



Ellen Kate O Sullivan

An Account of her voyage
from Bantry to Brisbane





A Brief Account
of
My Voyage from Bantry to Brisbane
Commenced September 22nd, 1902
Ended November 10th, 1902
To
My very dear Father and Mother
From
Your Loving Child Ellen Kate

VOYAGE OF ELLEN KATE O¹ SULLIVAN SEPTEMBER 22ND - NOVEMBER 10TH, 1902

Bantry - Cork - Dublin
Holyhead - London - Plymouth
Gibraltar - Marseilles
Naples - Port Said Colombo
- Fremantle Melbourne -
Sydney Brisbane (13,000
miles approximately)



Ellen Kate O Sullivan joined the Mercy Order in Bantry town.

She describes in a letter to her sister-in-law how her brother Ted, a small child at the time, tried to stop her going by removing the labels from her luggage.

Shown here is Ellen Kate's map of her voyage

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This is my first experience of diary writing, so I expect folks will excuse mistakes.

Bantry, September 22nd, 1902.

The long looked forward-to day has at last arrived, the day on which I am to leave home and all my loved ones in Ireland and start to a new home in Queensland. How quickly the morning past, at two o'clock I had to say that sad, sad word good-bye, to Brothers, Sisters, Father and Mother. "Good-bye"; a long farewell to all! - At the station a number of friends and companions await to give me a parting word. The scene of this shall never fade from my memory. The train started, then followed a waving of handkerchiefs until we lose sight of each other. Two of my brothers are with me, one of them is going to one of the City Hospitals, should it be God's holy will to repair his health; the other going to see both of us safe on our own route. A pang of loneliness darts through me again as I pass by for the last time the Convent school where I spent a good many happy days. At Drimoleague Station some friends are waiting to see me, but the time here is short, just time to bid good-bye. We arrived in Cork at 6 o'clock and enjoyed as best I could a last chat with all my friends.

September 23rd

I meet one of my travelling companions, both of us start for Dublin at 12.35. I have to say my last good-bye here. I could not describe how I feel. I wished somebody had given me a dose of something that could make me forget all. I cried the rain down until I reached Dublin at 6 o'clock. We were driven to the Belvedere Hotel in Great Georges Street where we meet all our future Companions.

September 24th

Feast of Our Lady of Mercy. Under whose protection we are leaving our dear native land, yes leaving for ever Holy Ireland and all we love on this earth to help to spread the faith of St. Patrick under the Southern Cross and to devote ourselves more earnestly to the service of our Divine Lord, and while our hearts are wrung with sorrow at the parting, they are raised in silent thanksgiving to Him who bestowed on us so undeserving and glorious a favour.

At 7.30 we leave for Kingstown and arrive there about 8 o'clock. Mr. Moloney sees us all safely on board the Mail boat "Munster", and accompanies us to Holyhead. At 8.30 the boat slides away from the pier. What a sad time for each member of our party (who now number thirty-three). Then indeed all feel that we are really leaving Ireland, all loving ties of home and kindred are severed, but not without this great consolation that all was done for a good and generous Master who will one day reward a hundredfold, and we know well that Our Lady of Mercy, upon whose feast we are severing all earthly ties, will guard for us our dear ones in Holy Ireland. Land is visible for a long time and needless to say all remain on deck to watch the last speck of Erin's green hills sink beneath the Western Horizon.

Oh Ireland isn't it grand you look, Like a bride in her rich adorning; With all the pent up love of my heart, I bid you the top of the Morning!

Yes, Ireland has faded from our sight, so we must bide it a long last farewell. Adieu dear Erin.

At 11.30 we arrive at Holyhead. Mr. Moloney sees us all safely seated in the Train for London, gives us a little advice as to how we are to care ourselves, leaves good-bye and returns to dear old Ireland, I could repeat that word a hundred times over.

We have reserved Corridor Carriages and so have access to one another. Shortly after the train has started we enjoy a hearty luncheon. Under other circumstances we might easily describe the wild beauty of the Welsh scenery, as it is, it has no charm for us. One thing we admired very much was the strand from Bangor to Conway. It was very nice and looked so white that one would imagine it had become strewn with "Irish Britais". It did not seem to lack for want of visitors.

Wales is more mountaineous than I hitherto thought, judging from the number of tunnels we pass through en-route. We are on the Express Train and have only three stops, one at Chester, Ruby, and Crewe. We got past the others so quickly that we could not even read the names. At 6 o'clock we reached Buston Station, very tired indeed, yet each one's cup of happiness was full to the brim, and not one amongst us, would exchange her position with the greatest lady in the land.

Very Rev. Canon Conlan (M.M. Bridget's Brother) met us at Euston and had Cabs provided to take us to Charing Cross. He accompanied us to Gravesend. Father White met us there, and they both gave us in charge to our dear Mothers Bridget and Audeon. Did we not get a warm welcome from them, and also from the other Sisters who received us as cordially as if we were their own Postulants.

After a short delay here, we are sent to our hotels and have a good sleep until nine next morning.

September 25th

We rise at nine this morning and having taken breakfast we go to the Convent. On approaching it we see an Irish flag floating above the Convent

which had been hoisted the day before to welcome us. It attracted a lot of outsiders who seemed anxious to know what all of us intended doing, and as we had several walks through Gravesend during the day we came in contact with many who asked if there was any particular Ceremony in the Church to-day.

We had dinner at one o'clock and went to Confession in the evening. The Nuns entertained us during the evening with Recitations, Songs, Music etc. Rev. Mother gave us a picture each as a souvenir of Gravesend.

