

Crompton Letters

by Con Rutter

Some years ago Mr Con Rutter had acquired the “Crompton” archive and he kindly sent me the letters relating about Malta for publication. Mr Rutter went to great pains to decipher the near illegible handwriting and type them. Unfortunately because of lack of space I was unable to reproduce his contribution until now - my apologies.

There are letters for the period 11 December 1824 to March 1826 describing his journey through Italy-Sicily-Malta-Egypt-Syria.

I am publishing four letters written by H. Crompton, three written on the 2nd March 1825 to his father Joshua Crompton, one to his sister Miss Crompton while in Malta and one from Alexandria written on the 20th March to his brother Robert.

Our Crompton was a relative of the Lancashire Crompton who was the inventor of “Crompton’s Mule” for the wool industry.

In the 19th century the “Cromptons” developed the “Electric Light Bulb” and other electrical devices.

From these letters it transpires that the family had three different residencies namely: Micklegate House - York, Esholt Hall - North Bradford and Azerliy Hall - North _____, all in Yorkshire (Editor).

Itinerary of Mr H. Crompton from letters dated between 11th December 1824 and 10th March 1826 during his journey to the Middle East.

		Addressed to:-	Archival No.
London	11th December 1824	Miss M.F. Crompton, Esholt Hall, Bradford.	1
Calais	17th December 1824	Miss Mary Crompton, Esholt Hall, Bradford.	2
Paris	24th December 1824	Joshua Crompton Esq., Esholt Hall, Bradford.	4
Lyon	28th December 1824	Miss Crompton, Esholt Hall, Bradford.	5
Rome	25th January 1825	Miss Crompton, York, via Paris.	7
Messina	10th February 1825	Miss Crompton, Micklegate, York.	9
Malta	2nd March 1825	Joshua Crompton Esq., Micklegate, York.	10
Malta	2nd March 1825	Joshua Crompton Esq., Micklegate, York.	11
Malta	2nd March 1825	Miss Crompton, Micklegate, York.	12

Alexandria	20th March 1825	Robert Crompton Esq., Esholt Hall, Bradford, redirected York.	13
Cairo	13th April 1825	Joshua Crompton Esq., Esholt Hall, Bradford.	14
Cairo	16th May 1825	Joshua Crompton Esq., Esholt Hall, Bradford.	15
Smyrna	13th January 1826	Joshua Crompton Esq., York.	18
Corfu	10th March 1826	Rookes Crompton Esq., Esholt Hall, Bradford, re-directed via Malta, and again to Micklegate, York.	

The first letter from Hotel Victory in Malta (10th in Archive), written on the 2nd March 1825 describes in great detail his passage through Sicily and his intention to go to Egypt and Syria. There are only two small references to Malta:-

- 1) that mail from Italy to Malta is “so uncertain that one may almost as soon receive a letter from England when the packets are regula:-”.
- 2) “the Malta mail is made up in London the first Tuesday in every month, and it leaves Falmouth the first Friday”.

The second letter from Malta (No.11 in the archive), also dated 2nd March 1825, also describes in great detail his journey through Sicily from Scaletta to Catania and his trip up the mountain to see the Volcano Etna.

The third letter also from Malta (12th in archive) continues to describe his trip to Mount Etna. His departure from Catania and his stay in Malta, which is being reproduced:-

“From the top of Mount Etna I could plainly see Malta, which is unusual.”

“We agreed with the captain of a ‘Speronara’ to take us to Malta for 20 crowns, the 3 persons 1-12-6 nearly in Sicilian money, 1-8 in English. Manway was no use this first day.”

“By daybreak, we saw Malta, but the wind dying. Even though we had 7 rowers, we did not enter the celebrated harbour till past sunset, when it was too late for Pratique. We were obliged to pass another night on board.

Early in the morning we were released, and found ourselves comfortable in an English Inn, having greater comforts than any place since I left England.

I find I have a little room for my ‘proceedings’ in this place, but I must give you some little idea of the Island.

We enter the Grand Harbour, having to your right the Fort of St. Elmo, and to the left that of Ricasoli, to the strong fortifications; as you advance, the Fort of St. Angelo stands quite opposite, having 4 tiers of guns ready to blow up a fleet if one should enter. It is supposed that no Naval Force whatever could stand a few hours before these tremendous bastions which are on all sides.

Two small Creeks run down to the left of St. Angelo, where are the Government Docks and the moorings for the Merchant Vessels. The flagship 'The Revenge' is here, also the Euryalus Frigate which is commanded by Captain Clifford, brother to the Duke of Devonshire, he is very ill, not likely to recover.

