During these later years of my life, I have often seriously thought of trying to record the story of my life. Although it may have been commonplace enough in itself in comparison with many of my fellow men, the reading of this story will possibly be of interest to my family or friends that remembered me. I do not profess any claims of literary attainments, so if what I write appears crude and unpolished, I trust this effort of mine will be excused.

These pages are not written with any attempt on my part to show any special characteristics of myself, but to just put down in an unvarnished way the account of my wanderings and interesting people that I have come in contact with, many of which have passed on to their great award.

The majority of autobiographies commence with a description of the ancestors of the person described in the story, which may or may not go back for many years, but it is not possible for me to do that.

I was born of unknown parentage and in spite of many efforts of mine, in my later years, I have never been able to discover any trace of them, in fact I could not even find the Home or Institution in which I was placed as an infant. My narrative, therefore, will commence at a time when an advertisement appeared in a religious magazine called "The Christian Million", now non-existant, offering for adoption a baby boy.

One of the many subscribers to this magazine was a gentleman by the name of Joseph Walker, then residing in a small market town called Alfreton in Derbyshire, England. His occupation was that of an insurance agent for the Prudential Life Assurance Co. The family at that time consisted of his wife Mary, a son Ernest, and two daughters, Sarah-Ann and Florence.

The advertisement concerning the adoption of the baby boy caught the eye of one or the other of my future foster parents, and probably thinking that another son would level up the family somewhat, got in communication with the Institution in which I had been placed, and stated that they were prepared to receive me into their family.

The Institution could not have been in very good circumstances for I have since learned that one stipulation of my arrival in Alfreton from London was the payment of transportation of a nurse's fare return to London. I should say here that probably only half the fare was paid, as the nurse who was responsible for my delivery to Alfreton had also a baby girl to deliver to a master plumber, by the name of Towlson, who lived in the neighbouring town of Somercotes. I never did afterwards come in contact with my little fellow traveller. I arrived safely in Alfreton and my nurse returned the same day back to London.

It may seem strange but the only information regarding myself afforded to my foster parents by the Institution was that my name was Frank. Whether that name was given to me there or whether I originally had it I could not say. In any case no registration of my birth has ever been found but curious to relate the Institution stated that I was born in the Parish of St. Giles Cripplegate, London, and the date of my birth was June 6, 1885.

I must have been about 18 months old at the time of my adoption. I have seen since the little photo of myself dressed in a chequered dress, taken I presume at the Institution and sent to my foster parents for their approval. I wish to state at this point that I doubt that any home in the world could have given a more loveable family circle than the one I was destined to live in. From the time of my arrival I was considered as absolutely one of the family and it was not until I grew older, and even then my

information came from an outside source, I became aware that I was an adopted son.

My father, as I shall now call him, was an earnest, God-fearing man, and was greatly respected in the small town in which we lived. His occupation as insurance agent made him acquainted with not only the majority of the town, but also the countryside, through the different villages in the district. After walking throughout the week on his rounds, as he used to term them, he would often on a Sunday walk 5 or 6 miles to some little wayside chapel to deliver a sermon, as he was for many years a lay preacher in the Methodist Church. My mother, as I shall now call her, was a good and true mate to my father and also took quite a prominent part in our local chapel activities. She was considered a little reserved by many of her acquaintances but she was a mighty fine mother to us all.

At three years of age I attended a little private school near where we lived that was conducted by two elderly spinster sisters by the name of Misses Greensill, and from there I graduated to the regular day school. Board schools were not much in evidence in those days and our town school was controlled by the Church of England. The parents of each scholar had to contribute two pence per week. Our schoolmaster, Mr. Helliwell, was also choirmaster in the Parish Church of England.