September 26th

All rise at 5.30. We have Mass at 6 o'clock in the Convent Chapel. Rev. Canon Conlan celebrates and all including Mother Bridget and Audeon communicate. We breakfast at the hotel and return to the Convent at 8.30. At nine we bid adieu to the Nuns with whom we had become very intimate during our short stay. Fr. White gave us his blessing and a medal as a souvenir of Gravesend. We got to Tilbury docks and on board the tender "Carlotta" which takes us to "Orizaba". The morning was very foggy, but it's clear now and we can see the Orizaba in the distance. We are nearing it by degrees and in less time than it takes to write it we are on board and each one shown her cabin. It was fitted with every requirement and when I got into mine I did get a surprise. There was my trunk battered and broken and two locks disappeared altogether. I did not know it at first and wanted to get it taken away out of the way. We are all next to each other in the ship (by special arrangement). We got up on deck as soon as we could and amused ourselves by watching the different Tenders bring numerous strangers to join us on the "Orizaba".

We went down to dinner at one o'clock and returned to the deck immediately to watch the ship start but to our great surprise we were a good way from Tilbury. It moved off while we were at dinner but the motion was so slow we did not notice it.

How different we felt here, from what we felt when leaving the Irish Shore, though it is now we are really leaving all. We were in sight of land during the evening but did not enjoy it much and went to bed after tea.

Saturday 27th

I slept well last night considering that it was my first night on sea. We were called at seven this morning and had a little time on deck before breakfast. We have breakfast at 8 o'clock, lunch at 11, dinner at 1, afternoon tea at 3.30, tea at 6.30 and supper at 9. It is a beautiful day, we are out of sight of land and are enjoying ourselves as best we can. It is now about one o'clock. The ship is steering into Plymouth. The scenery here is very nice, woods on both sides. We are to remain here for a few hours. Little boats are sailing round in all directions, some of the occupants come on board selling Apples, Pears, Chocolate etc. A number of passengers came on board and in a short time we are facing the Ocean. I shall lay down my pen and watch the land recede. It may be some days before we see land again. The sea is rougher now but it is still lovely to watch the waves rush against and battle with each other. It is getting dark yet we do not like to go down as we must be somewhere near the Eddystone Lighthouse. Yes, after a little while it is in sight. The different lights are very nice, something like the "Search lights" I used to see from the ships at home.

Sunday, 28th September

Our first Sunday on board, we have the blessing of assisting at Mass. There are two Jesuit Fathers from Dublin on board. Very few of our party are at breakfast this morning. They were staggering from one place to another and had to go to bed, that is not a surprise as we are now on the "Bay of Biscay". I feel a little dizzy - not very bad but I shall lay in bed for a while. The stewardess brought us some apples, we thought them a strange diet, but we had no sooner eaten them than we were much better. After Tea some of us went on deck but could not remain their long. We went down to the Saloon, but our time there was very limited. We were only just seated when we saw a Minister preparing for Service. He invited us to stay and sing, but we went off to bed as quickly as we could. The ship is swaying very much and the waves are dashing against its sides. The portholes are fastened up and how are we to live - not a breath of air can be had.

Monday, 29th September

After a restless night we are called at 7 o'clock but few of us are able to rise, most of them are very ill. The ship is swaying as much as ever today, yet I do not think it at all bad for the Bay of Biscay. The weather is fine. About four o'clock we get out of the bay, our trip over it was very good D.G. I did fear it very much having heard so much about it in the past. The sea is very calm here, not even a ripple to be seen on the water. The sun is setting in the west casting it reflections on the waters. It is a very nice scenery but not a new one to me.

Tuesday, 30th September

Calm sea again to-day. We were on deck about 11 o'clock when a bell was rung

and instantly all the men employed on board including a number of blacks in their bare feet, a few had slippers on, came running along the deck putting on lifebelts, some of them had buckets of water and others rugs and two or three jumped on each of the Lifeboats. They were there only a few minutes when a bugle was sounded and off they ran as quickly as they came. Meantime some of us got a little excited and inquired on all sides, was the ship sinking or was anything wrong. To our astonishment we were told they were only practising in case of fire. It was the sight of the blacks gave us the greatest fright as we did not know they were on board.

We have seen Porpoises in great numbers to-day jumping very high in the water. When they follow a ship it is to be a sign of a storm. They went off in another direction from us. About eighteen ships have passed us to-day.

About 2.30 we passed quite close to Cape St. Vincent, it is a very rocky barren place. There are a number of Caves in the rocks against which the waves are dashing with great force.

On a part near us is a square-topped white stone building, with a lighthouse rising out of it. This was formerly a Monastery and the Monks took charge of the lighthouse. On this Cape also the battle of Corunna was fought and the spot where Sir John Moore received his death-wound was pointed out to us.

Wednesday, October 1st

The Stewardess called us early this morning as we were getting near Gibraltar. She knew we were anxious to see the first glimpse of it. We did not lose much time until we got on deck where we remained a while anxiously looking for the approaching land. Very soon our attention was given to a number of boats laden with fruit. In a short time the occupants

were on board and besieged the ship while we stayed in port. The greater number of them were Spaniards, we enjoyed ourselves well listening to them trying to speak English. One of them said to a Gentleman who was buying fruit from them "Sir! I don't talk a lie"! but if you give me won shilling, I'll give you back two pennies.

We have just time to inquire about the chief points of interest. There are fortifications close to the water's edge and behind these rise slope of green turf in which are earthen-works heavily armed. We can see a very high road lined with prickly pears and Aloes. We can also see shrubberies but above all is "The Rock" about 1400 feet above the sea. The houses are made of wood painted in different colours. A long zig-zag wall runs up about the centre which separates the Moorish from the Spanish town. As we leave the harbour we get a closer view of the "Strait" which here separate Europe and Africa.

