

1893

March 15th

Appointment to HMS Nautilus. Received a telegram about 5:30 PM from Hawker, wine merchant, Plymouth telling me that I had been appointed navigator on HMS Nautilus, which was good news.



March 28th

Joined HMS Nautilus. Left Warwick with much regret by the 10:55 AM train for Plymouth. Caught the Flying Dutchman at Swindon and arrived at Plymouth about 8:00 PM and immediately on arriving took a boat off to the Nautilus which was lying off Devonport Dockyard [note - HMS Nautilus is a tender to HMS Impregnable, the training establishment at Devonport]. She is 501 tonnes and has a complement of 101 boys.

March 31st

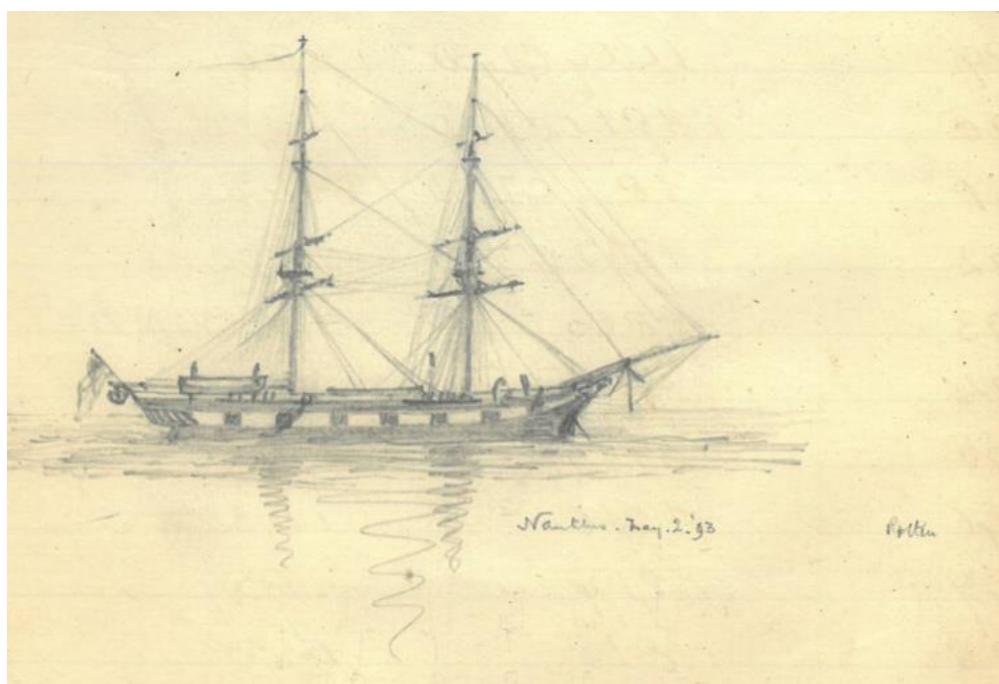
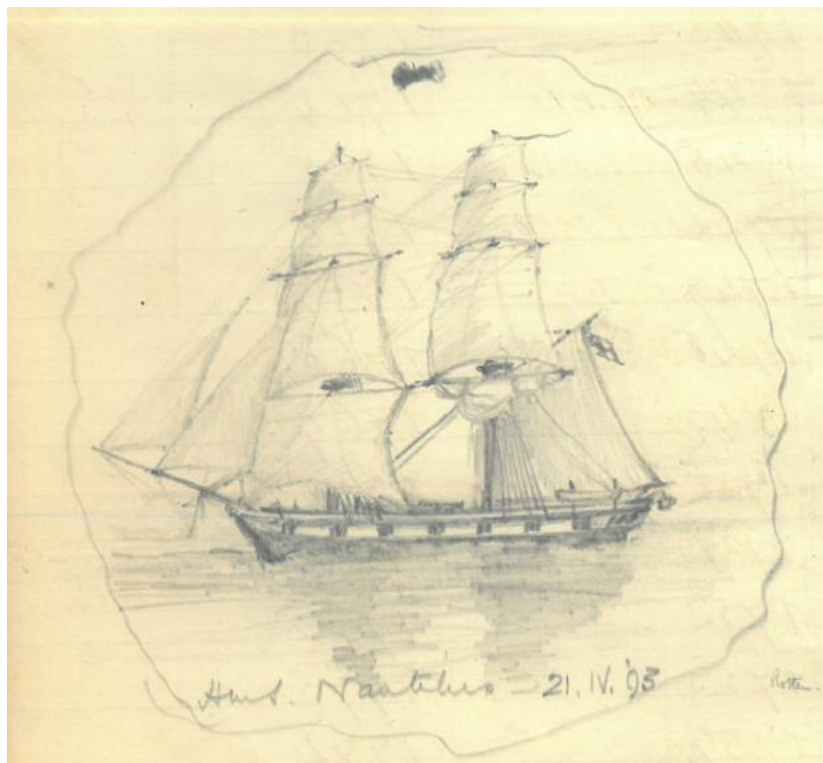
Good Friday. In the afternoon I went ashore and went by train from Millbay to Cornwood and had a look at the new viaduct which has just been built there, and met an old man in the station. Took me to see the new viaduct. He had a cork leg, his leg being lost in an accident he had whilst working at the bridge. By which he not nearly lost his life.