One of my earliest recollections, when I was about five years of age, was seeing three companies of soldiers, who came to Alfreton and district to prevent disorder which attended the Coal Miners Strike which spread throughout the mining districts of England in 1890. Fortunately no clash occurred between the armed forces and the miners after the riot act had been read by our Squire, Mr. Palmer Morewood, who was Justice of the Peace. I always remember the glittering uniforms of the soldiers which I afterwards was

told, when I was older, consisted of the Yorkshire Dragoons, Welsh Fusileers and 17th Lancers.

When I was eight years of age, my eldest foster sister Sarah-Ann was married to a young coal miner by the name of William Davis which left Ernest, Florence and myself at home. Ernest was employed at that time by the Blackwell Colliery Co. as clerk in the offices. He was also considered quite a musician and his string band, of which he was the leader, was quite in demand by the gentry for dancing throughout the district. He also gave me a few lessons on the piano, an instrument I have always been fond of, and which I have strummed indifferently here and there all my life.

My schooldays passed along smoothly with the exception of my weakness for playing truant, which brought down upon me the rigid discipline of my mother, who whilst possessing a warm heart also had a corrective hand.

In 1897 came Queen Victoria's Jubilee, 60 years a Queen. We had been prepared by our schoolmaster Mr. Helliwell to sing suitable songs for the celebration, at the end of which we were all presented with a china cup on which Her Majesty's likeness was superimposed. Before this event had taken place Ernest had married and we had left our home on Nottingham Road and gone to live in a new home which father had had built on Prospect St., a property which had just been opened up and our new home was named Woodbine Cottage.

Up to this time I had been attending regularly with my parents the Methodist Chapel, where even at my age at that time I was a member of the choir. I had also been baptized in that chapel shortly after my adoption. Mr. Helliwell our day schoolmaster who, as I have mentioned was also choirmaster in the Church of England, desired to have me in his choir, so he approached my father

on the subject, and my father being very broad-minded, left the question for me to decide. Whether the cassock and surplice intrigued me or not I could not say, but I decided to become a choir boy in the parish church and a year or two later I was confirmed by the Bishop of Derby into the Church of England. This was the first of many changes to come in that respect.

Shortly after the Jubilee celebration in 1897, having passed through the highest grade at our school, I left and secured my first employment as newspaper boy in the service of Mr. A. W. Pearson, Newsagent and Stationer. My job consisted of going down early in the morning to the railway station in order to pick up a bundle of London newspapers that was thrown off the express train as she roared through Alfreton at about 80 miles per hour. The distribution of these papers through the town and district would occupy my time until noon and then I would make myself generally useful, running errands, etc. until 8 o'clock at night, with the exception of Wednesday which was half a day holiday. My weekly pay was 4 shillings, which I proudly handed to my mother. Many of my papers were delivered to the local gentry in the district and what with tips and delicacies from the butler's pantries I got along pretty good.

My next job after spending 6 months on the paper route, was in a local sawmill for T. Lawson & Son, where my duties were to clean up the shavings in the cabinetmaker's shop. Whilst I was there the foreman's son had the misfortune to have three fingers taken off by a planer. I was at the time standing by the machine waiting for the piece of wood that he was operating on, and I certainly got a shock when I saw the head sawyer come along and pick up the severed finger ends from the shavings under the machine. My services with the sawmill terminated at the end of another 6 months.

My next venture into industry was quite a change. It was in a watchmaker's shop owned by E. E. Staddon in Alfreton, and for

another 6 months I was taught how to clean and repair clocks and jewellry, but unfortunately I had the misfortune to overheat a brooch that I was putting a new catch on. The said brooch happened to be highly treasured by a voluble lady and after the remarks had passed, which were also overheated, between my employer, myself and the lady, who proved by her remarks that she was no lady, I resigned.

By this time, having had three different jobs in 18 months, I was, as you might say, fairly well launched into industry. My parents were beginning to wonder what next.

The town of Alfreton is on the main line of the Midland Railway, now known as the London, Midland and Scottish Railway. The railway company was laying two more extra tracks alongside their present ones in order to keep the passenger and freight service separate. The stretch of track for about 10 miles that included Alfreton was contracted for by Thos. Oliver and Sons, Railway Contractors of Rugby. This work had just started about the time I left the jewellry trade behind me. The timekeeper for the construction company, Mr. Drake, had taken up his residence near where we lived and became acquainted with my father, so through his influence I obtained work on the new construction job.