Gibraltar is so burrowed with Caverns it is called the hill of caves. As we turn eastward we have a good view of the Moorish Castle which was built in 725. Beyond is the Europa Lighthouse and when we pass this we are in the Mediterranean and for a while we can see the mountains rise in tiers and a glimpse of the Snowy Sierra Nevada may be had at a distance. There were two heavy showers during our stay in Gibraltar, the first rain we have seen since we left Ireland.

Thursday, 2nd October

To-day we are sailing round the south-east coast of Spain, the water here is a very deep blue and the air is very warm. We can see the African hills but they are at a good distance. Nearer to us are the Balearic Islands. We are entering the Gulf of Lyons and are looking forward to to-morrow when we shall be in Marseilles.

Friday, 3rd October

Another beautiful day. Coming into the harbour of Marseilles we can see the famous Church of “Notre Dame de la Garde” on a high rock facing the sea. Marseilles is a very nice place, it is built low near the sea; houses and trees alternately rise like steps until they meet the highlands of the Riviera, the great heath resort.

We are well in the harbour now. There are four nice docks here and about twenty ships. One a low plantation near the sea is a large Cathedral built on the old French style. A number of passengers have gone out to visit the different parts. The French are selling their fruit but they are not allowed on board. We are much interested in these as we can understand most of what they say. The water is quite green here and is blue near Spain.

Saturday, 4th October

We are on the open sea again, yet the air is very warm, and there are a good many ill. As we go on we can see the Riviera hills appearing. Occasionally they seem to be covered with mist. In a short time the rain is pouring heavily and continue so for a few hours. Then we are at the mercy of a heavy thunderstorm. M.M. Bridget is with us and we are saying the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary which never failed in time of storm. A little while after it ceased very much, and all was over before bedtime. During the storm we passed between Corsica and Sardina. We saw nothing to admire in either. There was a nice lighthouse on Sardina.

October 5th - Rosary Sunday

At 6 a.m. we are in Naples, the first thing we see is Mount Vesuvius. There

is a little smoke coming out of it. There are a number of houses at the bottom. I should not like to live in them. We can see the Domes and Spires of many Churches and Cathedrals. The ship is besieged all day by clean and dirty Italians selling Fruit, Necklaces, Brooches, Marble Ornaments, Postcards etc., others are playing on Violins and Guitars in the boats. Some of the passengers have finished their route, others are gone out for the day. M.M. Bridget gave us a feast of black grapes which we prized very much as it is dried fruit we get on board. We almost forgot it is Sunday though we were at Mass as usual, but they seem busier on the ship to-day than any other. About 12 o'clock we came down to our Cabins and one of the men was scrubbing them. He said, he thought we were gone out to Church but as we were in he said we would not get cakes for tea unless we kept them very clean. We say our Rosary every evening when first class passengers are at dinner. Fr. Corish reminded us this morning of this being Rosary Sunday so we said the fifteen decades. Naples does not look at all nice during the day, but it is very nice at night. It is built close to the water's edge and it is beautiful to see the different lights reflecting on the water. We see now what we have not seen all day, fire coming from the side of Mt. Vesuvius, it disappears for a while but soon appears again. We shall leave Naples at midnight.

Monday, October 6th

We are far from the sight of land this morning and nearly every one is sick. It is on account of being still yesterday and the sea is very rough now.

Later on the sea got very calm and all are as bright as ever. We are near a burning volcano “Stromboli” which tells us we are not far from the Sipari Islands. It stands like a lighthouse close to us and though it is said to be uninhabited we fancy we see houses on the Island. Noises heard here by

Crusaders coming from the Holy Land were said to be the groans of the souls in Purgatory and hence gave rise to Masses for the dead. About 3 o'clock we get in sight of Sicily on our right and the Coast of Calabria on the left, going through the Strait of Messina we have a very good view of the sea-side town. Green hills covered with trees and shrubs on the top, some trees near are mushroom shaped. On a level with the sea is the Cemetery with beautiful marble monuments. As we go on the scenery becomes more picturesque. In the higher part are castles and fortifications. The houses seem to be built of cement stone which with the green trees gives a fresh look to the place. The town of Reggio on the other side is very nice too but the houses are made of wood and painted different colours. The sun is shining from the west which adds a good deal to the scenery. One could remain admiring it for hours but our stay here is very short so we must be satisfied.

October 7th and 8th

Nothing unusual has occurred. We have seen a number of Volcanic Islands and distant glimpse of Alexandria. On Tuesday night there was a Concert in the Second Class Saloon. Nearly all the airs were Irish.

Thursday, October 9th

The heat to-day is something terrible, not a breath of cool air is to be had. About half-past eleven we get into Port Said. We got a pleasant surprise here as we thought from the name it should be queer. The first thing that attracts us, is a life-size statue of Leesepts (on a long pier) the man who started the great work of opening the Canal. We are within 30 yards of the town. The houses are flat-roofed, most of them have verandahs. The streets

look as if they were strewn with dried white sand. Tall trees are planted here and there to afford a shade from the sun.

The natives are blacks, most of the men were dressed in long loose robes, the more stylish wore white ones with red belts and caps and tan boots. The others wore blue, red, yellow, or any colour convenient I suppose. Some of them dived round the ship for money. The police came on the scene and tried to get those fellows away but their efforts were useless. When the police had them almost caught, they dived and reappeared about ten yards distant. It was great fun to see them watch the money and evade the police. The Policemen dressed in white sailor suits and helmets.

We left about five o'clock. On our right are splendid stone buildings, past these, all along are nice green shrubs. Here we see two men on camels. Behind the shrubs in the distance is a very large lake. It is a moonlight night and we are enjoying the scenery. A large passenger ship passed us and this ship had to stop a long time on that account although it has an Electric Projector that can throw light 1300 yards unless it had this it dare not enter the Canal at night. When the ship had passed a good way and our ship was yet still, I looked through the Porthole to see if it was in sight. What did I see? About 10 fierce looking blacks standing in a little boat quite close to me, did I not come in quick?

