

1899

## HMS Archer

January 1st to 31st

**In Singapore**

February 6th

**Weight.** For the next five days, I walked out to the Sepoy Lines and played a round or two of golf, running back afterwards about 1.5 miles to the pier to try to reduce my weight which seems to increase rapidly in this climate.

February 20th

**Inspection.** The day fixed for the inspection of the 'Archer'. Captain Sir E Chichester (Bart) was the inspecting officer. He came on board about 9:30 AM, the men being fallen in at Divisions, the marines forming a guard. He first walked round the divisions and then inspected the ship on deck and below, after which we were mustered by 'Open List'. Then drills consisting of General Quarters, Collision, Man and Arm Boats, and Fire Stations. Soon afternoon, his boat was sent for and he left, but before going over the gangway he expressed to Captain Dare his satisfaction on the efficient state of the ship and her cleanliness and said she was very creditable to officers and men, which remarks gave me great satisfaction.

February 24th

**Inspection report.** The captain read the Inspection Report to the men after Divisions. It could not have been better. Captain Chichester remarked that "the men were clean, healthy, smart and well dressed, the ship very clean and efficient and great credit due to officers and men, drills smartly and well performed, the men knowing their duties and stations and the absence of noise noticeable". Altogether most complimentary. The captain was very pleased, and I was especially so, as it may do me a good turn.

February 25th

**Notice for sea.** Whilst at lunch I received a mysterious note from the Captain, who was ashore, upon opening which I discovered that we were to prepare for sea in the afternoon and leave tomorrow, destination not divulged by him. Much speculation as to where we are going. No one appeared to mind too much, as we were tired of Singapore, but in spite of the fact that the 'Brisk' (our relief) is expected hourly.

## February 26th

**Depart for Palarran Island - Uncle.** We were told to wait for a mail for Palarran [*note – Palawan, Philippines*] which we now found out was our destination. It appears that our hurried departure is in consequences of a telegram having been received by the Governor from Lord Salisbury, stating that the British flag had been hoisted at Port Royalist Palarran, at the request of the natives. We were told to find out by whose authority was hoisted and on occasion it to be hauled down, the island (which is one of the Philippines) having been turned over by Spain to America after the late war. We were fortunate in receiving our mails, in which I learnt, with much satisfaction that I am now an Uncle, my sister Emily [*note – Morley*] having been presented with the son in Assam. He was born on the 28th last [*note - Edward Streatfield Morley*].

## February 26th to March 5th

### Passage

### March 5th

**Arrive in Port Royalist.** Land was sighted in the Morning Watch for which we bore down and shaped course for Port Royalist [*note – now Puerto Princesa*], arriving and anchoring off the settlement around 11:00 AM. Contrary to our expectations we found that there was a considerable village with a church and several comfortable looking houses. We have been led to understand that there was nothing but a few huts, but we have no record of the place since 1853, in which year HMS Royalist surveyed the bay and gave it the name. As we came in, a party of natives assembled on the pier and hoisted the British flag (a red ensign) no doubt thinking thereby that they were pleasing us, not having any knowledge of our errand. After launch three men came off to see the captain, one of them calling himself the President. They said they were in a very sorry plight, the settlement, since the departure of the Spanish regiment, having been ransacked by ‘bad men from the hills’ so that they lived in danger of their lives. Upon the arrival of the steamer called the ‘Labuan’ they had asked her captain to allow them to hoist the British flag as it was the only one under which they felt secure. To this he had consented, and it was duly hoisted, but it was not justified, as he had no authority to grant this privilege. Captain Dare told them politely but firmly, that they must haul it down and this was done as soon as they landed, and therefore our mission was ended. I landed in the settlement and upon strolling around, was much struck with an absolute chaos and deserted appearance of the place. It appears that the Spanish had a Garrison here, but as soon as the island was ceded to America, the troops with were withdrawn and the ‘bad men’ looted right and left and smashed everything breakable. They even tore up the flooring, I suppose for building huts. Curiously enough, the church into which I went was untouched, but there had evidently been no service since the Spanish left (December), and the trees were growing through the windows.

