

# 1898

## HMS Edgar

### January 1st to January 4th

**Passage to Hong Kong.** HMS Archer. 3rd class cruiser of 1770 tonnes, 2200 horsepower, natural draught, 3500 forced draught, twin screw armament, 6/6 inch BL. 83 pounder QF Hotchkiss, 3 torpedo tubes, 1 bow to broadside. Two Nordenfelt machine guns and 17 pounder field gun. ML Maximum speed about 15 knots. January 4th arrival Hong Kong leave HMS Edgar join HMS Archer. Arrived at Hong Kong in the early morning. I found that the Archer was looking quite correct. The funnel is out of her and only the foremast left. The old main mast is being put further after and the mizzen. Done away with, which is a great improvement both for utility and in parents. She is Red Lee did outside. And looks like an old Hulk. I went on board the ship later and found her in a state of chaos, everything in pieces and the decks of etc. I contemplate a hard time in getting her to look in any way decent.

### January 7th

**Captain.** Met my new captain, Commander Kingsmill in the morning. It appears that it will be a terrific grind to get everything on board again as all the stores are assured at the Dockyard and at Kowloon, which are about 3 miles apart, which makes embarking them difficult.

### January 21st

**Chinese New Year.** A day of general rejoicing amongst the Chinese to who celebrate their New Year. About this time work ceases among them and they all go to their homes where the time is spent and revelry and enjoyment of a peculiar kind. Thing which seems to afford them most pleasure is the firing of innumerable crackers. They are hung in long strings outside the house. And make an incessant buying for 10 minutes or more. I understand that the idea of letting these things off is to show that their debts of the past year had been squared. Squared up. And the sampans taking the ships. I notice the collection of very nasty looking food apparently put there for the same reason. Josh. Appan which just sticks with smouldering. In the afternoon I rode through Chinatown and the celebrations, which struck me as being rather silly, but no doubt the museum to the celestions.

January 31st

Masts and rigging. Brought the four top mast off to the ship in the afternoon owing to the alteration of the mass, the main mast, the old main mast having been abolished and the original SPA being. Out. You, my master. The ship now having two months only, I found that the four top must would be too long, especially the original main mass was cut down as the dockyard would not take the matter in hand without the estimate, I went to the Hong Kong hotel to see the captain. Finally the thing was done, about 6 feet of the four top. Boss being cut off bicycle rides for January 9832 miles. Total distance covered by bicycle whilst in my possession. 4941 miles.

February 98,

The ship in a mass. February 1st. To the 5th. To the ship everyday at 7:00 AM. Chiefly occupied replacing the caps, tan fitting, main rigging, embarking stores, etc. Everything in a state of model and dirt from the Chinese workmen, and a very hopeless state of offence. Captain annoyed and irritable. Might save myself worried.

February 14th to 15th

Coaling ship coaling all afternoon. The men worked well and cleared 2 large chunks by evening, which was not bad considering the difficulty of stowage for bunkers in the shipping. Very awkward and the fact that they are strange to the ship. Took in the remaining coal working from Sunderland till about two PM 205 tonnes altogether.

February 17th

**Loss of USS Maine.** In the evening telegram came news of the terrible disaster Havana, but the US battleship Maine suddenly blew up at night 'cause unknown and 250 of her crew reported missing



<https://usnhistory.navylive.dodlive.mil/Recent/Article-View/Article/3290776/why-did-the-uss-maine-explode/>

February 21st to the 25th

painting. During these days the ship began to assume a better appearance of dockyard began painting her outside. We also painted and blacked down laughed.

February 26th.

Rubbish and sale of bicycle. In the afternoon the captain went on board and had a regular field. They all the superfluous wood was thrown overboard and deck fittings etc, put in place, as we did not know the stowage for half the gear. It was Hove over the side and many useful things went in this way. However it made a great clearance of a lot of useless trash which have been hoarded up in the ship. The captain was on board before us and as it came alongside there were showers of various articles coming over the side which was amusing to look at. To say the least of it, during the dinner hour Mr Broughton came to see me about my bicycle. I eventually, reluctantly parted with it for about 4 lbs. It was a great wrench, but I find it very little of use to me in the Archer, as I cannot get ashore much, whilst there is no decent place to it. Also very little bicycling in China. As there are no roads to speak of. However, it was a very old friend and has afforded me many a pleasant days amusement.