Friday, October 10th

We got up very early this morning as we were anxious to see the Canal. It is very narrow, another ship as large as this could not pass. On each side as far as we can see is nothing but a lumpy sandy plain. Five or six wild Arabs are running along the bank on our right. They are trying to keep up to the ship. They are talking but we cannot understand them though we are quite near. Sometimes the sand slips from under their feet and, of course, they slip after it.

There are Signal Stations along the Canal 7 miles between each, white people live in most of them. We are now under the famous sky of Egypt and at the end of the Canal and stay here about twenty minutes. The Officers of the Canal Company live here, such pretty houses on the edge of a green double avenue of Sont trees. The town of Suez is about three miles to the right. We can see it plain, an inlet of the sea separates us and half-way in the inlet are gates across with big white pillars which could be seen about 4 miles away. We are now entering the Gulf of Suez and passing the historical land where Our Lord spent his life. On the east are the tall trees of an Oasis known as the well of "Moses". North of this is a long line of grey hills called Jebel-Raha or the desert of wanderings. Here also is a great lake Marah, near this the Israelites crossed the Red Sea and to the south-east rise the peaks of Sinai. The sun is setting and we must be content with what we have seen.

Saturday, 11th October

We are well into the red sea to-day and far from land again. The heat is terrible. The Stewardess told us we are only in the beginning of it. The water is a steel grey colour.

Sunday, 12th October

We have Mass on deck this morning at 6 o'clock, three will be said in the drawing-room later. I forget to mention before there were three Irish Passionist Fathers came on board at Naples and are going to Adelaide.

We did not sleep much last night on account of the heat, and what shall we do to-day. The heat is over 80D. I wish we were out of the Red-Sea.

Monday, 13th October

Warmer still; this will be our last day on the Red Sea, D.G. About 3 o'clock we passed twelve islands almost in a straight line, called the Twelve Apostles. On the summit of one is a lighthouse which we called St. Peter.

Tuesday, 14th October

We got up at 6 this morning to be in time for 6.30 Mass. There are four Masses said every morning. Sometimes we are so weak, we cannot wait for one. When we were at Mass this morning some sailors and others came peeping at the Portholes. We overheard the following - What are they doing there 1 - They are saying their prayers - Oh! Is that the way they go to Heaven? Don't they look like Presbyterians. To-day was just as warm as the preceding days, although we passed through the "Gate of Tears" (Strait of Bablemandeb) last night.

Wednesday, 15th October

On awakening this morning and looking out we see land. It is Cape Guardfui. By this we know we are on the most easterly point of Africa and entering the Arabian Sea. We shall not see land again until we reach Colombo. Nothing unusual has happened to-day but the Sunset is magnificent this evening, and admired by everyone. Just as the sun sinks out of sight, a patch of pearly white appears above and a rosy arch appears below. In about 10 minutes the white is tinged with purple and the red changes into a bright Canary-yellow, then to see the reflections on the water was worth looking at.

October, 16th 17th, 18th, 19th;

Four uneventful days, on Thursday there was a good deal of rain. On Friday one of the Passionist Fathers told us some nice stories about Rome and other places; in one of their Monasteries they have the stairs which Our Divine Lord went up when He was being brought by Pilate before the people, and the drops of blood that He shed are covered with glass. At the top of this stairs is a small room called "Sanctus Sanctorium" in this there is a chest in which is kept the most precious treasure in the world, no one is allowed to open it except the Pope and it has not been opened since the time of Pope Pius the Ninth, as the present Pope is a prisoner in the Vatican.

He told us he said Mass over the body of St. Paul of the Cross and used the same Vestments and Charts that St. Paul used and he has a piece of his finger-bone as a relic.

Saturday and Sunday passed on as usual, nothing to attract our attention only the deep waters of the Arabian Sea and the beautiful Sunset.

October 20th

All letters had to be posted at nine o'clock and about 11 we get near Colombo. There are more ships here than we have seen in any other Port. Opposite us is a Japanese man of War Ship, from which were fired some shots to-day. They frightened us as we did not expect them. We see several kinds of blacks here, some wear coats and tight-fitting petticoats, the hair in polls and big combs, these distinguish the pure of Singalese, some have short hair and long robes and those of the lowest class have very little on them. There were about 80 of them coaling the ship all day, dinner was brought to these. It consisted of two baskets of steeped Rice,

one pot of Curry and a pot of something like Indian Meal and Soup, actually in the pots it was cooked in. About 6 at the time gathered round this with a small open little basket. The one in charge of the dinner put his black hands into the pots and gave each one two handfuls of rice and a spoon of soup meal and curry. They eat this with their hands and had some green leaves and Cocoa-nut for desert. Meantime a steward stood by to see that each one had his turn and that no one came a second time.

Every one of them wear ear-rings and rings. I saw one of them at the coal and he had silver bangles on his legs, not one of them wears boots or shoes. Some of the Priests who went out told us all about the place. First they went to an English Hotel, lunch was not ready and they went to look at the shops. They met a number able to speak English. At each shop someone would say "come and look" we won't ask you to buy but look, yet if they went in they should buy.

When some of them saw the Priests they showed them the Brown Scapular to let them know they were Catholics. There is a Convent of the Sisters of the Poor here, most of the Sisters are Irish and one is from Cork. Four Loreto Nuns and two Postulants left us here for Calcutta. There are Budhist Priests here, when they go out they take a fan with them. If they meet a woman they raise the fan so as not to see her.