April 6th

Drills. We went outside with the other brigs, Pilot and Liberty [*note - both also training brigs*] and spent the day at the drills. Ordered returning about 5:00 PM and anchoring off the Winter Shoal [*note - South Winter Shoal is a fixed buoy in Plymouth Harbour*]. It is usual to go out at 7:30 AM and return to an anchor as above had 5:00 PM except on Friday when we returned to pick up our buoy at 11:30 AM and spend Sat and Sun in the harbour.

April 17th

Grounding. We went outside at the usual time but were caught in a dense fog when we got outside. We managed to get rough bearings of Penlee Point and Rame Head before the fog came on and accordingly stood away from the Penlee Point [*note - Penlee Point and Rame are a peninsular at the edge of Plymouth bay*]. A very strong tide (springs) caught us unawares, however, and the dinghy which was sent ahead of the ship reported 'breakers ahead', and at the same time we saw rocks ahead of us. The only thing we could do was to let go both anchors, and there was not, as there was no time to go about and we immediately got out the kedge anchors to hold the ship clear. Before we could get our stern kedge out, however, our stern swung round amongst the rocks and we touched the ground two or three times with the swell. As the tide was falling fast, I thought we should be there for a 'full due', but luckily there was no wind and we managed to catch the ship clear and weigh our anchors which were fearfully foul. Some Trinity House Pilots informed us we were in Lady Cove near Penlee Point. We see managed to haul the ship clear of danger and I was thankful for we were on very dangerous coast and art mishap mishap might have proved disastrous.



Sketches of HMS Nautilus by CT

May 3rd

Admiralty letter. The Captain (Lt Lyon) received a letter with reference to our mishap on April 17th from the Admiralty in which it said that the Admiralty attached no blame whatsoever to the Captain or his navigating officer, but considered that he was to be

commended for the prompt, seamanlike and judicial manner in which the ship was worked to get her clear of the danger, so that altogether it was rather favourable than otherwise, and extremely satisfactory.

May 5th

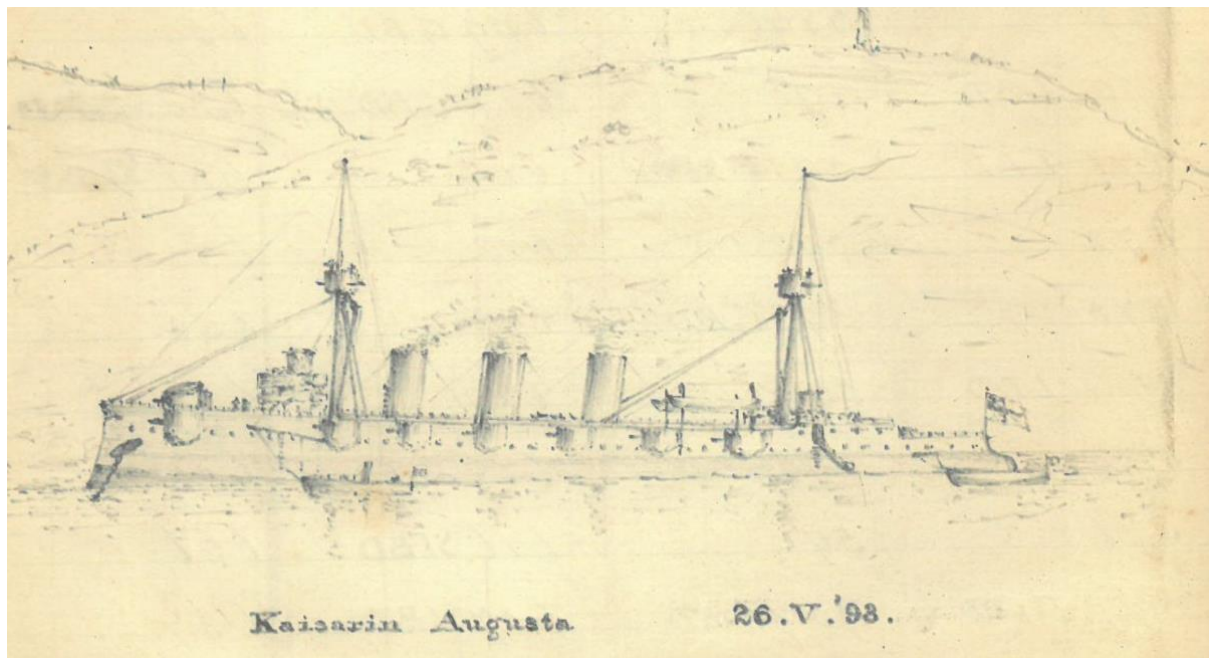
Inspection. The Inspecting Captain of Boys Training Ships, Captain Bosanquet, went on board the Pilot and signalled to us drills to perform for his inspection. We shifted topsail masts and topsails, etc, and they were done admirably by the boys who worked well.