## March 7th

**Pangolin - depart from Port Royalist.** In the forenoon and native brought off a pangolin or scaly anteater, which one of the Chinese thought to take to Singapore, where it is esteemed a cure for consumption if made into soup. However, I rescued it by buying it from him with a view to presenting it to the Singapore Gardens. It is a curious animal, scales being said to be closely fused hairs. At 1:30 PM we got underweigh and left Port Royalist, not without regret as we should have liked to explore the surroundings fully.

## March 10th

**Coaling at Port Victoria, Labuan Island.** *[note – Labuan is a Malaysian island off the north coast of Borneo]*

## March 14th to 18th

### At Singapore

## March 15th

**Pangolin.** The paymaster kindly took the Pangolin to the Botanic Gardens, where they were very pleased to receive it.

## March 16th

**Death of Penguin.** In the afternoon, I went out to the gardens to see the Penguin, but was sorry to find that the poor beast had died. It was probably owing to an unaccustomed diet, for these beasts live almost exclusively on ants, which stick to the prehensile tongue, and it has practically no teeth. I could only provide him with cockroaches and rice etc, and this may have disagreed with him. After satisfying myself that he was gone, I walked back to town.

## End Volume V - Start of volume VI

## March 18th

**Homeward bound.** The close of Volume V of my journal also marked the end of the service of the 'Archer' on the China station, for we Leave Singapore 'homeward bound' today. In consequence of our intended departure this afternoon, a long paying off pennant with a golden bladder at the end, was hoisted with the colours at 8:00. During the day all our Chinese servants were discharged to the 'Immortalite'. Their loss to us is very great, for they make such excellent stewards and cooks, and we have no one to replace them excepting a man who came out in the 'Brisk' as steward, but who is apparently no use. At 5:00 PM, at which time I reported 'ready for sea', it came on to pour with rain, such rain indeed, that we had never seen before, even in Singapore,

which is saying a good deal. In spite of it, we got underweigh and steamed slowly towards the 'Immortalite' to give the rain a chance of stopping before we reached her. Luckily it lulled and we at once man the rigging and cheered ship, the men of the Immortalite also giving us a very hearty send off, responding lastly to our prolonged cheers, their band at the same time playing 'Rolling Home' and 'Home Sweet Home'.

## March 26th to 30th

**At Colombo.** We were ready for sea soon after 8:00, but we were delayed at the last minute through the absence of one of the marines, who it appears had more than was good for him last night at the soldiers' barracks and so did not come off. He will be disagreeably surprised when he finds the ship left without him. We weighed about 8:45, having transferred his kit to the Melpomme, where he will probably have to serve for a year until she pays off instead of going home with us.

## April 9th to 15th

**At Aden.** In the morning we caught another dolphin which gave us fresh fish for breakfast. In my morning watch we sighted land which proved to be Aden. About 1:00 PM we anchored off the town of Steamer Point just ahead of the 'Raccoon'. There is no doubt that Aden does not improve with acquaintance. It is a wilderness of cinders and sand with nothing to relieve the eye in the way of green stuff. A prolong stay would be enough to finish a man, I should think, although the climate is very healthy.

## April 15th to 22nd

### Passage to Suez

## April 23rd

**Passage of Suez Canal.** Underweigh at 6:00 AM and soon afterwards entered the Suez Canal. We had to proceed at the unorthodox speed of a little over 5 knots, which was very different from our passage through in the 'Fame'. Arrived at Port Said about 11:00 PM.

## April 26th

### To Port Said

## May 1st to 3rd

**At Malta.** The barren looking island of Malta was sighted about 8:30 and soon afterwards. HMS Anson carrying out with their firing. About 11:00 AM we entered the Grand Harbour and were told by the flagship to anchor and make our stern fast to the marina (Valetta) a most unusual position for a man-of-war but the harbour is so

crowded with the fleet that there is no other place. The fleet is a grand sight. There were present 10 battleships alone and many cruisers and gunboats.