A steam shovel was working in a deep cutting that led to the proposed entrance of a new tunnel that was being made. Horses were used to pull the dump wagons to and from the steam shovel. My job was to hook the horses on to the wagons. There were two horses I had to attend to, one horse was a big Flemish animal. The driver of that horse was a man by the name of Bob Jones who always cautioned me to never allow the chain that hooked on to the wagon to touch this particular horse's hind legs. One day I was careless enough to do so. The horse did not kick, but instead he turned right around and seized me by the upper part of my clothing, lifted

me off my feet, walked over to a trench in which water was running and deliberately dropped me in. I carried the marks of his teeth on my chest for quite a time after.

I was transferred from that job to a better one with more pay attached to it, and that was to be a fireman on a small vertical boiler which supplied steam to the winding engine to one of the shafts in the new tunnel.

One morning when I arrived early in order to light the fire in the boiler, I found a man apparently asleep, laying on the wood that I required. I gave him a little shake to wake him up but to my surprise I found that he was dead. When the engine driver arrived a little later, after I had shown him the body, he dispatched me to town to get a policeman. At the inquest it was found that he had died of heart failure during the night previous. My father was one of the jurymen at the inquest.

There were also many fatal accidents which unfortunately attend most construction work, two of which I was a witness to. One poor man plunged 200 feet down one of the tunnel shafts, and the other accident was due to a premature explosion whilst blasting in which the foreman of the gang was killed. I was not far from him when it occurred.

I had two narrow escapes from death myself. One of my duties was to attend a small pump situated at the foot of the shaft which was about 200 feet deep. This pump was used to keep the pit clear of seepage water. One Sunday evening I was being lowered down the shaft during a violent thunderstorm. I was alone at the time. It being Sunday only the engine driver and myself were on duty. The skip in which I was being lowered was just a box with two chains that were fastened to the hoisting rope which was made of steel wire. A flash of lightening struck the headgear over the mouth of

the pit, and then it ran down the steel wire to the chains which I had hold of. Fortunately I was practically at the bottom when the flash occurred. It flung me out of the skip and put out my light that I had with me, and there I was alone in the pitch darkness trying to find the skip again in order to get a new light for my lamp. I certainly was scared and the engine driver told me after that if I had not had both hands on the chains I would have been instantly killed.

One other escape I had was after I had been promoted to fireman on the steam shovel. On Sunday mornings the engine driver and I used to wash the boiler out when empty, and I usually went inside the boiler to chip the scale and dirt off the inside. This particular Sunday I had nearly finished inside when I heard the engine driver, who by the way was very deaf, putting on the manhole door which covered the hole by which I had entered. He had forgotten that I was inside. I hammered and hammered in order to attract his attention and the flame of my little candle began to flicker out when to my relief I heard him taking the door off again. When he peeped in I do not know which of the two of us was the most scared. If he had not remembered me in time I would have been suffocated, drowned, and then boiled, at my tender age too. Needless to say, I never went in that boiler again unless I had a piece of rope tied around my waist, with the other end hanging outside of the boiler.

The steam shovel on which I was fireman, was working at that time about 1½ miles from my home in Alfreton. I had to be at work at 5 o'clock in the morning in order to raise steam in the boiler for 6 o'clock. It was my custom to walk up the main line to work, which as I have said before ran parallel to the new line under construction. One very foggy morning it was almost impossible to see more than 6 feet ahead. I was walking along the track on my way to work, and knowing that the Scotch Express on its way to

London was due to pass me about that time, I stepped down the embankment until she had roared by. On resuming my way, I was just passing a small hut in which the fog signalman is situated. He was a man I knew very well, so I stopped to speak to him. He was at the time picking up something from the ground and to my surprise he told me gruffly to hurry off to my work. I was told shortly after I arrived at work that the express had cut three men to pieces, on their way to work just ahead of me, and the fog signalman had been picking up various parts of the unfortunate victims, and strange to say, one of them was our next door neighbour's son.