May 24th

74th birthday of HM Queen Victoria. Dressed ship and at noon fired a royal salute 21 guns.

May 26th

A grand ball. A grand ball was given by the officers of HMS Cambridge, to which I went. It was given as a farewell to the Duke of Edinburgh on giving up his Plymouth command. There were several hundreds there, the Duke, Duchess and the Princess Victoria Melita being also present. It was very brilliant affair and splendidly got up, but I did not enjoy very much owing to the lack of partners consequent upon the number of people there. Left about 2:00 AM.



Sketch of Kaiserin Augusta by CT 26th May 1893. The ship had left New York on 13th May and arrived in Kiel on 2nd June so she must have stopped off in Plymouth on her way.

May 27th

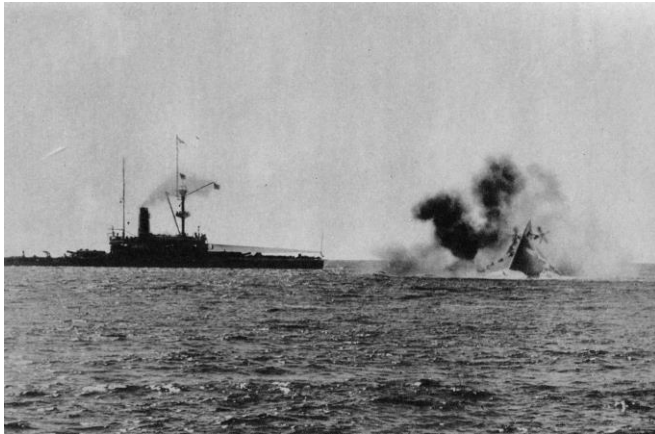
A hangover. Turned out rather late and had a lunch with Bather (Midshipman) at Jones' Restaurant. Felt a bit of a wreck and having the hump returned on board about 5:00 PM.

June 19th

My 21st birthday. Had several close presents including a gold watch chain from mother. Goldlink, studs and a pin from Jack. Razors from Walter and a box of very good cigars from Pop [note - Oliver]. In the evening Jack and I went into the pier and listened to the Band of the Bedfordshire Regiment.

June 23rd

Victoria disaster. The following signal was made from the Harbour Master Signal station "Terrible news from the Mediterranean. Camperdown and Victoria collided. Victoria sunk in 80 fathoms. Commander-in-chief and about 250 men drowned. 25 officers saved." Appended [*an extract of the Western Morning Daily News dated Saturday, June 24th*] is an account of the disaster as first received in England, but it has subsequently transpired, however, that none of these surmises were correct, but the whole thing happened through most lamentable error of Admiral Tyron. He himself admitted this error to Captain Bourke and the Staff Commander when the ship was sinking and told him it was entirely his fault the collision occurred. The news created a profound sensation in the country, such a calamity not having happened since the loss of HMS Captain in 1870. Many men appear to have been killed by the screws which revolved at a great rate when her stern came clear of the water, and others were killed by the spars which floated to the surface. The discipline was perfect and not a man left the ship until the order was given to everyone to save themselves. The ram of the Camperdown struck the ship on the starboard side near the turret and happened to strike in a very large compartment. The forepart of the ship rapidly filled and her head became buried in the water then she suddenly listed over to starboard and sank bottom upwards, the last thing seen being her stern with the screws rapidly revolving in the air. The sight must have been appalling. The Camperdown was very seriously damaged, her ram being nearly broken off and several large holes and knocked in her bows. Had it not been for her collision bulkhead, she must have also gone down. The diagram illustrates the cause of the disaster.