February 27th.

Notice for C. After rather rather a bothering day, I was disturbed just before dinner by a message from that weed to say that the captain wanted to see me at once when I arrived on board. I was very much taken aback when he said we were ordered to see as soon as possible and that he wanted to be ready by Wednesday

3rd. March

night I hardly thought it possible as we were still in dockyard hands, not half stores in on the ship in a filthy state with as yet hardly one coat paint on the outside. However, it has to be done somehow and upon hearing the news I went straight to the dockyard to arrange about lighters for ammunition stores.

March the 1st.

On board at last. We were all on board in the forenoon and clearing bag lighter provisions lighter and everything in a state of indescribable chaos. The wardrobe was still in filthy state from the Chinese workmen but our stewarding management turn after very piece of lunch. Somehow the place as full with mess traps. Bottles etc. And the straw in which they were packed. By the evening we had shaken down to some extent and everyone was thanks thankful that our last we were in our proper ship. No one more so than I was before. I have never had a more bothering times in the last few weeks.

March 2nd

Sea trials outside to see in the morning for four hours. Steam trial returned about 4:00 PM, the trial having been very satisfactory. Speed about 914.9 knots. A little more comfortable now, the men having got into a routine. And all the gear stores stoned. Barge. 3rd, 2:00. Hoi Hoare. Let's see today for HOI core. How many islands we were already for slipping my new but did not leave until 2:30 PM when we proceeded to see in fine weather. I was rather agreeably surprised with the ship's qualities as a sea boat. She does not knock about so much as I expected, but of course we were we. I've not had any bad weather so far. The captain seems an excellent fellow, very different to when he was at Hong Kong, but this is entirely due to the absence of bother. And the fact that he is now in his own ship.

## March 4th to 28th

### At Hoi Haw

*[note – it is not clear where Hoi Haw is but is most likely Hoi Ha Wan to the north of Hong Kong]*

## March 7th

**Day of drills.** A day of drills which are so necessary on commissioning. Exercised Stations for Out Stream and Kedge anchors, out diving gear and fire engines and collisions Quarters. In the evening, the captain dined with us in the Wardroom and we had a very successful sing-song on the half deck afterwards.

## March 13th

**Congratulations.** After Divisions, the captain had all hands aft and complemented them (and myself) on the great strides which had been made in making the ship a little more presentable. Considering the short time that we have had and the filthy state she was in when we turned over to her, there certainly was a marked improvement, and it was very gratifying to me to know that it had been noted and made some amends for the bothering time I have had in getting things put straight.

## March 25th

**Dining with the French.** In the evening, I dined on board the French man-of-war 'Pascal', the Captain also coming. We had a most enjoyable evening, the Captain was a charming man and spoke English very well. I had a long walk talk with one fellow who was very well read and knew English history, and all about Shakespeare, etc, and so we got on well together. He was, I think, a 'Royalist' and one of the good old sort with some sense in his head.

## March 28th

### Returned to Hong Kong

## March 29th

**War Scare.** We were immediately ordered to do the same *[note - pairing for sea]* filling up with coal, ammunition and provisions. When the Officer of the Guard boarded us, he told us that there was another war scare, that all ships were ordered North, but no one knew for certain what was the reason. To my disgust, I heard that the 'Fame' and 'Whiting' were both to remain in commission, having suddenly received orders when about to pay off. I could not help feeling sore for about this, for I ought to be in the 'Fame' still, and now would be a good opportunity of doing something if war were to be declared. *[note – presumably this is part of Britain's response to the Spanish-American War and possibly in anticipation of action in the Philippines as they were in the Far East. Britain was neutral but seemed to favour the US]*

## March 31st

**Depart Hong Kong.** Left Hong Kong at 7:00 AM with the 'Centurion', 'Fame' and 'Whiting'. On our way out we passed the 'Deutschland' (German Flagship), on board of which with his Prince Henry of Prussia, the 'Mailed Fist' of whom so much has been said lately in the papers *[note – Prince Heinrich was Emperor Wilhelm II's brother and was, in 1898, the first European Potentate to visit the court of China]*. She is an antiquated looking old craft, as broad as she is long, and I doubt if the Emperor realised this when he told Prince Henry to 'strike hard'.