## May 8th to 13th

**At Gibraltar.** Sighted the 'Rock' about 5:30 AM and arrived off the Mole at 8:00. The Channel Fleet were assembled here. There were four new cruises, 'Niobe' and 'Diadem' (with four funnels), and the 'Furious' and 'Arrogant' (with three funnels), in addition to six battleships and some smaller ships altogether a fine demonstration of the country's strength.

## May 18th

**Arrival home.** Just on the stroke of noon the Eddystone was sighted right ahead and so we made an excellent landfall. Everyone was very pleased to see the old familiar mark again. About 1:30 we made fast to a buoy inside the breakwater. We were also still more pleased to hear that we were to go up harbour, which we did at 4:15 making fast to a buoy off North Corner. Discharged all supernumeraries here of which there were a good many from the different ships we have met on our voyage home

## May 19th to 22nd

**Admiral's inspection - 48 hours leave.** Started early preparing for the Admiral's inspection which takes place today. The Admiral arrived on board at 9:30. He first walked around the upper deck inspecting the divisions. He said he was particularly pleased with the appearance of the men, observing that much attention seemed to have been paid to uniform. He afterwards went down below and saw the magazines, storerooms, etc, at which he seemed pleased. The divisional drills, general quarters, etc, were much spoilt by rain, but he commented on the cutlass drill by the stokers, remarking that they performed it better than any he has ever seen. The whole thing was over soon after 11:00, and before going he, made a speech to the men saying that he was extremely pleased with the ship and wished them a pleasant leave etc. Altogether it was most gratifying. I made up my mind to ask for 48 hours leave to go home. This was granted till Monday morning and so I caught the 4:15 train from North Road. At Knole I was most surprised to find Oliver had most kindly come to meet me. He brought some whisky and soda with him which was very thoughtful, and we had a split on the way to Warwick where we arrived at 12:15 AM.

## May 20th

**Mother.** On getting home I saw dear old mother, who did not seem very well, and had aged a great deal, which concerned me rather. I heard that she had been seriously ill, and she and has not been able to get about since January, but I was kept in the happy

ignorance of all this. The girls were very fit and much amused by my tattoo marks, which they very soon spotted.

## May 24th

**80th birthday of HM The Queen.** Dressed the ship at 8:00 AM and the usual salutes were fired from the ships in the harbour.

## May 30th

**Captains farewell.** The Captain made a farewell speech to the men after division, reading and complimenting them on the Inspection Report from Admiral Fremantle, which was most excellent. The Admiral said that the ship was very clean, drills smart, great attention paid to uniforms and many other pleasant things. The men were very pleased, wishing them him a hearty farewell.

## May 31st

**Paying off leave.** About 9:00 the men were mustered by the ledger, and soon afterwards the inspecting officer came on board. After the men were paid they fell in on the jetty and were marched away and having their liberty tickets proceeded on leave as soon as they passed the dockyard gates. The inspection over the ship was declared paid-off and the pennant hauled down at sunset. Lunched on board the 'Benbow' and then caught the 2:25 PM train from Mill Bay.

## June 8th

**Franks engagement.** Frank arrived last night and today his fiancée (Miss Jaques) paid us a visit. We were all much surprised to hear of his engagement. He seems to have made a good choice, for the lady is very much interested in parochial matters and ought to make an excellent wife for a clergyman. Frank is at present curate of Sedgley.

## June 12th

**Visit to Admiralty.** I went to the Admiralty to find out what ship I was likely to get. I saw the secretary, Mr. Brooks, who told me that I would get a destroyer and that they would probably leave me alone until the manoeuvres which pleased me most and set my mind at rest.

## June 15th

**Sunday School Picnic.** The Sunday School Treat which annually takes place, came off in the afternoon. Some 1400 children assembled at the church for the short service which I attended and which was a most touching sight. Afterwards they marched down to the Castle Park headed by bands and church bells ringing furiously. Arriving there, an

enormous tea was provided, after which various games, scrambles, etc. Later on I saw the children dispersed in the Market Place, whither they returned in procession tired out, to the strains of God Save the Queen, in which they all joined.