HMS Victoria sinking, HMS Nile on the left

The dotted line shows the track of the ships shows the original organisation. shows proposed organisation. On the evolution being attempted, the Camperdown rammed the Victoria at the spot marked +. The dotted line shows what was meant, but this was not possible as they would overlap, there being insufficient room for the ships to turn. The turning circle of the Victoria was 800 yards and the distance between the two flagships in the first position, 6 cables or about 1,210 yards. The Camperdown's turning circle being nearly as much as the Victoria's. It will be seen that a collision was inevitable. It really seems hard to realise the fearful disaster which has befallen the Navy.

July 4th

Collision with pilot. Just as we were going to get under weigh from the anchor, the Pilot ran into us through some mishap. Her flying jibboom, ran between our port, foremost pair of main shrouds and carried them away, beside smashing our dinghy and breaking the cutter's davit and damaging the cutter and hammock netting. She did no damage to herself beyond smashing her bumpkin and carrying away her jibboom and head gear. We were both told to the buoy and immediately we unbent unbent sails and started stripping the mainmast, which we almost finished by the evening.

July 5th

Royal wedding. Day of general rejoicing throughout the country owing to the marriage of the Duke of York, Prince George, with the Princess May of Teck [*note – future King Geroge V and Queen Mary*]. It was celebrated in Plymouth in various ways including an illumination of ships and a burning ship in the evening. The brigs, and other craft in the harbour, burnt coloured lights and a ship with old masts and sails fitted to her and filled with tar and inflammables was burnt, the effect being very good.



July 10th to 20th

Dartmouth. Visit to Dartmouth with Pilot and Liberty.



Sketch of Nautilus and Liberty by CT 30th July 1893

Aug 3rd to the 9th

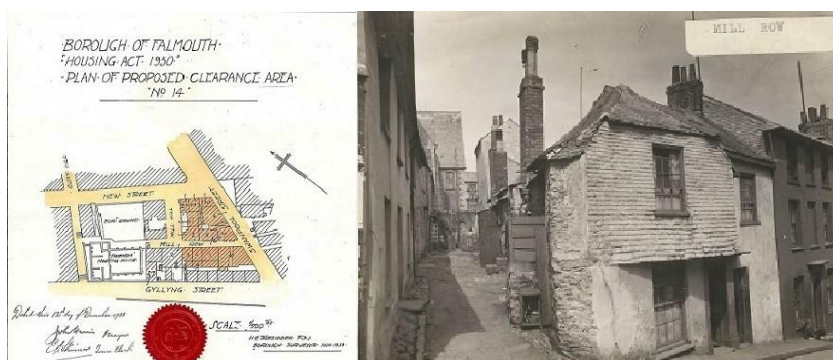
On leave in Warwick. We afterwards walked up to Peers Gaveston's monument on Blacklow Hill. This monument was erected some 50 years ago on the spot where he was beheaded in 1312. It bears the following inscription, as near as I can remember "In the hollow of this rock was beheaded, by barons lawless as himself, Piers Gaveston, Earl of Cornwall, the minion of a hateful King. In life and death, a memorable instance of misrule. July 1st, 1312." *[note – Gaveston was the favourite of Edward II]*



Sketch of HMS Nautilus

August 23rd to 28th

Falmouth slums. Visit to Falmouth for Falmouth Regatta (25th). On my return however, I passed through some filthy slums which I thought it do well for the sanitary inspector to visit. Garbage etc was lying about in profusion and there was an open drain running down the alley in one place I passed through.