March 6<sup>th</sup>

**Chefoo Bay.** About 9:00 we anchored in Chefoo Bay *[note – now Yantai, China]*. Nearly the whole the China fleet is assembled.

## April 7th

**War scare.** Went on board the 'Edgar' in the forenoon and found a very war-like spirit has prevailed lately amongst the fleet. The ships had been cleared for action with steam ready at short notice and the men sleeping at the guns at night. In fact, no one seems to know what the scare is about or who we are likely to go for, but things have evidently been leading close to war. The ships are now resuming their ordinary conditions, the scare being apparently over for some time.

## April 10th

**Ashore in Chefoo.** Landed about 4:00 PM for a ramble by myself. I wanted to see what kind of place this was and so struck right into the middle of the city. Found that it was

very similar to Hoi Haw, or in many respects. The same narrow streets, evil smells and overcrowding. There are a great number of some horrible looking curs which I hear are met with all over China. There. They were most repulsive looking brutes and have equally repulsive habits, acting as they do as scavengers of the worst kind. They bark furiously at all Europeans. I soon saw enough of the city and made for the country. As I passed through the gate, I came across a sickening sight. A man who had apparently died of starvation was lying behind the wooden gate. Half of the body was exposed and was wasted away to skin and bone. A crowd stopped to gaze at it when I stopped, but none of them seemed in the least disconcerted and from what I gather, the dogs dispose of the remains. The crime of infanticide, which is so prevalent in China, is practised here and I hear it is not uncommon to find the remains of children (mostly female) exposed in the paddy fields for the dogs to finish! I saw any amount of women with compressed feet, but they're not so small here as in other parts. They are, however not more than 3 or 4 inches long. On my return I came upon a theatrical performance which was being held on a raised platform stage of bamboo and matting. The performers appeared in marvellous costumes and did a great deal of gesticulating, but it was all dumb show. They were stimulated by a terrible band consisting of a kind of flagellate, cymbals and drums, which made a weird noise. The audience did not show their appreciation or disapproval of any parts of the play but seemed quite oblivious of what was going on.

## April 22nd

**Declaration of war.** Received news today by Reuters Telegram that war has been declared between Spain and the United States.

*[note – the Spanish-American War lasted from April to December 1898 and was triggered by rumours that the sinking of USS Maine was caused by Spanish sabotage. It was the end of the Spanish empire and resulted in the ceding of Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines to America]*

## April 25th and 26th

**Two days cruising.** At 7:00 AM we left with the fleet for two days cruising. During the day, firing was carried out from 'tube cannons' at towing targets astern of each ship.

## May 3rd

**Fishing.** The party away. Exploding gun cotton charges brought back a fine amount of fish with them. They were 102 of an average of 5 lbs each, of a kind of bream species. Every mess had some given to them, and there was enough for the whole ship's company.

## May 9th to 12th

**At sea**

## May 15th

**Dressing down.** After prayers, the captain harangued the men on their work coaling yesterday, which they deserved. I had a long yarn with him afterwards on subject.

## May 20th

**Death of Gladstone.** By the daily morning telegram we heard that Gladstone was dead. The poor 'Old G.O.M' gone at last after many years of good and bad service to his country! To my mind a marvellous man.

## May 21st

**Depart for Nagasaki.** Ready for sea and awaiting orders at 10:30 AM. Finally we were told to leave after the arrival of the mail. Embarked about a dozen sheep and quantities of poultry to keep us going in fresh provisions in the Behring Sea. Left Chefoo at 6:00 PM.

## May 24th to June 3rd

**At Nakasaki.** Off the entrance to Nagasaki Harbour at about 5:15 PM. From the lighthouse it is about 7 miles up to the anchorage. My first impressions of Japan are most favourable. Going up the harbour reminded me of a Norwegian fjord on a small scale. It was very pretty. Not far from the entrance is the island of Pappenburg, from which it is said that 300 native Christians and missionaries were hurled on the rocks below for not relinquishing their faith during the terrible persecutions which raged in the 17th century. We anchored off the town about 6:30 PM.

## May 25th

**Russian soldiers.** In the town were great numbers of ruffianly looking Russians. It turned out they were time expired Cossacks going back to Russia from Siberia. I think I have never seen such villainous looking brutes before and should be very sorry to fall foul of them.