## June 19th

### My 27th birthday

## June 26th

**Indian Mutiny Prisoners.** In the forenoon, I had a walk with Higginbottom, an old soldier and one of the Brethren Of The Hospital. He was all through the Indian Mutiny and actually assisted in lashing, to the gun, some of the prisoners who were afterwards punished by being blown to bits.

## June 29th

**Sarah Bernhardt - Warwick.** About 11:00 AM Ida and I left work for Stratford to hear the celebrated French actress Madame Sarah Bernhardt who performs at the Stratford Memorial Theatre, taking the part of Hamlet. The seats were booked at fabulous prices, the gallery being 5 shillings. Pit where we went 7/6. The play was most enjoyable, and Madame's acting was certainly marvellous, although it seemed to me she was hardly suited to play such a part as Hamlet, which is essentially a man's part. The cast was entirely French and of course the play was given in that language. Nevertheless, I managed to understand most of it. After the performance, the mayor, much embarrassed, presented the 'Divine Sarah' with a bouquet and amid much applause, received the drop scene on his head, which was a little disconcerting for him. Crowds waited outside to see her come out. She afterwards drove around Stratford and I saw her well twice. I took my hat off to her once and she 'graciously' kissed her hand to me. After some tea we drove home through the lovely Warwickshire scenery, which I prefer to any other place I've seen in the wide world. The town of Warwick too is, to my mind, the most quaint and delightful old place I have ever been in.

## July 4th

**Appointment to HMS Mersey.** I was a little surprised to receive an appointment to the 'Mersey' as First Lieutenant this morning, although I quite expected to be hauled out for the forthcoming manoeuvres. I have to join next Monday at Chatham. At first I thought that I would have my work cut out, for she is large (4050 tonnes) and I am very junior for such a billet. However, I afterwards discovered that she has a commander appointed which thereby saves me deal of anxiety.

## July 5th

**Croquet.** Spent a very pleasant time at a large tennis party given by the Colonel and Officers of the 6th. The only thing that annoyed me was that I was let in for a game of croquet directly I arrived which lasted for one and a half hours. I never felt so bored before and would never play again unless I can help it. In consequence, I had little time to see any people.

## July 9<sup>th</sup>

**Department Chatham – Mother.** Took an affectionate farewell of mother sometime before leaving. The old lady is still in bed, although slightly improved.

# HMS Mersey

## July 10th

**Preparations for commissioning.** Spent most of the day looking around the ship which is turned out in a very dirty state by the dockyard reserve but luckily all the stores except provisions are on board. Managed to make a shake down in my cabin and slept on board by order. A few men were sent on board to prepare for the ship's company, which arrives tomorrow.

## July 11th

**Commissioning.** The men told off for the various ships joined this morning. Ours coming aboard about 8:00 AM. They were given time to settle down and stow bags, etc, and provisions taken on board after which their commissioning cards were given to them with their stations, etc thereon. Most of the officers were on board by the evening and our mess was formed. We are lucky in having a messman (Mr Zammit) a Maltese, who seemed very satisfactory. We have no cook or wine steward, though marines being supplied in lieu. The dearth of domestics is a scandal. There are none in any of the depots and so most of the mobilised ships will be living hand to mouth. It really is time the Admiralty took steps to prevent this state of things, but they do not seem to consider the officers comfort in this respect of much importance.

## July 12th

**Depart Chatham.** I am in charge of the magazines and ammunition supply, which is an important thing in this ship which has so many guns. At 1:30 PM we left The Wall and preceded through the North Lock for Sheerness. All the cruisers from Chatham (11) assemble there today.

## July 14th to 17th



**At Portland.** About 9:30 AM arrived at Portland and joined the Channel Fleet which, with other mobilised ships, is assembled there.

## July 15th

**The Fleet.** The Fleet today was complete with ships and a magnificent sight it presented. Weymouth appeared crowded with visitors who'd come to see the exhibition of the nation's strength.

