which some one threw to me on the pier in exchange for a Canadian coin.

"We received a grand reception on arrival from the other ships at the Cape.

Mr. Fullerton tells me he wrote in his letter a long account of the voyage, so you can see Mr. Fullerton about it. Mr. Fullerton is quite an acquisition, and is much liked.

"We all realize the importance of our mission and know that some of us will not come back; but one and all of us P. E. Islanders at any rate are keen and determined to do no dishonour to Canada."

Mr. Fullerton has received a letter from her husband saying that he was in good health and all the Island boys were well. The letter was written on board the Sardinian just before her arrival at Cape Town.

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1. Orchestra.....
 2. Grand Chorus from Operz Bemer.....
 3. Piano Quartette, Grand Valtz, Strauss
The Missees Horasby, Handrahan and
Misses Carroll
 4. Comic Vocal Duett.....Mazingh
Miss Earle and Mr. Chas Earle.
 5. Dance.....Sailor's Hornpipe.....
Master Arthur Warburton
 6. Violin Solo.....Hungarian Fantasie....
.....Rainold
 7. Vocal Solo.....Selected.....
Mr. Vinnicombe
 8. String Quartette.....Miss-Florence Earle
 9. Mandoline, Miss E. Murphy and Miss
Hogar; Banjo, Miss Murphy; Guitar,
Miss J. Horasby.
 10. Quattette—Merrily Goes our Bark....
.....Leslie
 11. Piano Quartette.....
[b] Grand Galop.....Smith
 12. I'm a Philosopher...From Opera....
Belle of New York.....
Mr. Chas Earle
 13. Orchestra.....

- PART II.
- A Dress Rehearsal or Burlesque on
Cinderella
CHARACTERS
Miss Jones, Principal of Grove House Aca-
demy.....Miss Florence Earle
Mademoiselle Epinar, French Governess
Miss Lillian Collings
Amy Fibbe...Afterwards Cinderella.....
Miss Mary Stewart
Clara Wilkins...Afterwards the Prince...
Mr. E. Mitchell
Mrs. Jarvey...Elouction Mistress.....
Miss Amy Earle
Josa Jennings...Afterwards Fairy God-
mother.....Miss Winnie Collings
Martha Higgins? Afterwards a Spiteful
Harry Jackson } Sisters
Miss M. Earle and Miss Nettie Ross
Sophonisba Spavin...The Romantic Girl
Miss Louise Brenner
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Remnants there on every floor that must move on, that must move on.
Remnant sale begins Tuesday, January 2nd, 1900.
FURS have got to move on at My Store.
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