The Medina (?), the Hinde, the Chanticleer, the Alacrity are also here. Windyard, who was in the Revenge but who leaves for England soon, has promised to carry me a parcel containing some seeds. Let some of them be sown of each sort, but not all. I have collected them from all parts.

The Quarantine Harbour is at the other side of Fort St. Elmo, quite removed from the town.

The town of Valletta and Floriana which is a suburb, is quite, I believe, impregnable. The walls are cut out of solid rock, and to the person even ignorant of Fortifications, have a most imposing appearance! We have not men on the Island to man one twentieth part of the works, to do so properly would require 60,000 men; we have about 1,500. But as I have not paper for a description, I will give you a little of our proceedings.

We had some Letters of Introduction to different persons which we delivered and also left our Cards on the Marquis of Hastings.

On the 23rd, the next day, Dr Wilson the 'Maynard's' (?) personal Secretary, called on us with the Marquis' compliments, and asked us to dinner that day. We went and had a very pleasant party. There was a large party afterwards and Marquis and Marchioness introduced us to numbers of persons and on this account I think we experienced such marked civility from all persons on the Island. The Marchioness, who is supposed by the Inhabitants to be so remarkably proud, we found civil in the extreme.

24th. We had a letter of Invite from Sir Manly Pavers, the Commander of the forces here. For the next day (we spent, in view of the different (?) Posts) the two Blanes direct with the Major de Bathe, they had a letter to him. If she had been well enough to have seen any person, I should have also called, but she is in wretched health, so thin as to be perfect skin and bone.

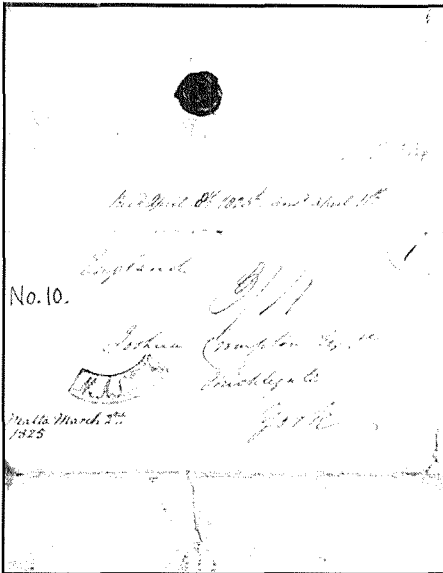
25th. Went to visit the Revenge. Windyard showed us the whole, highly pleased. She is one of the newly constructed vessels with round Stern, and is considered the finest in the Navy.

Afterwards, went to see the Euryalus come home for to '_____' for Sir Manly Pavers. After, went to a very pleasant Ball given by Col. and Mrs Gardner, where we saw all the belles of the place.

26th. After viewing more sights, went to call on the Officers of the 85 who had all left their names. Dined at home and went to the Opera, which is good. It was a benefit night.

Sunday, 27th. After Church, went to the Public Library, to which we had been without. It is a good collection and they also take in the Papers. Saw the speech in 'Gal ____' 'next ____', which I thought was fine and manly. Dined with Mr Ross, the Principal '____' in this place.

28th. We spent most of this day in preparing for our Journey. We were invited to dine with Captain Bayley who has an office under Government. I and Mr Blane refused as we were so busy, the Captain went, and found only a Stupid Party.



First Letter from Malta, 2nd March, 1825

March 1st. The morning spent in Roving (?) and walking about. Mrs Blance and help dined with the 85 and had a delightful party. I found an old Harrow Man who I knew, Captain Yorke, he has been in the Greek Station 2 years and is going again. He offered to take us, as also did Lord John Churchill, who commanded the Hinde. They both sail soon, one for the coast of Smyrna, the other for the 'morea' off Cape Matapan.

I should have liked much to have been able to join them. In the evening, went to Major and Mrs Fox's Party. They had asked us to dinner, which we refused by before engaged this by Captain Blane, I asked for Corfu.

Major Fox is Lord Holland's son, and Mrs was one of the Miss 'T___' Clarences, they are very pleasing persons.

When we returned, found two invites, one from the Palace, one for dinner on the 3rd and

the other a party for the '___', the former we were obliged to refuse, as we were engaged to Mrs President (?), the Head of the Law here.

3rd. We dined at home, having refused the invites. In the evening, went to the Palace and was told by all persons that we had committed a great breach of etiquette by refusing the Marquis, as all other parties gave way. However it was lucky it was so, as the Marquis told me he was sorry and if we could fix a day before our Departure he would be most happy to see us. I told him we were disengaged Friday and that day he sent us an invite.