## July 17th

**Sailed.** The fleet came out about 8:30, and we steamed down Channel. In the evening we came across 'B' Fleet, our 'enemy', which had evidently just left Torbay. This junction of these two enormous fleets was a magnificent spectacle, and it seemed a pity there were no ships of foreign nations to witness it, for it would have had a salutary effect.

## July 22nd to 28th

**At Bangor - Sail for fleet manoeuvres.** The following is a general plan of the forthcoming manoeuvres. Objects: to obtain information as to the most advantageous method of employing a considerable body of cruisers in conjunction with the fleet. A subsidiary objective is to throw some light on the relative advantages and disadvantages of speed and fighting strength and another subsidiary object is to obtain information relative to the working of destroyers and torpedo boats. General idea: a British convoy of slow ships escorted by a fast cruiser on passage from Halifax to Milford Haven is ordered to wait at certain rendezvous the arrival of a protecting squadron. The hostile squadron ('A' fleet) of fast ships lying at Belfast, is sent to intercept and capture the convoy and bring it to Belfast. After an interval, a superior British squadron ('B' fleet) of slower ships is sent to protect the convoy, cover it from 'A' and take it to Milford. Should 'B' fleet to succeed in taking convoy to Milford, 'A' fleet would try to bring 'B' into action. Three days are allowed before 'A' can assume that the convoy has been successfully escorted by 'B' to her destination.

## August 4<sup>th</sup>

**End of manoeuvres.** Later on the 'Niobe' joined the fleet and brought the news that the convoy had been safely escorted to Milford by the other fleet and that 'hostilities' came to an end. So we were foiled and all our labour fruitless. It turned out that she (the convoy) came up the channel, which was quite contrary to the Admiral's expectations. As far as we were concerned, the manoeuvres cannot be said to have been successful, although we worked hard enough to make them. It was one continual 'hustle' for both officers and men for every spare minute was occupied by drills in addition to ordinary routine duties.

August 6th to 7th

**At Portland**

August 8th

**Arrived Sheerness**

August 9th

**Appointment to 'Contest'.** The Sheerness Destroyer Flotilla arrived at 9:30 and a curious thing happened to me. I was looking at the 'Contest', picking up her billet, and was remarking that I should like to have one of those destroyers went on going down below, I found I was appointed to that very ship. I was very much pleased with the news.

August 21st

**Pay off HMS Mersey – leave - mother.** General worry to get the ship cleaned up for the Fleet Reserve inspection in the early morning. The ship's company were bundled on the jetty with their bags about 7:00 AM and a train conveyed them to their various ports later. I lost no time in getting away by cab to catch the 9:47 train. I was sorry to find Mother in very much the same condition. She did not look any better than when I last saw her.

HMS Contest

August 25th

**Joined HMS Contest.** I had great difficulty in finding the 'Contest', and subsequently discovered her in No 4 dock. It appears that the Starboard 'A' bracket was cracked, and Hawksley (whom I relieve), was at the Court of Inquiry, being held as to the cause of the defect.

HMS Swordfish

August 31st

**Leave HMS Contest - join HMS Swordfish.** Today the 'Contest' was undocked and conveyed alongside the 'Swordfish' in the Basin and we turned over to the latter ship. It is not a good exchange for the 'Swordfish' is known as a bad steamer and always gives trouble.

September 5th

**Sailed**

## September 6th

**At Scarborough - family.** I went ashore and bicycle to 2 Crown Terrace where Uncle Walter is staying. I was surprised to find aunt Emily Bird here, the others were out looking for me. They came in whilst I was having my supper and seemed very pleased to see me. Uncle Sam and his son Percy (13) are also staying here. We went down to the Spa, a fine promenade with a splendid band playing. I had no idea Scarborough was such a fine place. The people were also a fashionable crowd with an absence of the 'tripper'.