Falmouth in 1930s

September 2nd

A trip through Cornwall. After some lunch started for our intended bicycle trip. I had to walk to a place near the station for my bicycle and having got it into order we proceeded for the GWR station. It is a pneumatic tyred machine and very light. We went by train to Liskeard and from there rode to Bodmin which is a very good run of about 10 miles. From Bodmin we proceeded to Wadebridge about 6 miles distant and from there to Saint Neath. Here I began to feel most fearfully hungry, having practically had nothing since breakfast for our lunch was light and I felt I could not go on till I had some food. I went into the nearest cottage where I had a plentiful supply of jam, cream cakes etc, and felt quite well again after it and was able to proceed. It now began to get dark and on the way to Tintangel we lost our way two or three times and the road in some places was bad. There was one hill which was literally like a wall, our progression was thus rather slow and we had to walk up one hill about one mile long. We arrived at Tintangel at about 10:00 PM to find that there was absolutely no accommodation available at the hotel. We managed to find a cottage, however, and after some supper retired to roost.
[note -returned to ship on the 3rd]

October 3rd

Pilot in trouble again. I met Lt Savoury (Captain of 'Pilot') who told me he had been in collision with a trawler. It was the trawler's fault, although by hard swearing they appear to have turned the blame on to the pilot.

October 15th

Visit to HMS Empress of India. He afterwards showed me over the ship. She is one of the new battleships built under the Naval Defence Act and is sister ship to the Royal Sovereign. Her size is enormous and it took us about half an hour to get around her. The flats, passages, etc below are wonderful and they are so extensive that it takes a long time to find your way about the ship.

October 31st

Leaving HMS Nautilus/ Servant Ferris. At about 5:00 PM the captain asked the Doctor, Boatswain and myself into his cabin and took his farewell by cracking a bottle of fizz. Having got my things packed up, I left the ship by shoreboat about 6:30 PM with much regret. Landed at the Admiral's Hard, my servant coming with me (Ferris), to whom I said goodbye on the Hard. Ferris was the inventor of the Ferris Wheel now in use at the Chicago Exhibition. He constructed a model of it about 3 years ago and drove it by wind. Not having enough money to bring it forward and patent it, he sold it to a chief

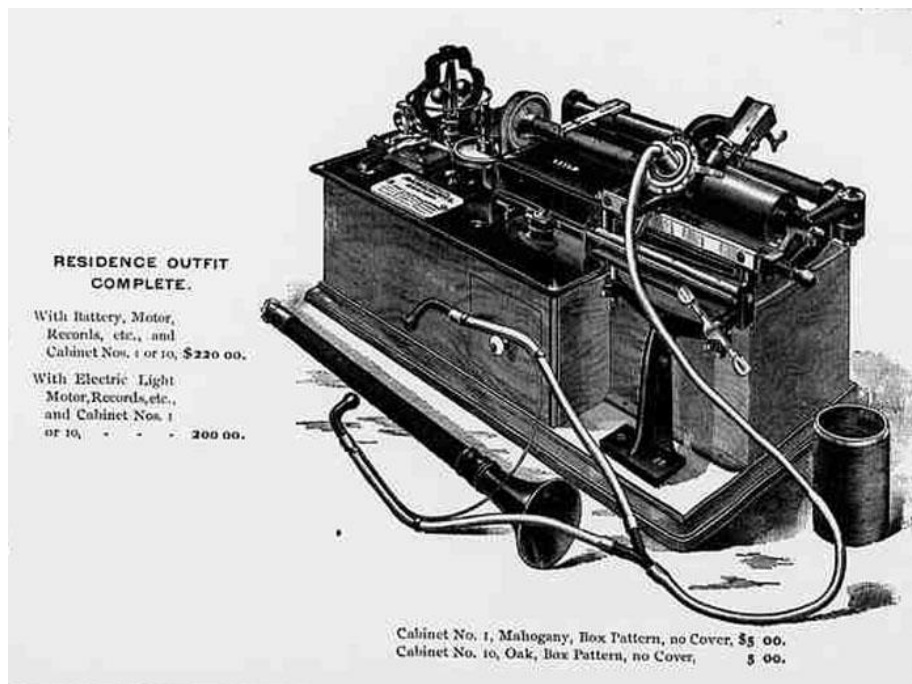
engineer in the navy on condition that if he made use of it, it should be called after Ferris. Ferris sold it for £5 and at present derives no benefit from it, which seems hard luck.

November the 1st to 30th

On leave in Warwick.

November 3rd

The phonograph. Heard the wonderful invention of Edison's, the 'Phonograph' or talking machine. By holding up some India rubber tubes to the air, we heard a piece from an American band played in New York, the speech made by Mr Gladstone into the instrument, to comic songs and a scene in the Birmingham Police Court. It was truly marvellous. The music in all cases with perfect and the words and every sound could be distinctly heard.