My mother did not altogether care for me, young as I was, to be associated with this class of work, but I was getting good wages, sometimes between 20 to 30 shillings a week, which was at my age a tremendous sum. I used to turn it over to her, less a generous allowance for myself. I liked the work I was engaged in, so I carried on until the contract was finished in the early part of 1902. I was then 16 years of age. What to do next was my problem. I could not hope to get the same amount of wages anywhere else in our district. All the construction men that I had worked with had left and gone to other jobs in different parts of the country. I did not feel content to settle down to the quiet everyday life in Alfreton, so I decided to look for another construction job. This meant, of course, my leaving home and one of the best homes that any boy could have had.

Construction men, or navvies, as they are known in the British Isles, are as a rule a hardworking, hardliving class of men and always willing to fight at the drop of the hat and generally classed as a nuisance to the local authorities in whatever district construction work is being done. But on the other hand they are generous to a fault and always willing to help each other out in times of need. They travel around the country to the different

construction jobs that are in progress. The usual salutation was that if one should come on to a new job, and should he know anyone already working there, the one that was working would put his hand in his pocket and give the newcomer the inevitable shilling, as a standby until he had started work.

I had heard from my former workmates that a new railway was to be built in the Manchester district. So I packed a few of my belongings in a bundle, said good-bye to Mother and Father and started on my way to the job that was known as the Wilmslow and Sevenshulme Railway. The work was being done by Naylor Bros., Contractors, of Huddersfield. I could have easily gone by train to the new job, but I was young and imaginative so I decided to go in the orthodox method of construction men of those days, and that was to go "on tramp" or walk the distance.

It is about 80 miles roughly from Alfreton to the district to where I was going. I was well supplied with money and it being springtime of the year, it was both a pleasure and a novelty for me. I passed through the lovely scenery of the Peak District of Derbyshire, Hope, Edale, Chapel en le Frith until I came to Stockport, then I passed on through Cheadle Village to the next village of Gatley where the headquarters of the job I intended trying to work on were. It was in the evening when I arrived and pouring with rain, so I made my way to the stables as that seemed to be the only place where there was any life. I heard a man's voice speaking to his horse inside the stable. On investigation I found him to be none other than the horse driver Bob Jones whom I had worked with before on the Alfreton work, the man whose horse had bit me as before mentioned. When he saw me he tried not to look too surprised, but solemnly put his hand in his pocket and gave me the proverbial shilling. I casually mentioned that I thought of looking the job over the next day, and as I turned to go, he said, "Hey where do you think you are going, you go on up to the house"

and he gave me his address, and "tell the old woman to give you some dry clothes and supper". The old woman in question was of course Mrs. Jones. I went on up to the house and Mrs. Jones, a kind motherly soul, gave me a hearty welcome. She knew my father from when they lived in Alfreton. My father used to call at their house to collect the insurance money. She was greatly concerned to know whether my parents knew where I was.

The next morning I went down to the works. A steam shovel had recently arrived and was being got ready to start in operation. Bob introduced me to the engine driver and told him that I was a good fireman so I started in to work right away. I boarded with the engine driver who had taken a house in the neighbouring village of Cheadle.

After my day's work, in the evenings, I soon made myself acquainted with the native boys of the village, one especially, Billy Warburton, and it was due to my correspondence with him in after years that drew me back to the same district. However I must not get ahead of my story.