*The Scarborough Spa Complex in the early 1890s - From 'Round the Coast' by George Newnes, Ltd, 1895.*

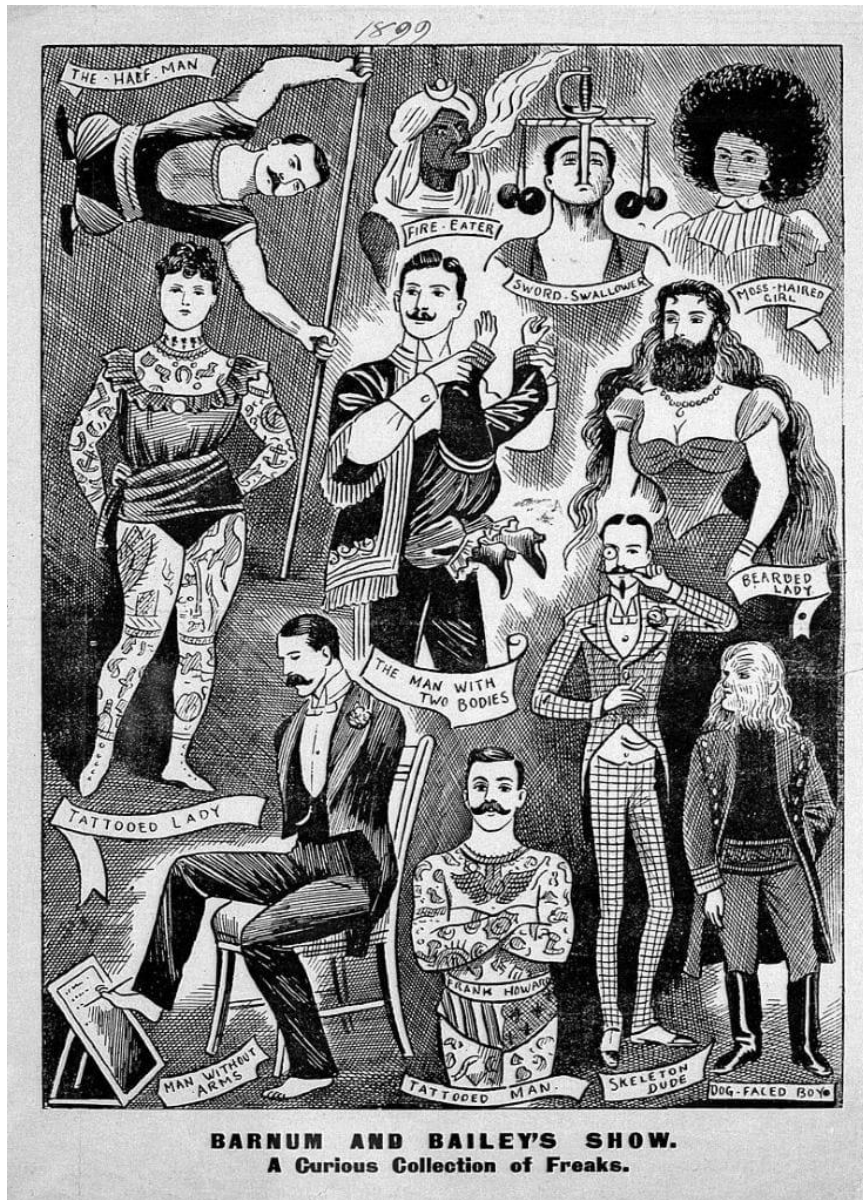
## September 7<sup>th</sup>

**Flotilla sailed for deployment.** We left at about 10:00 and this is the first time we've had we have been with the Flotilla. The ships consist of the 'Mermaid', 'Cygnet', 'Sturgeon', 'Haughty', 'Mallard', 'Swordfish' and 'Porcupine'. The 'Janus' makes the eighth but has not yet joined *[note - between 7th September and 6th of October 1899, The Swordfish visited Berwick, Granton, Dundee, Aberdeen, Kingsland, Felixstowe, Harwich].*