[Could have been something like this]



November 17th

Appointment to HMS Thrush. To my astonishment I found by the morning paper that I was appointed to HMS Thrush, Cape of Good Hope and West Coast of Africa Station. I was rather disappointed that I am not appointed for navigating duties and also at having to go to that station which is considered so unhealthy. I am appointed to relieve Lt Child (1st Lt) with whom I was in Minotaur in the manoeuvres of 1890.



November 21st

London. Travelled up with Arthur and Jack (Nelson) Ward (cousin). We went up to the Admiralty and enquired there about my passage out to the Cape. I got the desired information and found I was to leave from Southampton in the Union SS Company's ship Gaul, on December the 2nd.

November 22nd

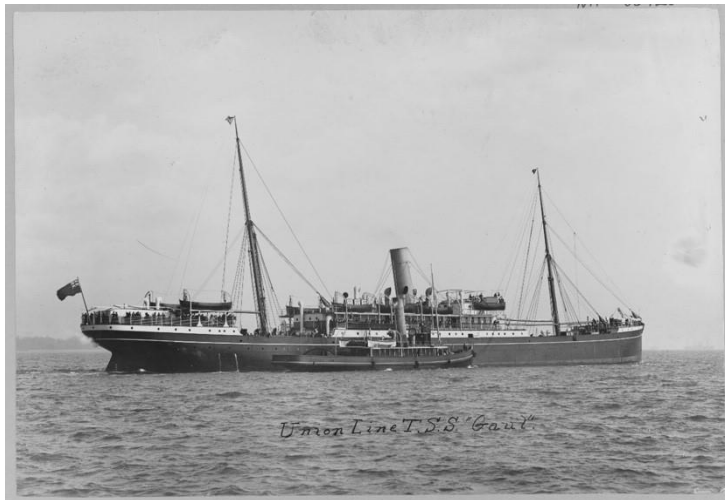
Family. Called on Aunt Jesse (Bird) about 10:30 AM where I saw Rose, Kattie and Mary (cousins).

December 1st

London - staying with Uncle Sam and Aunt Emily. Left to my exceeding sorrow for Paddington where I arrived at 5:45 PM. Took a cab to Uncle Sam's where I met Aunt Emily and saw Percy, who was a baby in arms when I last saw him and who is now about seven years old.

December 2nd to 26th

Passage to South Africa. Joined SS Gaul for passage to Simon's Town to join HMS Thrush.



December 15th

Crossing the line. Crossed the equator in the early morning. This is the first time I have crossed the line, but there were no celebrations in the shape of ducklings etc. as the company will not allow it owing to complaints made by passengers.

December 25th

Christmas Day. There was nothing to do on board in the daytime and I spent anything but a Merry Christmas. In the evening fizz was supplied at dinner. I felt rather down in the dumps in the evening and altogether spent a rather miserable day. Table Mountain was sighted about midnight.

December 26th

Arrived in South Africa and joined HMS Thrush. Arrived in Table Bay [*note – Cape Town's harbour*] in the night and upon waking up in the morning I found we were secured alongside the wharf. After breakfast, I got my luggage out of the Wharf and having said goodbye to Captain Tyacke and her passengers I knew, left the ship at about 9:30 AM with much regret, for I had had a very pleasant time in her. There was nothing to do in the town, all the shops being shut as it was Bank Holiday, so we had to while away the time at the Botanical Gardens. Caught the 2.50 train to Simon's Town and after a very tedious journey arrived by 3:45 PM. I got a passage off to the Thrush which was lying at the trooper buoy some distance out. The trip off was wretched as it was blowing so hard and I got very wet. Felt most miserable for the rest of the day as everything was strange and there was no one on board except the chief engineer and gunner and it was blowing hard. My first impressions of Simon's Bay was there for anything but a pleasant one. HMS Thrush is classed as a screw gunboat of 805 tonnes and 720 horsepower. She was commissioned at Chatham on 25th of August 1891 [*6 x 4 inch and 2 x 3pdr - wrecked 1917*].



December 27th

Passage. Proceeded to sea at noon for Durban P Natal. Everyone seemed very miserable on leaving Simon's Bay as it is considered the best place on the station. I do not mind leaving, but I did not feel particularly lively and was in rather melancholy spirits for the next week.

December 30th

Weather. Passing the coast of K. land. It came on to blow rather hard in the evening and so after quarters, the foreyard and topmosts were struck. Very rough sea in the night and the ship knocking about badly