## May 26th

**48 hours leave to Takeo.** Isida, or Guide arrived on board about 7:00 AM and after some breakfast Eldred and myself left the ship by sampan for the projected trip. Landed on the outskirts of the town and took rickshaws to the station which is a distance outside at the head of the harbour. Took tickets to Takeo. These were wonderfully cheap, about 3 shillings for a 50 mile journey, first class, and including a trip of about 10 miles by steamer. The first stage of our journey was to Negayo where we were bundled out as the train went no further. The scenery through which we passed on the way was

lovely. This being springtime, everything looks so fresh and green and so different from Chefoo where everything was so barren. We found we had a walk about 3 miles to the steamer. We had the option of taking a rickshaw but preferred the 'ten toed' method. The steamer was a small one with practically no accommodation, but we made ourselves comfortable on the wooden awning. After an hour's run, we arrived at Omura and made for the station. Then a long journey in the train. Eventually we fetched up at Takeo station at 3:30 PM and on leaving the station walked to the village, much to the disgust of Isida who eventually regarded foreigners walking as infra dig. We went to the 'Mikumiya Hotel'. Two 'mousmies' (Japanese girls) received us on the threshold, kneeling and bowing their heads on the floor. We required to take off our boots before going in and we were then shown to our rooms. The houses is of the usual style, built entirely of wood, the roof heavily tiled and many artistic gargoyles under the eaves. Inside the house is a perfect haven of cleanliness. In our room there was no furniture except a tiny table standing about a foot high, a round wood and copper box of hot charcoal in sand (for lighting cigarettes) and a wooden bar for hanging up clothes. Two mousmies soon came in to bring tea, which was served in little bowls. It consists of an infusion of green leaves and no milk or sugar is taken with it. At first I do not care for it much but came to like it very much. Before going they bid us undress and left two kimonos, a long gown which they all wear, and asked us to get ready for the bath. As soon as we were ready we walked in our kimonos and clogs to them. We found a beautiful marble bath of black and white tiles ready for us. This is a private bath large enough for two. The bath was delightful, quite hot as it came from the ground. The mousmie attended us quite unconcerned, such is the custom, and she gave us cold douches when we came out and prepared tea and sponge cake for us in the anteroom. Although only about 5:30 PM, we found our 'chow' was ready for us when we got back. We were rather in doubt as to what they could give us, but they understood European ways more or less and brought in an enormous feed. Soup, fish, chicken, beefsteaks, poached eggs, etc. They gave us no bread, but we had our own. Everything was well cooked, but there was an absence of vegetables. After 'chow' we went for a walk behind the village. We visited a temple which seemed much the same as the Chinese, only well kept and cared for, and then we went to see the silk weaving houses. I was never so much struck before by the ingenuity of these people. Their spinning looms and machinery when marvellously made, entirely of bamboo. I was sorry for the workpeople. They keep very long hours, and it is trying work, especially for the eyes. On our return, we decided to visit a 'tea house' and Isida took us to the best in the village. Shortly afterwards supper was brought in consisting of fruit, soup and raw fish with 'sake', the native wine (served up hot). Returned to the hotel about 11:00 PM. Our beds consisted of a padded mat and a quilt, which was laid out on the floor of our room. The pillow, a bag of shavings, and rather hard. However, we both managed to sleep all night.



## May 27th

**On leave in Takeo.** About 9:00 we turned out and walked across to the baths attended by our 'chesi'. We spent a long time bathing and having tea and cigarettes afterwards. We visited several temples in the village, all very much the same, and then inspected a wine factory where sake was brewed followed all the time by a large crowd of curious villages who, amongst other things, seemed to regard our beards with amusement.

## May 28th

**Return.** After breakfast we thought better to start on our return. Our departure caused quite a sensation and all the hotel girls came down to make salaams to us when we went off in our rickshaws to the station. A train left about 10:00 PM, which we caught. Arrived at Nagasaki about 6:00 PM and so off to the ship by 7:00 PM, having had a most enjoyable holiday, its only fault being that it was too short.