I joined the Church Lads Brigade, the Boy Scout movement was not known then, also the Church of England choir. Whilst I was there the coronation of King Edward VII took place, in which I took part in the local celebrations. After a little while I moved my boarding place to a farmhouse in the Gatley district. The farm was situated on the top of the cutting in which our steam shovel was working. It was very convenient for me, for I could slip out of bed early in the morning, go down the embankment to the steam shovel, light my boiler up, and then I would go back and have my breakfast. I was made very comfortable at the farm. Mrs. Clark, the farmer's wife, regarded me as one of her own sons. I became a member of the Gatley Church of England choir. That same church was destined to be the scene of another episode in my life later, but I did not know it then.

There was just one sad incident that occurred on our job, that of the death of one of our men. His duty was to level up the timbers for the steam shovel to proceed ahead on. The big steel scoop, or bucket as we call it, accidently came down and crushed his skull. Having taken a few lessons in St. John's Ambulance whilst a member of the Church Lads Brigade, I applied a skull bandage, but of course the poor man was dead before the doctor arrived. It was the same doctor that had taken us boys through the course.

Our work on the new railway was drawing to a close in the early part of 1903, so I thought I would go home for the Easter Holidays. I said good-bye to all my friends and took the train home this time.

One of my reasons for going home was that of asking for my parents' consent to join the Royal Navy, and as I was under age their consent was necessary. Mother at first demurred, but my father said, "If he joins the Navy, we will at least know where he is". Having got my mother's permission, my father and I went to the recruiting office on Derby Road, Nottingham. Sergeant Hines of the Royal Marines was in charge. I was passed OK by the doctor and the necessary papers were signed by my father. I was sworn in as a stoker in the Royal Navy.

The sergeant gave me the King's shilling this time. It was on Saturday, May 9, 1903 when I joined. I said good-bye to my father, who went back home that night, and I stayed over the week-end in the recruiting office.

On Monday morning the sergeant took two other recruits and myself down to the railway station in Nottingham, wished us good luck, and dispatched us to London where we were met by another sergeant and taken to the Admiralty Office, Whitehall. The other

two recruits went to Chatham, but I preferred Portsmouth where I arrived that evening.

A seaman petty officer met me at the station, and I felt as though I had entered another world entirely. The streets seemed to be full of sailors, soldiers, and civilians all mixed up. It was like a dream to me. My guide piloted me through the streets until we came to the dockyard and then on to what looked to me in the dark like a hugh Noah's Ark which was in reality the old "Duke of Wellington", one of the few remaining wooden walls of old England. That night I slept in a hammock for the first time in my life. The next morning I was lined up on the upper deck with some other recruits to be entered up in the ship's books. Whilst we stood there we, that is the recruits, were startled to hear big guns roaring. At first we thought war had been declared but we discovered after it was just the Whale Island Gunnery School practising.

After being kitted up, that is to say having received my clothing and bedding, also my own personal hammock, I went through the order of the bath, changed out of my civilian clothing into uniform and then I felt as if I really belonged to the rest of the crowd. It was then I was able to look at my surroundings. The "Duke of Wellington", "Duke of Marlborough", "Hannibal" and "Asia" were old wooden hulks used as a barracks, or home for all men not on commissioned or seagoing ships, and were moored to a stone jetty. The old "Victory", Nelson's old flagship, lay out in midstream at anchor and was used at that time for signalmen and boys. She was also a naval museum for visitors to explore for the admission fee of six pence. The hulks were dispensed with shortly after my entry into the service, as then the handsome brick barracks built ashore were completed.

On May 13th I was sent to the H.M.S. "Nelson" to commence my

training to be a stoker and that night I was allowed to go ashore for the first time in my uniform. I stayed six months on the training ship and during that time I passed through the different classes which included rifle and cutlass drill besides my stoke-hold training. We were allowed weekend leave on shore. I usually stayed overnight in the Sailor's Home, an institution founded by Miss Agnes Weston, affectionately known as "Aggie" by all the men in the Navy.

