

1894

HMS Thrush



January 2nd to 7th

Durban. Crossed the bar and preceded into harbour. In the evening we had the plumduff for dinner, which I have brought from England and which turned out excellent

January 3rd

Mail – Durban. The mail arrived today and I found one letter from home (Dec 6th), which I was very glad to get, this being the first news since leaving England. Landed at about 2:00 PM and preceded by a 'ricksha' to the Durban Club, which we are made honorary members of. Durban has no cabs, but their place is supplied by 'rickshas' which are something like a bathchair with two bicycle wheels. These are drawn at a trotting speed by a n....., and the distance they run without stopping is very wonderful. They hire their caps for the day and make what they can from the fairs.

January 7th

Depart Durban – beard. We left Durban about noon for Chinde River. As this appeared about the last civilised place we would like to be at for some time, I resolved to take the opportunity of growing a beard.

January 12th

Chinde River. Anchored off Chinde River [*note – Chinde is a town at the mouth of the Chinde River which is one of the tributaries of the Zambezi River in Mozambique*] early in the morning. The bar at the entrance was too shallow to cross today so we had to wait outside all day and night and rolled considerably. It was also raining heavily nearly the whole day which made things very uncomfortable as we had to shut everything up and the heat became intense down below.

January 13th

Chinde. Proceeded over the bar early in the morning and anchored in the mouth of the Chinde River off the settlement. Found in here the two stern wheeled river gunboats, 'Mosquito' and 'Herald', which were built about 3 years ago in England and put together out here for the protection of British interests on the river and African lakes. The Consul and other English people live in the concession [*note - Mozambique was a Portuguese colony but Britain was given the Chinde Concession in 1891 as a trading post and to load ships with goods coming from the British Central Africa Protectorate*]. The Portuguese appeared to manage affairs very badly and treat the natives, who belong mostly to the Kaffir and Zulu tribes [*Kaffir was used to refer principally to members of the Nguni tribes*], in a shameful manner, the result being that they try to get under our protection when possible. In the evening droves of mosquitoes came off to the ship. At dinner the table was covered with them and there was little sleep for anyone in the night as they bit everyone furiously. We also had winged ants and various other insects visited us.



HMS Mosquito and HMS Herald moored near Chiromo
(<https://zimfieldguide.com/manicaland/dr-james-johnston%E2%80%99s-account-journey-across-africa-part-5-5-massi-kessi-chinde-mission>)

January 14th

Shooting. Browell and myself got leave to go shooting. We took Martini Henry rifles with us as our intention being to try to get some reedbuck. We steamed straight up the river for about 6 miles and had the opportunity of seeing the country. We kept a good lookout for crocodile but did not see any. The river abounds with them, especially a little higher up, and it's absolutely dangerous to get in the water. Landed about 6 miles up in a sort of plain where there were few trees. After walking about 3 miles through thick grass and water up to the knees, the boy soon spotted some buck and I got in amongst them, but they were some distance off. I fired several shots but only succeeded, I believe, in wounding one of them, which got away. After this, wandered about one and a half hours and had some shots at long distances, but they took no effect. At last I came across Lindsay who had shot one beauty which his boy was disembowelling. The two boys shouldered the buck between them and carried it right back to the boat, which was no easy matter as it must have weighed 3cwt [*note – about 150kg*] at least. On return to the boat we shoved off and went for a trip up the river. Had several shots at hippopotamus but could not see whether we hit them or not as the hippopotamus disappeared. Landed at a native village consisting of two or three grass huts. They were certainly well made and held an upper room with a hard board for a bed and a curious wooden pillow which I managed to buy. Fetched up at Chinde Settlement about 7:00 PM and returned on board about 10:30 PM.

January 19th

Departure Chine River. Weighed at 9:45 AM and preceded down the river and anchored again at the entrance whilst the captain and Browell went away to sound the bar. Weighed again at 2:30 PM. The captain resolved to go out and make the attempt at crossing the bar. We certainly did manage it but bumped several times. As the swell rolled in we descend very heavily on our after part which shook the ship up in an alarming manner. By going full speed however, we just managed to go ahead and eventually passed. If we should have stuck it would have been a 'case' as the heavy rollers would probably have soon shaken the ship to pieces.