Bullocks and some other animals like buffaloes are their beasts of burden. Horses are used for carriage work only and are worked only every second day on account of the great heat. Little carts with accommodation for one person are drawn by little Singalese boys, they trot off like little ponies for an hour or so. There are some very funny boats in the harbour "Catamorangs". They are like Ferry boats with a frame at one side like the frame of a rolling stone, no matter what way the wind blows it has no effect on them.

Thank goodness we shall be leaving those blacks to-night. They made me very lonely during the evening.

October 21st and 22nd

Nothing unusual only we crossed the Equator on the morning of the 22nd. One of the engineers told us we shall have no more warm weather. Of course the sun is as warm as ever but the trade winds are blowing and that makes the heat less unbearable. We are now 7 hours and 10 minutes before Irish time. I did not change my watch. I shall keep the Irish time until I go to Brisbane and see how much it is behind the Brisbane time.

October 23rd

We are getting a great rocking to-day. The sea is a bit rough though the weather is fine and it is much cooler to-day. There is a good supply of green oranges on board. We did not see them before and we are so thirsty now that we find them better for use than ornament.

October 24th

We are up at 5.30 this morning for Confession. It is very warm to-day and the sea is very rough. A number are seasick including myself. I have been sick during the past three days but not very bad until to-day. I could not describe my feelings.

October 25th

Feast of Blessed Thaddeus. This day is as wild as it could be. It is not only from side to side the ship is swaying, but it is actually jumping backwards

and forwards. I was at only one Mass to-day and was not able to go to Holy Communion. I remained on deck a good part of the day. There is no trouble in walking for we are driven along by the wind and motion of the ship. I am praying to Blessed Thaddeus to cease the storm and have to go off to bed.

October 26th

Last night was our first really wild night at sea. Many a time during the night "Our Lady Star of the Sea was invoked". If we had not good hold of the berths we may be thrown to the floor. It is just as wild to-day but we don't mind it so much as at night, and if it is so wild in Ireland the Irish are saying God help those on sea. We are now 160 south of the Equator and are not sorry to be leaving the Tropics.

October 27th

The old familiar face again to-day. A wild sea and a great change from the heat, it is very cold.

October 28th

It is not so rough to-day, my head is quite dizzy. The Chief Engineer told us to-day when a person dies on board they are sewn up in Canvas, laid on a stretcher and covered with the flag of the country to which he belonged, and a large weight tied round his feet. Then a funeral procession is formed round the deck and if there is no Clergyman of his religion on board, the Captain reads the Church of England Service, and at the words "and the sea shall give up its dead" the body is lowered off the stretcher into its

watery grave. He told us that one time he was on a ship, on which small pox broke out. A number died and they got short of weights, For one person they got a large piece of coal to serve for the purpose. The body was lowered and every one stood looking serious, when a man shouted “Why then Mr. Engineer, I’ve seen a great many of them going down, but he is the first one I saw taking his own fuel with him”.

October 29th

We have had some heavy showers to-day. It is rough too and very cold but we prefer it to the heat. I feel my head much better and I hope my sea-sickness is over. I think I’ve had quite enough of it.

October 30th

Last night and this morning were both wet and wild. At twelve o’clock we are close to land and think we are in Freemantle but we are mistaken. It is an Island twelve miles from it. We are only a little further on when the Pilot comes to steer us into Freemantle and about 3 o’clock we get in. The Orizaba goes quite close to the pier and the passengers going out can step on the pier from the ship. The Pier is crowded with people waving handkerchiefs. They are the first familiar faces we have seen since we left England.

We soon realised that we are on the shore of our adopted land, and the great expanse of sea and land that separated us from “Home sweet Home”.

Indeed it was with mingled feelings of joy and sorrow that we did realise it and a few silent tears were shed too. Yes, we feel we are in the Australian Waters, but we have not yet set foot on Australian soil. Most of the

passengers went ashore. It is terribly cold and what we used to call a March Wind to, is blowing with far greater vengeance than it ever blew on the top of Knock-na- veagh.

About seven o’clock an Irish Priest came on board and had a long chat with us, he told us there are four large Churches and a number of Convents here and about 4,000 Catholics. We shall leave Freemantle about eleven o’clock, so we will start for the first time from the Australian Shore.

October 31st

M.M. Bridget got several letters from Brisbane yesterday welcoming herself and M.M. Audeons and their birds of Paradise to the Sunny Land. There was a nice one from The Archbishop Dr. Browne, in which he said that our Fathers and Mothers never gave us a greater welcome than he has in store for us. And the following is a copy of one from our future Sisters at All Hallows:

Dearest Sisters,

“Cead Mille Failthe” to the sunny shores of Australia is our greeting. Right heartily we welcome you - the Religious band of Volunteers who have so nobly given up home and country to labour in this Australian portion of the Master’s Vineyard.

We are sorry that Australia has not on her brightest dress to welcome you - our Irish Sisters to her shores.

King drought has reigned here supreme for many years, and God has not been pleased to hear our prayers for the Tyrants dethronement. But we will try dear Sisters to compensate for our Country’s apparent want of welcome, by doing all in our power to make you feel quite at home amongst us.

Your coming swells a great debt of gratitude to the "Island of Saints". From her infancy Ireland has given her Sons and Daughters to labour in foreign lands for the greater honour and glory of God - To you the latest of these noble daughters God will repay a hundredfold the great sacrifice you have made. He will not be outdone in generosity with you, for each year will add to your peace and happiness in doing His work.

Your "Crown's" (Caps) are already begun and are growing nightly at recreation. We are counting the days till your arrival when we can give you the hearty welcome to our "All Hallows Convent Home" that we have tried to extend to you in this short note.

Again in your own loved language "Cead Mille Failthe".

