

Lisbon, Oct. 28. 1874

My dearest Helen: I wrote to mamma two days ago instead of to you, because there was a question she wanted answered. I did not say much of our passage south, knowing that for my more regular letters - not indeed that there was much to say. For nearly ten days before we started the weather had been exceptionally fine, with an unusually high barometer - indeed the previous month had been very quiet despite the very heavy storms you had in the U. S. During my visit to Plymouth it was beautiful. Three or four days before our sailing, however, the barometer began to fall

getting as low as 29.50 and when we  
left on the 20<sup>th</sup> the sky was threatening  
big, and the pilot said we were sure  
to have very bad weather. The wind was  
then east, but by nine at night it had  
got round to South West and freshened  
very considerably. The admiral thought  
of going into Plymouth, but I  
didn't want it, so we kept on, and on  
Sunday evening rounded Ushant I?  
with a more moderate sea, and stood  
across the bay of Biscay for Cape  
Finisterre. The weather behaved very  
curiously, now clearing up and again  
clouding over and blowing hard, at-  
ways from South West. When it did  
clear it was wonderful to see the

extraordinary lucidity of the atmosphere. It seemed to be of infinite depth yet perfectly transparent, and the stars seemed to swim in it, while the great white clouds sweeping by intensified the effect by the contrast. I remember while sitting on a chest and looking at the sky I recalled some lines of Byron's, which made me think again of what I once said to you: that we are too apt to meet in the men melody or sweetness of poetry, without marking the mental effort & appreciating its intellectual quality. The deep <sup>dark</sup> sky and the placid stars shining, not so much brilliantly as intensely, for they did not twinkle in the least, showed me how carefully Byron had worked out his words from what his eyes had seen of dark & bright

She walks in beauty, like the night  
of cloudless climes and starry skies;  
And all that's best of dark and bright  
Meet in her aspect and her eyes;  
Thus mellow'd that tender light  
Which Heaven to fanny day denies.

You will find the rest in his Hebrew Melodies if you can follow the verses, <sup>Green Trolley P. 206</sup> and trace the same idea worked in and running through the whole. Well, in three or four hours that brilliant sky misted over, a rainbow came round the moon and the next day was blowing and muzzling, the barometer dancing a jig - up & down. At night I was very tired and the weather so thick you couldn't see more than half a

with so larva orders & the officer of the  
deck that he must look out - I could not  
get up in time if wanted - and lay  
down & sleep. At quarter before twelve  
I was waked with a message that it was  
blowing a gale, raining very hard and  
impassible to see any distance. So I  
got up put on some clothes, and  
when I got on deck there was the same  
red blue sky and white clouds - every-  
thing had cleared off and the same  
lustrous calm eyes looking down from  
heaven. ~~Everything was~~ Notwithstanding;  
the next day was also unpleasant  
raining and drizzling, and the night  
after we passed Finisterre we stood  
along, scarce able to see anything  
at times - only knowing that steamers

would pass, and they did pass, very close  
to us. It was an anxious time and I  
kept saying to myself "Oh thou of little  
faith, wherefore dost thou doubt?" but  
it was hard to prevent the feeling of uneasi-  
ness. I got Mr. Clove to take four  
hours of that night for me - but two  
of them I could not sleep owing to  
the jarring of the ship as she plunged  
into the head seas. The next day it  
moderated and cleared - Wednesday - &  
we ran in for the coast which we  
made and started, but could not get  
to Lisbon before night; so we anchored  
about fifty miles north under a  
cape with good promise for next  
day, which however proved delusion.  
At 7 in the morning it was blowing

harder than at any time during the voyage, and working very nasty. I would have preferred to stay where we were but the admiral wished to go on, and so we started. When we got off Lisbon bar it was very thick and foggy and we pulled out, but we fortunately exchanged signals with a shore station which said a pilot could be sent us. So we closed in and got him, and he took us through rather a narrow and not very deep passage but we got in all right and here we are. The night of our arrival it blew harder than ever and misty. I just heaved myself to be at anchor inside, and able to sleep quietly. Yesterday and today have been clear and pleasant. I am glad and much obliged to you girls for persuading

Mamma to stay a bit with Aunt Bartie  
she ought to have change from time to time  
if not to get wholly away from household  
cares. The monotonous strain of these bills  
heavily, and of course will be worse than usual  
this winter with Lyle and me away making  
the house so much more small and quiet  
I had to day her after 14<sup>th</sup> saying she was  
going to Aunt Mary's funeral, and also  
Nellie's saying that she should keep on draw-  
ing a bit longer. I quite approve of perse-  
verance, but think it might be well to ask  
Mr. Beckwith if her not getting on as fast as  
he thinks she might is for want of appetite.  
I was sorry to hear of Drummie's report - I  
trust he will not lose his peaceable temper  
Monday Oct 29 - All well - Goodbye  
dear child with love for all