January 22nd to 23rd

At Mozambique

January 26th to February 3rd

At Zanzibar

January 28th

The city. Went ashore about 5:00 PM and had a look at the city. The streets are very narrow and irregular. In some parts they cannot be more than 8 feet wide, on the other hand, the population appeared enormous and the mystery to me was where they stowed themselves. It was very hot and the narrowness of the streets did not admit of free ventilation. The inhabitants consist of Arabs, Banyans (Parsees), Jews, and N***** of various descriptions. The Banyans of the wealthiest people and own most of the clove plantations for which Zanzibar is noted.

January 31st

Inspection. Captain Campbell came aboard again about 6:00 AM to inspect the ship in drills, etc. We 'prepared for actions aloft', exercised 'collision stations'. 'Fire and General Quarters' and 'Man and arm boats', etc; all in about one and a quarter hours. We really started one thing before the other was finished which made things somewhat confusing.

February 4th

Depart Zanzibar. Weighed at about 9:00 AM and preceded to Chaki Chaki, Pemba Island where we arrived in the evening. Boarded a dhow on the way, but she was all right, there being no signs of slaves in her.

February 5th and 19th

Anti-slavery patrol. Anti-slavery patrol including one week in the steam cutter away from the ship.

February 20th

A murder. Up to Weti. As the captain had to investigate some murder there, a native collector of taxes being hanged on a tree. They arrested two men on suspicion but they were subsequently released.

February 22nd to March 2nd

At Zanzibar

February 23rd

Anniversary of Sultan of Zanzibar's accession to throne. Today being the anniversary of the succession to the throne of HH the Sultan of Zanzibar, a general holiday was proclaimed ashore. Dressed ship in honour of the occasion and in the forenoon landed all our available men to form, with the 'Philomels' part of the guard of honour. The ships in port and the guns ashore fired salutes and the band played the national anthems of England and Zanzibar whilst the presentations were being made. It was all over by about 11:15 AM and I was very glad as we kept standing so long and the heat was rather trying. *[note – Sultan Hamad bin Thuwaini died under suspicious circumstances in 1896 and was succeeded by Sultan Khalad bin Barghash which triggered the Anglo-Zanzibar War that lasted about 40 minutes]*

February 25th

The Affray Bathurst. Received the sad news of the affray at Bathurst (on the West Coast) between men of the 'Raleigh', 'Widgeon', 'Magpie' and 'Alecto' (and of the deaths of several officers) and the Mandingo Tribes headed by the slave raiding chief Jodi Silah. They had captured 2 stockaded villages and were returning to the boats when they were suddenly attacked. *[note – Bathurst (now Banjul) is the capital of Gambia]*

March 2nd

To Pemba Island. Left Zanzibar in the afternoon to proceed to Pemba and cruise about there until received by the 'Sparrow' having orders to keep boats away cruising, looking for the slave dhows.

March 3rd to April 7th

Duty. Anti slavery patrol duties both on board and in the steam cutter on independent operations. *[note – without success]*

April 8th to 26th

At Zanzibar.

April 9th

A death. We received the sad news in the forenoon that Barnes, Leading Stoker, who was sent hospital suffering from dysentery when we were last here, had died. He was recovering from his illness when he got an attack of the fever which, acting on his weakened condition, killed him very soon.

May 11th to 12th

At Mombasa.

May 21st to June 14th

At Zanzibar.

May 24th

75th birthday of HM the Queen. Dressed the ship at 8:00 AM. The landing party for the review unfortunately had to be postponed owing to the heavy rain. Went with Captain and Sturgess to the Consulate in the evening to a reception given by Mr Cracknall [*note - Acting Consulate General*]. There were a great many people present of all nationalities, including a few Arabs. Supper was provided with plenty of liquid, and afterward the Sultan's band played dance music on the balcony to which we danced, but owing to the scarcity of the fair sex, had to provide our own male partners.

June 15th to 24th

Cruising off coast

June 25th to July 9th

At Zanzibar

June 29th

Death of French President. Last Tuesday (25th) news was received of the death of the French President Carnot. He was assassinated in a most cowardly manner by an Anarchist while in his carriage at Lyon. He was stabbed in the region of the liver and died some hours afterwards. Today we celebrated the anniversary of the Queen's coronation (28th) by dressing the ship at 8:00 AM.