## 16th September

**Barnum's Show.** In the afternoon I went to see Barnum's show which is paying a visit here *[note – Aberdeen]*. I last saw it in Toronto in 1889, so that it is almost 10 years today since I visited the world famous circus. It does not seem to have changed much, the general entertainment being much the same. One new feature was a dog race in which the competing animals manifested the greatest pleasure. It is wonderful how they are trained to do this. The same old collection of 'freaks' was present but have

been added to. I saw the 'Skeleton Dude' and the 'Bearded Lady' again, but there was also the 'Egyptian Giant' and the 'Hindu Dwarf' a striking contrast. 'The Expansionist', a man who can pull his face out about a yard and the 'Human Ostrich' who eats nails, glass, etc, and drinks paraffin with apparent relish. The 'Dog Faced Man' and others all more or less repugnant.







## September 26th

**Defect.** Going into Aberdeen harbour my steering gear again jammed up, this time being the third. I was drifting helplessly about for an hour and a half and finally struggled alongside the wall and temporarily made fast until the defect was put right. I wrote a strong letter to the Commodore reporting this very seriously defect as soon as we secured.

## September 27th

**Grounding.** Cast off from the jetty about 3:30. As I was going out of the harbour, I had an unfortunate mishap. In turning the sharp corner, the tide or something of the sort, set me on the lower jetty and I was almost aground, the port screws striking the bottom, bending it badly. I cannot say how the ship got so close in, she did not seem as if she would turn, although I worked the screws reverse ways.

## October 6<sup>th</sup>

**Chatham.** Proceeded up harbour about 10:30. We only just managed to struggle up to the lock as they could not keep steam owing to all the fan engines being broken. The 'Swordfish' is most unlucky and is notorious for breakdowns. She only just managed to

pass the Admiralty trials. Armstrongs having the greatest difficulties in getting 27 knots out of her. She is a byword in the flotilla.

## October 7th to 16th

**Leave.**

## October 11<sup>th</sup>

**Board of Inquiry - Ultimatum.** The inquiry on the damage to the bow of the 'Haughty' was held first. She ran into the dock wall in Berwick and bent the stem. Yesterday the inquiry was held on the 'Janus', first for losing a torpedo and second for bending her screws. Mine *[note - relating to the bent port screw]* took place after Laetham (Haughty) had finished. They asked me many conundrums, which I managed to answer satisfactorily. I think I came out of it all right, although the Court never express an opinion in these cases. The Admiral, I found, is now anxious to know how the Starboard screw was bent, the inquiry only being held on the port. The only reply I could give was that it was probably bent at the same time which I trust will be a satisfactory explanation. Great excitement caused today by Mr Kruger (President of Transvaal) sending Great Britain an ultimatum to withdraw all troops by a certain time and declaring war.

## October 12th

**Start of the Boer War.** War with the Transvaal begins today.

## October 17th to 26th

**Depart for cruise - carry pigeons.** On arrival at Sheerness we were ordered to take some carrier pigeons out and let them loose off Warden Point. They were all young birds and it is doubtful if they will return. They have been found useful in carrying messages from ships and depots are now established for the Naval ports. *[note - between 17th and 26th October, the flotilla visited Harwich, Dover and Southend.]*

## October 31st

**News from South Africa.** Very disquieting news from South Africa. Two British regiments and a mountain battery were captured by the Boers near Ladysmith. The Irish Fusiliers and Gloucester Regiment. It appears as if a blunder had been made by Sir G White, who is in command at Ladysmith, and a great consternation has been caused in the country, for it is feared that Ladysmith cannot hold out, which would be a terrible disaster. A naval brigade from the 'Powerful' seems to have created great havoc amongst the enemy however, having by some means managed to get some 4.7 inch guns there, the lyddite shells from which have done some frightful damage to the

enemy. The transportation of these guns is a wonderful achievement and has worthily called forth admiration from the country in general.

## HMS ANGLER



### November 3rd to 13th

**Leave HMS Swordfish - joined HMS Angler.** Today the 'Angler' took the place of the 'Swordfish' in the Flotilla and we turned over to her, the ship's company and officers remaining the same. The 'Angler' is one of Messrs Thornycroft destroyers and a 30 knot ship against the 'Swordfish's' is 27 knots. She will be a great change for the better, for the 'Swordfish' was always the lame duck.