We had to be careful to recognise all officers at all times either on board or ashore by saluting. That lesson was brought home to me rather sharply. I sat one Sunday morning, shortly after my entry into the service, on a seat in Victoria Park. I was reading a newspaper at the time, when I heard a stern voice say, "Where are your manners?" I looked up and saw an elderly gentleman in a rough tweed suit and soft hat standing in front of me. I dropped my newspaper and automatically stood to attention and saluted. The old gentleman returned my salute, gave an amused smile and passed on. Another sailor had evidently witnessed the scene for he came up and said, "Lumme do you know who that was?" I said, "No". "Well", he said, "That's old Tug Wilson" and when I asked who Tug Wilson might be, he looked at me pityingly and said "Admiral Sir Charles Wilson". I nearly dropped. I suppose my cap ribbon saved me for on it was H.M.S. "Nelson" which pro-claimed me to be a newcomer to the service. Admiral Sir Charles Wilson was in command of the Home Fleet at that time.

At the end of my six month's training, I left the "Nelson" as a fully fledged stoker 2nd class ready for sea. I was sent to the barracks on shore, as then they had been completed and occupied, to wait my turn to go to sea. Having passed my 18th brithday I was entitled to my tot of rum which was issued at one bell sea time or what you would call 12:30 on shore. We used to call it "bubbley" but it had an older name than that, "grog". This defini-

tion was derived from the old days when Admiral Vernon was First Sea Lord in the Admiralty. When he was at sea, he was accustomed to wear what was known as a grogram cloak over his shoulders. The Admiral was nicknamed "Old Grog" and as he was the instigator of rum being issued to the men in the fleet, the name of "grog" was applied to the daily issue of rum. On very special occasions this issue was doubled and was known as "splicing the main brace".

On the 3rd of December I was ordered to pack my bag and get ready to go to the H.M.S. "Ariadne" that was being commissioned to join the North American and West Indies Station. Ten days leave was granted to us, and I spent a very pleasant holiday at home. On my return to barracks, I was disappointed to be told that I was not required for the "Ariadne", and that I was to go to the H.M.S. "Suffolk", a new cruiser that was being built in Portsmouth dockyard, and was now ready to do her steam trials in the English Channel.

The trials occupied 3 days and were a success. The engine builders Humphries and Tennant of Glasgow gave each of the stokehold staff, myself included, 10 shillings for our efforts. During the trials we accidentally tore through the Brixham fishing fleet's nets, the damage of which I believe the Admiralty had to pay for.

On my return to barracks, I worked for a week on an old cruiser, the "Imperuise", that was laying in one of the docks.

On the 22nd of December I again packed my bag and went to the H.M.S. "King Alfred" that was under orders to go to Hong Kong, China to take a relief crew to the battleship H.M.S. "Glory" that was already out on the China Station, and bring her old crew back. I did not go home for the Christmas Holidays, but went to stay with a shipmate at his home in Brighton.

The "King Alfred" was one of four of her class, one of the

others being the "Good Hope" that was later to come to a sad end at Coronel, South America with Admiral Craddock on board during the 1914-1918 War.

Our ship was a new ship, in fact this was her maiden voyage. Captain Stephen King-Hall was in command. He was a very fine man and a great friend of Miss Agnes Weston, before mentioned.

On the last day of the old year 1903 we left Portsmouth and steamed down the English Channel on our way to Gibraltar which was our first port of call. My duties as 2nd class stoker were to trim coal, that is place coal in front of the furnace doors for the older stokers in the service. I did not stay long at that job, as I was soon promoted to 1st class stoker and took my place on the fires, due probably to my previous experience before I entered the service.

New Year's Day 1904 at sea and we had passed the Ushant Light on the French Coast and entered the famed Bay of Biscay. Fortunately for my stomach's sake it was not so rough as it usually is. In about a day's time we sighted the light of Cape Finisterre which is at the other end of the Bay and passed down the coast of Portugal to Cape St. Vincent which we rounded and arrived at Gibraltar in the night time. The outlines of the hugh Rock were practically invisible in the darkness. The numberless lights from top to bottom made it appear like a gigantic Christmas tree lit up. Early next morning, the 5th of January, the ship as she lay at anchor in the roadstead was surrounded by numerous small boats loaded with fruit, fish, nuts and curios of all description for sale by the natives. We were not able to go ashore, as we sailed that evening for Malta, our next stop. It is curious to note the different color of the water, the Atlantic being a brownish green, and the Mediterranean is real blue. It was also interesting to watch the different ships as they passed by, dipping their ensigns,

that is the flag at the stern of the ship in salute, which would be returned in a like manner by our ship. We arrived at Malta in the early morning of the 8th of January. No leave on shore was given and we sailed that evening for Port Said.