July 2nd

Mail. The mail arrived in the morning and I received the photographs of the memorial in the Chapel of Saint Mary's, Warwick, erected to the memory of our dear Father, which certainly looks beautiful. Felt unwell in the evening and turned in early, having, as I afterwards found, a slight touch of fever.

July 4th

Fever (first time). In the afternoon I saw Doctor Brooch who found I had a fever again and so I went on the sick list and turned in. In the evening, my temperature went up to 103.4 Fahrenheit. Laid up until 8th of July.

July 13th to 23rd

At Mombasa. For the Cape of Good Hope and East Coast Squadron Regatta, (16th and 17th). Ships present: HMS Raleigh, HMS Philomel, HMS Swallow, HMS Thrush and HMS Sparrow.

July 24th

Fever (second time). Arrived Zanzibar at about 4:30 PM. I began to feel unwell again during the day, with every symptom of more fever. Laid up with fever until 2nd of August

July 29th to August 27th

At Mombasa.

August 14th

Fever again (third time). Went on the sick list again in the evening with another attack of fever, this being the third time. Laid up until 24th of August.

August 29th

Fever (fourth time). Had to go on the sick list again having another attack of fever. Laid up with fever until 6th September.

September 9th

Fever (fifth time). In the evening I felt bad again and eventually had to go on the sick list with my fifth attack of fever. Laid up until 28th of September [*note – almost three weeks*]. Towards the latter end I got a little better at time but it did not last and I was generally rather ill, but sometimes able to get up for a short time in the afternoon.

September 29th

Invalided to Cape. As I was very little better and getting in a very low state, the doctor decided to invalid me down to the Cape in her [*note – United SS Pretoria*] so as to get away from the non-malarial climate [*note - left on 30th*].

October 1st

Arrived Durban. I already felt much better and apparently the fever has left me. I had the first attack on July the 2nd. I have therefore been ill for three months.

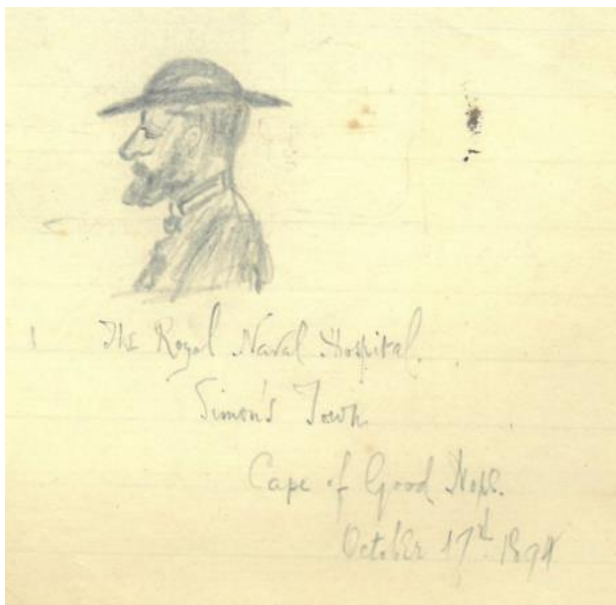
October 9th

Simon's Bay. Arrived Simon's Bay via East India as her east London. Port Elizabeth and Mosel Bay and Cape Town.

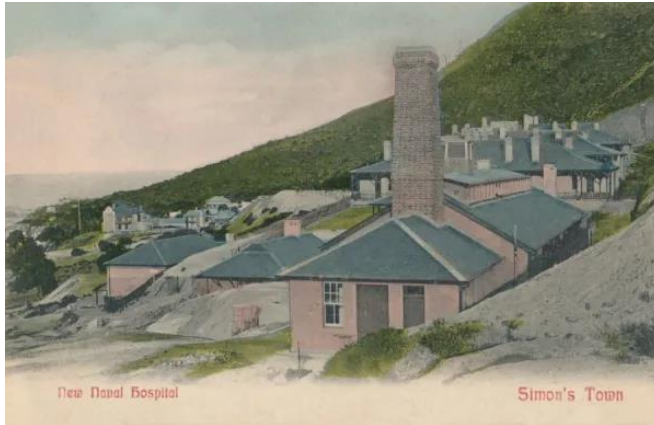


October 10th

Admitted to RN Hospital Simon's Town. I got a cab to the hospital and on arrival was examined by Doctor Anderson (Fleet surgeon), ordered to bed and put on 'low diet'. I was not at all well today for the first time since leaving 'Thrush' [note – CT was well again and allowed to get up on 11th of October].