From The Novices of St. Gertrudes.

There was also a very warm letter of welcome from Rev. Mother and some of the other Sisters.

November 1st - Feast of All Saints

We are in the Australian Bight since 12 o'clock last night and we are surprised this morning the sea is so calm. The lives were almost frightened out of us about this place. It is the most pleasant part of the voyage for we are over our seasickness and able to enjoy ourselves.

We saw a number of Albatrosses flying round the ship to-day. They are larger than Irish sea-gulls. They take salt water in a receptacle and keep it until it becomes crystalized before they drink it. They appear near land only when it is very stormy at sea.

M.M.Bridget gave us a feast to-day in honour of "All Hallows Eve". Nuts,

Oranges, Biscuits, Chocolate etc. We liked it well especially the Chocolate as there is none of that on board.

November 2nd Sunday

The sea is very calm to-day. Last Sunday at the Protestant Service, there was a collection for the Seaman's Orphan Fund from about 200 Protestants they collected £2.10.0. To-day there was a collection at Mass for the same purpose, besides our party there were only about fifteen others and the collection amounted to £3.19.6. When Fr. Corish gave in this they got a shock.

The Chief Engineer gave us a bit of paper with the following notice on it. "Traveller" writes to Modern Society on the subject of the "Model Liner".

I do so often hear complaints of the accommodation on board ship that it may interest you, sea-going readers to learn that a model liner is being constructed according to the following specification:-

Every cabin will be situated in the best part of the ship and will be fitted with two chests of drawers, a bathroom, corkscrew and a muscle developer. Ladies will be given special facilities for curling their hair, and setting the ship on fire at frequent intervals during the twenty-four hours.

In the event of encountering bad weather four quarter-masters will be sent off to stand at each corner of the ship to hold her steady. Hanging tables will be provided for playing billiards and ping pong, and a dance will be held every night on the quarter deck.

The meals will consist of Chotah hazri, early tea, coffee, chocolate; Breakfast commencing with porridge and ending with Bombay Ducks; light luncheon, heavy luncheon, afternoon tea etc. Special arrangements

have been made whereby neither the Captain, Doctor, or Purser have any official duties, but each shall be able to devote his entire time to the Lady passengers.

No Officer is admitted into this service until he has produced a certificate of good looks, a gift for dancing, acting and reciting and a talent for playing the banjo.

It has been found by experience that passengers always know very much better than the Captain or Officers what ought to be done in case of any emergency and they will be accordingly consulted and their decision taken as final. No delay will ever be caused by such as quarantine or the necessity of obtaining pratique and the ridiculous claims of Custom House Officials will be entirely ignored.

November 3rd

Last night was a beautiful moonlight night. Fr. Corish pointed out the Southern Cross to us, I was very glad to see it. I often heard Australia was under the Southern Cross but I did not know what it really meant until now. It is a group of stars in the shape of a cross.

The sea is still very calm, we saw a number of sharks in the water to-day. We passed Kangaroo Point about 12 o'clock. Here like in the Mediterranean are a number of volcanic Islands. We shall be in Adelaide at eleven to-night.

The Passionist Fathers are to leave here. We shall miss them very much during the remainder of the voyage.

November 4th

The Ship was coaling all night, and as there are funnels in some of the Cabins, we did not sleep much. The Ship did not go into Port. I think it anchored about 4 miles outside.

About 11 o'clock we went through the Strait called "Back Stairs Passage". The weather for some time past was very cold but there is dense heat to-day.

The sunset this evening was very nice being a mixture of blue and gold. At home we should look south to see the sun, now we look to the north to see it.

November 5th

About 2 o'clock a Doctor came on board to examine us before reaching Melbourne lest there should be any dangerous disease amongst us. All the Ship Staff were examined first and then the Passengers each on their own deck.

Meantime the Pilot came on board and we are in sight of Melbourne. Long before we reach the pier we can see them waving to their friends and as we get nearer the scene becomes more exciting. The people are actually dancing on the pier.

We are praying that Fr. Corish may not leave us.

He is to be stationed at Melbourne, but has telegraphed for leave to go to Sydney with Fr. O'Neill, as he is too weak to travel by himself. He is suffering from overwrought nerves, and thinks he is going to die every night, but it is hoped the voyage will do him good.

The ship is almost deserted to-night. Most of the passengers are at their destination and others are gone out for the night, so we are having a quiet time.

November 6th

The Ship was being coaled again last night and we did not sleep until 5 this morning. We have a good view of Melbourne and see many things just the same as they are at home. Fr. Corish came back. He will go to Sydney. A number of new passengers came also.

At twelve o'clock we start for the ocean again and the scene on the pier is indescribable, some of our party met their friends there, and all of us are almost as lonely as the morning we left Kingstown. We parted with our companion for Elsternwick about 10 o'clock.

The sea is calm and the air is thick with heat. We got into Bass Strait this evening and so were near land. We saw a number of houses on the coast and as far as we can see the land looks as fresh and green as if it had been raining for months.

It is very dark to-night, the lights on deck had to be put out so that they might be better able to see before them.

November 7th - First Friday

Thank God we are able to get Holy Communion this morning. This is our last day on the Orizaba, we are busy packing our luggage. We shall be in Sydney early to-morrow.

Saturday, 8th November

This is a memorable day for the Brisbane party. We got into Sydney about seven o'clock and had to wait three hours for the Tender to take us to the Brisbane Steamer. But while we wait we are well amused viewing Sydney. It

has the most beautiful harbour in the world. It is impossible to describe the enhancing beauty of the scenery. We feast our eyes on it for about 2 hours. On each side are green hills covered with trees of moderate size and houses built between them. It does not look like a city but like a number of villages next to each other on little hills.