### November 4th

**Ladysmith.** The situation in South Africa is very grave and it is feared that Ladysmith may not be able to hold out until the arrival of reinforcements.

### November 10th

**Warwick – Mother.** Decided I would go home for the weekend and caught the fast train from Paddington. Found mother much improved in health. She can stand more noise and is not so nervous.

## November 14th to December 2nd

**Sailed for cruise.** [*Note - the flotilla visited Harwich, Felixstowe, Southend, Deal, Dover and Greenhithe.*]

## November 18th

**Kipling's poem.** We went to the Oxford Music Hall which was crammed. Heard Kipling's far famed poem 'The Absent Minded Beggar' which was received with much enthusiasm. It is astonishing how this quaint poem has stirred the hearts of the British public for money has been pouring in from the wives and families of the soldiers and sailor's families left behind through their supporters going to the war. Mrs Beerbohn Tree, who recited this at the Palace Theatre, was so harassed by the showers of money thrown up on the stage that the manager had to ask the audience to desist and put their money in boxes provided, to prevent injury to the lady.

## November 21st

**Frank's wedding.** My eldest brother Frank was married today at Knowle, Warwickshire. [*Note - his bride was Miss Mary Teresa Jaques, only daughter of Charles Jaques of Blacklake, West Bromwich.*]

## November 27th

**War News.** News received on Sat and Sun of two brilliant victories over the Boers by Lord Methuen. The Naval Brigade and Marines are reported to have distinguished themselves greatly, but the sad news appeared of the death of Commander Ethelstone of the 'Powerful', such an excellent fellow. He was in charge of the Naval Brigade.

## December 6th

**Wounded from Transvaal.** In the forenoon the transport 'Sumatra' with the first batch of the wounded from the Transvaal went upriver and as she passed the boys [*note - of TS Cornwall*] gave a cheer and the band played 'Soldiers of the Queen'. It was a very pathetic sight.

## December 13<sup>th</sup>

**Death of General Wauchope.** I was very much startled and grieved to hear the death of General Wauchope. It is not three months ago since I sat next to him at dinner. He was killed at the terrible battle of Magersfontein whilst leading Highland Brigade. In his attack on the Boer position General Lord Methuen failed, which has caused some consternation and disappointment in England as hitherto he has done so brilliantly, winning two victories and crossing the Modder River.



## December 14th

**Fictitious news.** During the day everyone was very much elated by news said to have been received in England that General Buller had relieved Ladysmith and that 10,000 Boers had laid down their arms. We were all bitterly disappointed however to hear later by Central News telegram that there was absolutely no foundation for the news. The fact cast a terrible gloom over us all at dinner.

## December 15th

**War news.** Upon opening the paper today I was nearly knocked under by reading that in face of the good news of yesterday, General Buller has met with a serious reverse at the Ingela River [*note - Battle of Colenso*] losing 11 guns and many men. It was a terrible blow, more especially as we were all so confident of his success. This Transvaal war is an awful crisis and the resources of the country and determination of its people are being very greatly taxed.

## December 20th

**Full speed trial.** Left at 7:30 AM with steam for full power. We afterwards carried out our full speed trial and had a very exciting race with the Nore Lt Vessel, round the Black Deep Lt V and back. We ran neck and neck with the 'Coquette' up to the Black Deep when we forged ahead and arrived about three quarters mile ahead. The 'Aerial' did best and we were second, our speed being about 26.5 knots. [*note – Nore and Black Deep are locations of light vessels in the Thames Estuary*]

## December 22nd

**Three weeks leave - Mother.** I found on my arrival that Mother was undoubtedly better both in looks and cheerfulness, which she still has the old complaint (diabetes) undermining her constitution, which is very sad.

## December 25th

**Christmas.** The first Christmas I have spent at home since '92. The absent members of the family were Frank (now married and living in Bromsgrove), Emily (in Assam) and Walter (in India), all married and settled.