Sketch by CT



October 26th

Fainting fit and results. In the evening, through some cause I must have fainted. I was writing at the time it happened and remembered nothing whatever about it. I must have tumbled out of my chair and I was found insensible under the bed in an agitated state of mind and vomiting and shouting freely. I could not eat or answer any questions and remained unconscious all through the night. The Fleet Surgeon was sent for from a concert and I was turned in and had various mustard plaisters ice bag, etc applied. A Marine was engaged from 'Penelope' as nurse to keep watch on me with Gardner, the sick bay man. The Admiral was told of my illness.

October 27th to 28th

Illness. Still unconscious and remain so all day and night but I began to get more sensible on Sunday morning and by evening was conscious again.

October 29th to 31st

Illness. Progressing favourably and getting stronger.



A sketch by CT dated 2nd November 1894, whilst he was suffering from malaria.

November 3rd

Illness. I was put on half diet again and am now considered much better. I learned that the attack of last Friday night was chiefly owing to my very bad state of health and weakness. The result of this disability was the faint, and I must have fallen on my head, as the doctor says I had ‘concussion of the brain’. [Note - The following was noted by the author on 15th February 1900] “This ‘faint’ and ‘concussion of the brain’ and ‘general debility’, I subsequently found out was very nearly the cause of my death. In fact, on the 27th my life was despaired of.”

November 5th

Recovery. Progressing favourably.

November 7th

Emily's engagement and appointment to HMS Grafton. The Englishman mail arrived and by it I was delighted to receive a letter from Emily (sister) telling me the news of her engagement to Mr Morley, son of the Reverend G Morley, ‘Master’ of Leycester's Hospital, Warwick. I also heard I was appointed to HMS Grafton for passage to England. It surprised me very much as I expected to be invalided, not having been on the station for over 18 months.

November 8th to 23rd

Recovery. Recovering in RN Hospital, Simon's town.

November 24th

Left hospital. Discharged from hospital after being there for over six weeks. Owing to the recommendation of the Fleet Surgeon to the Admiral, I was discharged on leave for a week.

November 26th to 30th

Sick leave. At Coggil's Hotel at Wynberg on sick leave.





HMS Grafton

November 30th

Joined HMS Grafton. HMS Grafton is a first class cruiser of the 'Royal Arthur' class built under the Naval Defence Act of 1889 by Thames Ironworks Company. She is 7350 tons and 10,000 horsepower and her armament is as follows, two 9.2 inch BL – one on the fore part and one aft on Quarter Deck, six 6 inch QF on upper deck and four on the main deck in casemates 6pdr QF Hotchkiss, 3pdr QF Hotchkiss Nordenfelts and Maxim guns. Two submerged torpedo tubes for 8 inch Whiteheads and two ordinary torpedo tubes also for 18th Whiteheads.



December 8th

Depart for England. Admiral Bedford visited the ship in the forenoon and shook hands with us all before leaving. Slipped from the bouy at 11:00 AM and steamed out of Simon's Bay with the long pennant flying and the strains of 'Auld Lang Syne' etc from the band of 'Raleigh'. Cheered ship. Rounded the Cape at 3:00 PM

December 16th

Crossed the line. Crossed the equator, rather curiously, I crossed it on Saturday the 15th in the 'Gaul' outward last year.

December 22nd to 24th

At Las Palmas. Sighted Gran Canaria about noon and arrived off Las Palmas about 4:30 PM. The pilot took us inside the mole [*note – does he mean The Muelle Reina Sofia, the dock*] where we anchored with both bowers about 5:00 PM and made all arrangements for coaling tomorrow.

December 29th

Arrive in England. Eddystone lighthouse was sighted at about 10:00 AM and at 11:30 we anchored inside Plymouth breakwater. The ship being under sailing orders, no leave was granted.

December 30th

Depart Plymouth. Left Plymouth at 11:30 AM for Sheerness.

December 31st

Arrived at Sheerness. It was bitterly cold passing through the Downs, blowing from the north eastward. Arrived off the Nore at 4:00 PM and made fast to number 9 buoy off Sheerness about 4:30 PM.