There are steam Launches going to and fro across the harbour with passengers. I cannot find out their proper name. They are made exactly like the trams. I called them water trams and gave the others a good laugh.

At eleven o'clock we left the Orizaba and got on the Inimicha at 11.30. Fr. Corish and Fr. O'Neill came with us to this boat. There were five Nuns on board waiting to see us, one was M.M. Audeon's sister, another was a sister to one of my companions, and imagine the meeting of these sisters.

Meantime dear Fr. Corish is seeing about our luggage and is it not kind of him to stay with us until the boat is about to start. We felt lonely at parting with him, and indeed I think we should, he was so kind to us during the voyage.

We left Sydney at half-past one and if all goes well we shall be in Brisbane early on Monday. There is another Passionist Father on board so I think we are bound to have Priests with us all the way. We find this boat is able to toss about much more than the Orizaba, some of us are very sick. I do not know how I feel, one of my companions came in to the Cabin to see me and gave a great consolation to me by saying: "Good-bye, Ellen Kate, you look rather nervous and ill to be there in the morning, I am sure you will be thrown out during the night, so Good-bye once again. There is a heavy thunderstorm to-night.

Sunday, 9th November

We were surprised this morning when the Stewardess brought us a cup of tea at 6 o'clock. All the same we did not refuse it. This is the first Sunday since we started that we had not Mass. The ship kept very near land during the day. I think that helped to keep off some of the sea-sickness. About 4 p.m. we passed the first part of Queensland and the first welcome we got was thunder, lightning and hail. The coast is nice and green and shrubby.

To-night shall be our last night on sea D.G. We are praying that this night may be the shortest in the year.

Monday, 10th November

The last day on sea has come at last, seven weeks to-day since I left home. I almost say it as seven months. We got up very early this morning as we thought we should be sailing up river at 5 but we had three long hours to wait before the ship entered the river.

This being the King's birthday is a general holiday throughout Australia. When we saw all the flags flying and pleasure streamers coming down the river, we were inclined to think the whole business was in honour of the Irish contingents. When we got a little way up the Brisbane River we saw the flag of Our Lady of Mercy waving high above the others. When we get a little further up we have a good view of the Convent and from the verandahs and every window was a continuous waving which continued until we reached the pier, where we were met by our Dear Rev. Mother, one of the sisters of three Irish Priests who gave us a very warm welcome indeed. The Priests excited themselves finding out how many and which of us were from the different Counties.

In less than 20 minutes we were received with a hearty "Cead Mile Failthe" in our new home. We felt very excited in the midst of so many strange faces. We thought we would never see the end of the Nuns. On account of the holiday most of them were in from the branch houses. As soon as we got inside

All Hallows gates the first thing that met our eyes, was "Cead Mille Failthe" in fine old Irish style on the front of the Convent, and as we go through the Convent we can scarcely rest our eyes on anything else than C. M. F.

During the evening the Archbishop came to welcome us, his Lordship gave us an Irish welcome. He travelled through most of Ireland and was boating in Bantry Bay. He is advanced in years yet he says mass every morning about 6,30 and performs all his other duties as well as if he was only 40 years.

When I got inside the Convent I could do nothing but cry cry. Was it not a shame for me in the midst of so many happy faces; but the scene soon changed when we got our Postulants Uniform, one laughing at another we all looked so changed in one hour, and we spent a very happy evening.

Tuesday, 11th November

We enjoyed a sleep on an unshaky bed last night. It is very warm to-day, but considering the drought that has been here for past years, the place does not look as burnt as we expected.

The Convent is built on an eminence overlooking the river and affording a good view of the whole city. There are twenty branch houses and some of them are over 300 miles from Brisbane.

Our dear Sisters gave us a Musical entertainment to welcome us to Sunny Queensland and our new home. The following is the opening song, which dear Mother will be glad to see:

WELCOME TO QUEENSLAND!

Welcome home! Welcome home! to this fair sunny land
Where we greet you with joy as a heaven-sent band,
For your “safe arrival” all the year we have prayed,
And Good Angels have led where your new work is laid;

In this month of November to Brisbane you’ve come,

And All Hallows is now your new Convent home,

May the blessing of God on your labours descend,

And His love cheer you on till He crowns the bright end;

Welcome home! Welcome home! to this fair sunny land,

Where we greet you with joy as a heaven-sent band,
Your voyage is now over, no longer you roam;

Thank God you are safe in your new Queensland home.

Brisbane is a very nice place though rather quiet for a city. It is beautiful to see so many ships in the river especially at night when they are lit up. The streets are always clean and kept in very good order. The trams run from early morning until late at night. There are some splendid buildings through the city and nearly all the houses have verandahs outside and zinc roofs.

They call the cars, “buggies” out here and the sweets “lollies”.

There are some very nice Moths in Brisbane, entirely unknown in Ireland. Every time we come in contact with them they give us a pinch and leave a big blister as a souvenir of their visit. They call them “Mosquitoes”.

Wednesday, 12th November

The pupils of All Hallows School gave us a concert to-day. A good many Irish airs were played and most of the songs addressed to us. We enjoyed it very well, but the Exile of Erin’s return made us feel a bit lonely.

Tuesday, 18th November 1902

We spent the past week enjoying ourselves and learning something of our new surroundings. To-day I have been out in one of the schools teaching and so have begun to till the little corner allotted to me in my Master’s vineyard, and I hope my dear ones 1300 miles away in Holy Ireland will pray for me each day, that I may be a worthy tiller in the vineyard and draw many souls thereto.

Thank God my cup of happiness is now full. Hoping that it may daily increase for me here in Australia and for my dear friends at home.

Good-bye dear Mother and Father, Sisters and Brothers

In Heaven we all shall meet again

Ellen Kate O’Sullivan.