## June 7th to 10th

**At Hakodate.** At 1:20 AM we anchored in Hakodate Harbour. A very fine roadstead and even in the moonlight seemed to resemble Gibraltar, which has been compared with it. Went the shore about 5:30 PM in a sampan. By a previous arrangement, six of us had arranged to meet at the clubhouse and go to a 'tea house' for the evening. We drove out and rickshaws to a house about a mile away, very prettily situated in its gardens arranged in Japanese plan with the usual rustic bridge and pond. Having removed our boots we all went up into a large room, the outside balcony of which was hung with paper lanterns in our honour. The girls came with us, all turned out in their best. Tea was immediately provided and then we started in with a feed. This was a great event. Each of us had a girl to attend to us and we all squatted down in a semicircle whilst they provided course after course of mysterious looking dishes piled up with food of all sorts. Sake and Kirin beer from the liquids. I analysed several of things while seating and recognised beans, ginger, fish-cake, potatoes, bamboo root etc. Smaller dishes contained raw fish and sauce, salad (which was vg) and chopped up peas which here grow very large but are tasteless. He (the captain) said he enjoyed dinner very much, and so did we, in a way, the whole show being a novelty to us. I must say that I prefer our own method of cooking, etc. After dinner the dances began, the geishas striking up the same monotonous accompaniment. Four at a time performed and where most graceful in their movements but there seems to be this to be sameness in all their dances. Finally, we left after 10:00 PM, the whole household coming to the porch to see us safely away. Passing through the town, we saw the 'Yoshiware' [*note – Yoshiwara is the old red-light district of Tokyo, presumably the same in Hakodate!*]. To a widely thinking man who has studied Japanese - natural and right - to average Englishmen, more or less repugnant - to myself - a wrong - impossible to rectify, but compared with other countries, civilised (save the mask!). Off to ship by 11:30 PM. Left Hakodate for

Petropaulovsk to pursue our orders round the Komandovski Islands in the Bering Sea. No one was particularly cheerful over the prospect of spending about two months away from civilization in a boisterous and cold region [*note – Kamchatka peninsula, Russia*].

## June 17th to 22nd

**At Petropaulovsk.** Our first sight of the Kamchatka coast, which we made today is one I shall always remember. It was beautiful. The coast is very high backed by enormous mountains, and the whole of the land covered from summit to horizon with snow, on which the effect of the sun had a superb appearance. A curious feature was that we were quite 30 miles off, but we did not seem more than 10. We anchored about one and a half miles from the town Petropaulovsk, outside the harbour. Petropaulovsk is a miserable looking place hardly a size to be called a town for it only contains about 500 inhabitants and these are decreasing annually. It consists of a few detached wooden hut, a church in some salting sheds for curing skins and salting fish. It is the headquarters of the Russian Fur Seal Company, whose interests (as well as our own) we are here to protect.

## June 19th

**Birthday.** My 26th birthday. To celebrate we all had fizz after church in which the captain joined.

## June 22nd

**Departed Petropaulovsk.** Left Petropaulovsk about 11:30 AM for the Komandovski Islands, the scene of our duties. A lovely day which made the beauty of this land beyond description when viewed from a few miles seaward. The appearance of the huge volcanoes with the light of the sun striking the snow is magnificent and beat anything I have ever seen.

## 24th of June

**Bering Island.** Bering Island in sight. This is the largest the Komandovski Islands, the other being Medui [*note – Medny Island*] or more usually, Copper Island. Fog and rain is the general weather one gets off these islands and today our introduction to them was in drizzling rain.

## June 30th

**The Salmon.** About 4:30 PM another seining party went away [*note – seining is a type of fishing where a large net held by two poles is drawn through the water*]. When we landed the net, there was a stupendous haul. We counted them and they numbered 327, all salmon! This was quite enough, and as much as the boat would hold and so we

returned to the ship. I was not sorry, for it was bitterly cold and wet, the snow, even in the low land, has in many places not yet melted.

## July 7th to 17th

**The view - At Petropaulovsk.** When I came on deck at 4:00 AM for my watch the scene was glorious. The wind had abated and we were in calm water, whilst ahead of us was the coast of Kamchatka with the four high mountains lit up in the glint of the rising sun. Weighed They were then about 45 miles off. Anchored off Petropaulovsk at about 10:30 AM. Weighed and took the ship out of harbour, shaping course for the islands for our second cruise and let us hope, last, in this dreary region.