In between Malta and Port Said we were up against a very heavy head sea, which gave us a rough passage. I am afraid the record of this trip will have to confine itself more to dates of arrivals and departures, as we were in such a hurry to get to Hong Kong in order to discharge the relief crew to the "Glory" and bring the others back that we did not get hardly any chance to go ashore anywhere either on our way out or back. I made the same trip later in another ship, with the same ports of call, which was much more interesting, as I will relate further on in my story.

We arrived at Port Said on the 12th of January and picked up the pilot that was to take us through the Suez Canal. The speed allowed going through the canal, which is about 90 miles long, is only 5 knots per hour. That is not quite 6 miles per hour. The reason for this is the canal is so shallow and has to be constantly dredged, and any greater speed tends to wash the sand from the sides to the bottom.

We passed through during the night with our hugh searchlights making everything as bright as day. Billions of sand flies, mosquitoes and other flying insects, attracted by the lights, accompanied us on our way. Just before we got to the Bitter Lakes, which are about half way through, we struck a sand bar and were held up for an hour or two until we got clear. It takes more than 12 hours to go through. The channel is so narrow that it appears almost possible to jump ashore on either side. In the Bitter Lakes the passage is marked out with painted buoys on either side of the channel.

We arrived at Suez, which is at the Red Sea end of the canal,

on the 13th of January and proceeded to coal ship as our bunkers were getting low. We stayed at Suez three days, and with the exception of donkey riding over the hot sands and coming back to drink warm beer, there is not much else to do.

We left Suez on the 16th of January and entered the well-known Red Sea, although I did not notice a great deal of difference in the colour. Mount Sinai was pointed out to me on our port side. There is always a curious looking cloud halo just above the crest of that particular mountain. Old sailors say it is there all the time. The Red Sea is a long narrow body of water, but as our course lay through the middle, we did not see the shore on either side. Before we reached Perim, we passed the H.M.S. "Blenheim", homeward bound after doing a three year commission in the Far East. It is pretty to watch the small signal flags running up and down the halyards conveying the messages between our ship and theirs, bidding each other good-bye and good luck.

We arrived at Perim Island which is close to Aden at the other end of the Red Sea on the 20th of January and left the same say for Columbo, on the Island of Ceylon. It is a beautiful run across the Indian Ocean, that is in the nice weather. Many of us slept on the upper deck when we were off duty, it being so hot below. I became acquainted with that peculiar disease that nearly all newcomers to the tropics get, known as prickly heat, although I suppose it has a technical name for it. The sensation is just as if a million needles were pricking you all over, and you feel like scratching yourself to pieces. They say it is due to the blood adjusting itself to the climate, however several good baths in a strong solution of "Condy's Fluid" (permanganate of potash) gave relief and it soon passed away.

We arrived at Columbo on the 27th of January where we again coaled ship and left on the 31st for Signapore entering the

renowned Straits of Mallaca, the haunts of bloodthirsty native pirates many years ago (read "Hard Cash" by Charles Reade in regards to that).

Arriving at Singapore on the 6th of February we again left on the 8th. Singapore is like a railway junction. Ships bound for Australia carry on due south. We carried on a little more east and then turned north up the China Coast. Our destination, Hong Kong, was reached on the 14th of February. I shall have more to write in regards to Hong Kong later.

We stayed nearly a week. The battleship "Glory" was in port waiting for us. The new crew for her was transferred from our ship and her old crew came on board. They had already done 3 years service on the Station, and were in high spirits to know that they were on their way home to England.