The party tonight was not so good as one as usual. I dined with Mr President 'Wright' (?) where we met all the 'Learning' (?) of the Island, and a very pleasant party afterwards.

4th. Went to see the Gardens at Antonio also the Cetta Vecchia and Boschetto. The gardens of the Palace of Antonio are beautiful. We had an order from the Marchioness, who while we were there arrived and showed them respect. She gave me the melon seeds which I have sent home.

This Palace is the Country House of the Governor, 4 miles from Valletta. We had a very pleasant party at dinner at the Palace. In the evening, she showed us the whole of her Indian Sketches, which are all well worth seeing, they are not of her drawing but by artists who she employed. The extreme kindness that they both have shown is so singular that I do not understand it. On taking leave tonight they shook hands with us in the most cordial manner, and the Marquis presented me with a book, the History of his administration in India. I have not in the least exaggerated his civility, nor near mentioned all.

Today, the 5th, we were to dine with Mr 'Frere' (?) and Lady Erroll, but as we expect to sail by 4 in the afternoon, we refused.

I shall be sorry to quit a place where we have been so kindly treated.

The climate at present is delightful, but soon it will be hot. I wish I had not sent your

money to Rookes. I would have bought you two Maltese chains and hope Blane has done so for his sisters, I am not so with.

I must now end and I have not half room to give my best love and remembrances to you all. My father must accept my very best love, and to you all separately and conjunctively.

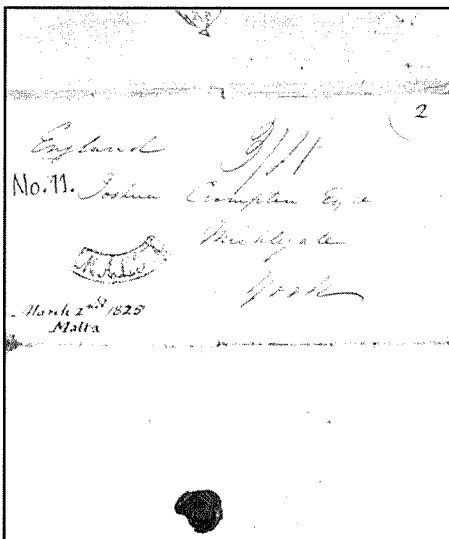
I can assure you I send you my very best and give my love to Robert Rookes, Emma, Caroline, Maria Preston and the two brats, and all who are not at home. I wish you to remember me also to my Uncle and Aunt Gilbert and the Hartfords family and all I know in York or elsewhere. Give my remembrances to Matison (?) and Brockhill, tell her such as him will certainly run no 'rigging' (?). God bless you all. Write to me at Cairo, as directed. You will hear from me soon. I remain, your ever affectionate brother.

(signed) **H. Crompton.**

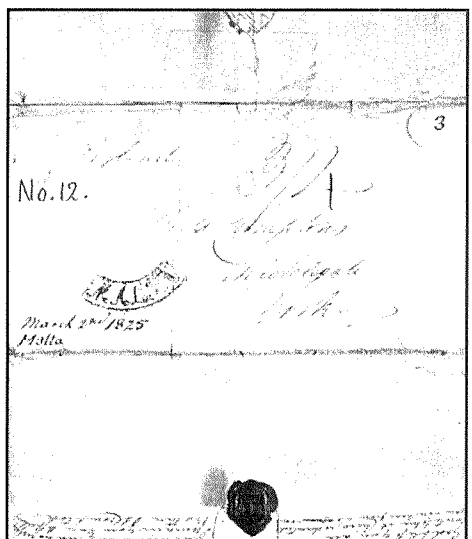
The fourth letter (No.13 in the Archives) was written on the 20th March from Alexandria. In this letter he describes his departure from Malta, saying:

"My letters at Malta brought me to Saturday the 5th March, but we did not sail that afternoon as expected, as the Captain could not get part of his cargo ready, this was provoking as we were to have dined with Mr Frere and Lady Errol, and there was Miss Blake to have been there, the super extra belle of Malta.

Only think what we lost, however I easily got over the disappointment and in the morning of Sunday the 6th, we left the Harbour of Valletta, about twelve or one, just after Church. Numbers of persons came to see us leave the shore, for the vessel which was ready to receive us off the Fort of Ricasoli. We were at least, I speak for myself, sorry to leave so hospitable a place, and I could not help fancying, we were leaving all that was civilised far behind to the westward, when under a favourable breeze, we left rapidly the small island of Malta."



Second Letter from Malta, 2nd March, 1825



Third Letter from Malta, 2nd March, 1825