Give my love to the dear ones at home

Be fleet with this message of love. Bear it o'er the dark ocean's foam;
On the wings of the home-seeking dove, Take my love to the dear ones at
home.

Give my fondest regards to them all, In that old house down close to sea;
Tell them I often recall,

Their love and their kindness to me.

Tell them I think of them yet,

Thou severed by mountains and waves;

Tell them I'll never forget,

The land of my forefather's graves -

The land where the smile and the tear,

Are forever and ever combined;

Where sorrow is sacred and dear,

Where the sigh and the song are entwined,

O take this fond tribute I send,

To the land of the ivy-clad towers;

Where the sunshine and showers ever blend, And the thorns encircle the
flowers.

To green Erin who stands in her gore, A queen with a fresh bleeding brow;
Despoiled of the crown she once wore, A broken, crushed passion flower
now.

Mourning her glories' decay, Grieving for those who have fled; Weeping
her sad life away,

For the purest, her noblest are dead,

Then take to the Isle of the West, This message of love the most dear; And
say 'tis the fondest, the best, An exile's affection sincere.

But perhaps, they remember no more,

A name which they knew long ago;

The days when they loved may be over, One whom they used to know.

Oh! tell them that I, too, was there, In the days of my youthful delight;
That I joined in their eventide prayer, That I sat by their fireside at night.

That my own Island home far away,

In the distance more beautiful seems; Oh tell them my thoughts often
stray, To the land I revisit in dreams.

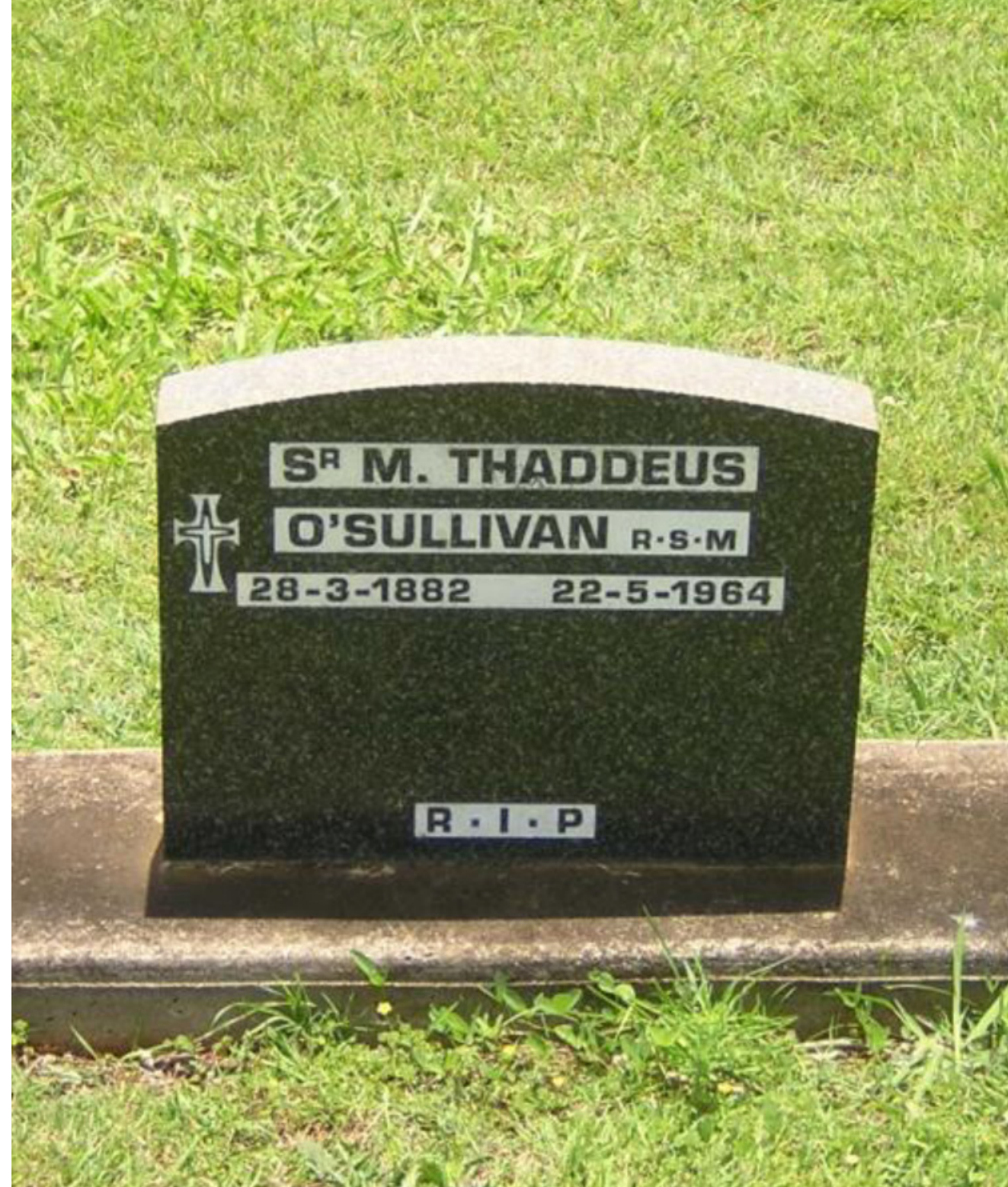
Then take the fond token I give,

Over valley and mountains and wave; Tell them as long as I live,

I'll return the love which they gave,

E. K. O'Sullivan

Ellen Kate O Sullivan is buried in the graveyard
of the Mercy Convent at Nudgee Cemetery Brisbane Australia.

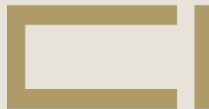




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