## July 24th

**Sea Otter.** In the evening a sea otter was observed close under the stern. It kept up with us for some time and seemed curious as to what we were. Its antics were peculiar sometimes it jumped right out of the water, but generally about half way. In appearance it was similar to the land otter, only, I should think three times the size. During the day the Russian cruise 'Koretz' was seen. She is acting in conjunction with us, but up to the present does not seem to have done much. Our duties in this respect had been performed with the usual British honesty and conscientiousness.

## July 29th

**End of second cruise.** Soon after noon course was shaped for Petropaulovsk, our patrolling time being finished. No one is very sorry to see the last of these regions and trust we will not have to return again.

## August 2nd

**Torpedoes at Petropaulovsk.** Early in the morning we started running torpedoes from the ship at anchor. Four 'runs' have to be made every quarter. The first two were fairly successful, but the third ended disastrously. Towards the end of its run it took a turn and ran into a whaler going clean through one side and jamming itself under one of the thwarts. She began to sink and was soon full of water, but the crew were picked up by the gig which towed the whaler onboard. The torpedo had to be cut out and we hauled the boat up on the beach. Shortly afterwards we got underweigh and moored inside the harbour. Left Aracha Bay, we hope never to see it again, although on the whole, our service on this part of the station had been better than we anticipated. Shaped course for Hakadote.

## August 15th to September 5th

**At Hakadote.** Arrived of Hakadote at 2:00 PM, anxiously expecting to find a relief ship for us. We were, however, grievously disappointed, for the 'Redpole' was the only ship

and she had arrived this morning from Robbeu Island *[note – it is not clear where this is!]* where they have been doing the same duty as ourselves. The mail arrived shortly afterwards and we found that we had orders to return again to the Bering Sea, much to everyone's disgust. We also learned that the captain had not been promoted. It seems very hard on him, for he has worked hard for it and is sorely disappointed.

## September 3rd

**Execution of previous orders.** Landed about 5:30 PM and had not been ashore long when Richards (Chief Carpenter's Mate) came running after me to tell me that a telegram had been received ordering us to 'proceed at the execution of previous orders'. It was anything but pleasant news, especially as we thought that having been here for three weeks, we were going to evade a second trip. It is a year today since I left England in the 'Fame'.

## September 14th to October 16th

### At Petropavlovsk

## October 6th

**Departed Petropaulovsk.** Our last glimpse of this bay was very beautiful, the volcanoes being perfectly magnificent against the cloudy sky. No-one, however, regrets seeing the last of it and we do not hanker after seeing it again.

## October 12th to 15th

### At Hakadote

## October 18th to 28th

### At the Yokohama

## October the 20th

**Trip to Nikko.** Left the ship with Doctor Walsh for our trip to Nikko about 7:45 AM, just as the men were starting coaling. We drove to the station in rickshaws and caught the 8:38 AM train. At Utsonomiya *[note – Utsunomiya]* a branch line runs to Nikko and here the country becomes very mountainous. The most notable feature is an avenue of a kind of conifer extending for at least 20 miles. The trees were planted about 200 years ago partly as a guide and also as an approach to the village of Nikko, which is considered the most sacred place in the whole of Japan. We finally arrived at about 6:00 PM just as we were getting tired of the journey. We were met by the manager of the Nikko Hotel, where we decided to go, who started us off in rickshaws. As it was now quite dark, we did not see much of the scenery, but the quiet surroundings were a great treat after the racket of the ship. The hotel we found most comfortable. After an

excellent dinner, we walked into the village to look at the curios. There are some good shops, but the prices are naturally stuck on for foreigners. However, I bought a small incense burner of bronze which came from one of the temples, also a carved ivory skull of marvellous workmanship. These I managed to get fairly cheap.

## October 22nd

**100 Buddas - Temples of Nikko.** Before breakfast. I walked out to see the 100 Buddhas, which are about a mile from the hotel. They consist of a number of stone images, some scattered and others in ruins. They overlook the river and the view of them is very weird as one approaches. There is a legend which says that they cannot be counted correctly no matter how many undertake the trouble. However, I counted a row of 64 which I know was correct. They must be very old because they are heavy with age and in a dilapidated state and there are several more slabs with images missing. *[note – these are the Jizo Buddhas in the Kanmangafuchi Abyss. They were made in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries. Now there are only 74 as some of them were washed away in the flood of 1902].* After breakfast I visited the famous Nikko temples. The first we went to is noted as the burial place of Ieyasu, one of the Shoguns *[note – Tokugawa Ieyasu is considered to be the greatest of all the shogun. He pacified and united Japan in the 1600s].* The first thing that strikes one is a very fine granite toru (gate) 27.5 ft high and on the left, a five storey pagoda, the red lacquer work which contrasted well with the temples with the colour of the surrounding trees. It is 104 ft high and built entirely of wood (circa 1650). At the present day, the temples are almost deserted except by native and foreign sightseers. Passing up a few steps, there is another fine toru of bronze, which is the entrance to another courtyard, in which stands two wooden towers of peculiar construction. The one on the right contained a bell and that on the right a drum. In this courtyard are 118 bronze and stone lanterns, which were given by various dignitaries. Going up the steps, the next gateway passed is one of great magnificence. In fact, I cannot attempt to describe. It is supported by four white pillars, on one of them, the carving is upside down. It is said to have been carved thus intentionally because the architect was afraid that the flawless nature of the structure might excite the jealousy of heaven. Retracing our steps we passed 'the dancing girl'. I could not quite understand what she was for. Upon throwing a few cents, she goes through various contortions like an automaton, with a very solemn face. Her dress was entirely white and certainly picturesque, but she was not a beauty. We next went up a flight of 200 steps to see Ieyasu's tomb. It is of bronze and near are bronze storks etc. This completed our round of the first temple, or rather group of temples. We visited another group called the Jenitsa, his tomb being here. It was much the same as the other, but not so grand. After lunch, I visited the 'Hall of the Three Brothers'. Near this is a pillar of copper 42 ft high called Sorinto. It was erected in 1643. After seeing this I had quite enough of temples

and went into the village to buy curios. There is nothing of interest in the village. It is of the usual style consisting of one long street in which are some good shops.

## October 23rd

**Return on board.** Much to our regret, we had to return today. The sky was cloudless and it would have been glorious weather for seeing more of the enchanting district. However, we saw a good deal in the short time we have at our disposal. I was quite sorry to get back to the ship again after a pleasant four days passed.

## October 26th

**Diabutsu - War with France.** In the afternoon, I went to a place called Kamakura. Near here is the celebrated Diabutsu. It is an enormous bronze statue of Buddha, 50 ft high, cast some three centuries ago and mounted on a pedestal. It stands in the grove of a temple and presented a weird sight to me as I arrived there in the moonlight. There is no doubt that it is a work of art for the face has many expressions when viewed from different positions. Great excitement prevailing as two firms here have received telegrams announcing that war with France is inevitable [*note – the Fashoda Incident when Britain and France clashed over control of the upper Nile region in Sudan*]

## November 6th to December 9th

### At Hong Kong

## November 7th

**New Captain.** Our new captain (Commander CH Dare) came onboard to have a look around the ship. He seems an excellent man, very cheery and amusing.

## December 4<sup>th</sup>

**Fashoda.** Read the papers at the club in the evening and saw about the war preparations in England over the Fashoda Affair. Things seem to have been 'touch and go' and the Coastguards and Volunteers were called up, a most unusual proceeding.

## December 5th

**Cemetery - Midshipman J Tibbits.** In the afternoon I went to see the cemetery at Happy Valley. It is a very pretty place but shows a sad record of deaths from disease, violence and fighting for the old country. One gathers from it a lesson as to how our colonies, now so prosperous, were obtained. My primary object to see if I could find the traces of the grave of my great uncle John Tibbits, who was a midshipman RN and who died at Canton about the year 1823. I could find no trace that I did not expect to, for Hong Kong was hardly ours until '48.

December 15th

**Arrived Singapore**

December 21st

**Orders for home.** The 'Grafton' brought our sailing orders for England which put at rest any doubts about our going home. The information was enthusiastically received forward, but personally, my feelings are rather mixed, for on the one hand we have now an excellent Captain and everything is settled down, and going home means the same old racket commissioning another ship, whilst on the other, one naturally longs to get a spell of home again, however short.