Britian at that time was maintaining a large fleet on the China Station, owing to the trouble that was looming up between Russia and Japan. The Boxer rising had recently been suppressed. We again filled up with coal and on the 20th of February commenced our return trip reaching Singapore on the 24th, leaving on the 25th and arriving at Colombo on the 1st of March. More coal, and we left on the 4th, got to Perim on the 12th, left the same day for Suez, picked up the pilot and passed through the Canal without any mishap this time.

We coaled ship at Port Said, and here it was that a little experience occurred to me which I shall always remember. The supply of coal to the Admiralty is done by private contract in some ports, Port Said being one. Native Arabs are used to stow the coal into the bunkers and it is passed down a shute or pipe from the upper deck to the compartment below. Two natives usually work in each one, of which of course there are many. A stoker is

also detailed off for each bunker also, in order to take care that it is stowed properly, and that no vacant corners are left, which sometimes is the case if the natives are not watched, thereby depriving the ship of its proper quantity of coal.

We wait until the bunker is nearly filled by gravity and then the two natives and the stoker, myself in this particular case, go down the shute by the means of a rope, to complete the filling of the compartment. We commence working at the far corners and gradually fill up to the centre, where the hole from the shute is situated, and where also the coal is coming down.

On this particular occasion, the two natives and myself had nearly finished our bunker. The chief stoker in charge of our section shouted down the shute to ask me how many more bags of coal I required to finish. I told him about a dozen, which would just leave enough room for us to scramble out to climb back up the shute. The chief stoker evidently forgot us, consequently instead of the dozen bags I had asked for, we got completely blocked in, as the coaling party on deck filled the shute right up to the upper deck, thereby cutting off our only exit. To make matters worse, another chief stoker, whose duty it was to place the lid on the bunkers and seal it with white lead in order to keep the water out, came across our bunker and thinking we were all out sealed it up ready for sea. I realised what had happened and wondered how it was all going to turn out. The two natives commenced muttering in their language and looking at me. We were all huddled together. I might say here that there is a certain amount of ventilation supplied to each bunker down a small pipe from the upper deck, but in our case, with the bunker being full it was not so good at that.

Our ultimate escape about 4 hours later was due to the native serang, or boss in charge of his bunch, who on checking up his men, discovered two missing. He happened to know where they should

be. He told the chief engineer about it who called the chief stoker in charge of our section to check up who the stoker was down that particular bunker. A roll call of stokers found me missing of course, and as I happened to be allocated on the list to the bunker where the two natives were supposed to be missing, they commenced to investigate. In order to do this, it meant emptying the bunker down below into the stokehold, which they did, and down we came gradually with the coal until we emerged. I only had swimming trunks on and the natives of course had only their usual loin cloths and it must have been difficult to recognise me from the other two, but of course a good bath soon corrected that. I am sorry to state that the unfortunate chief stoker who forgot we were in there got disrated, although I was not to blame for that.

We left Port Said on the 19th of March, arrived at Malta on the 21st and left again on the 24th. We did not call at Gibraltar at all, but carried on and arrived at Plymouth on the 30th. We stayed a few hours and later entered Portsmouth Harbour the same day, home again.

The next day we again coaled ship, no mishap this time. The old crew of the "Glory" had of course left us and gone on leave. For the next month we had a nice quiet time cleaning up the ship after our trip.

In the "King Alfred" and the other three ships of her class, a large pipe called the main drain was built in below the bilges, at the extreme bottom of the ship, inside of course, and was in reality the suction line to the bilge pumps situated in the engine room. This large pipe extended almost the full length of the ship. It had become blocked up with dirt and required cleaning out. The chief engineer gave orders that the smallest stoker on board was to clean it out, and of course it had to be me.

I was just able to enter the pipe, naked, as there was no room for clothing, and it was my delightful job to push the dirt ahead of me with my hands, there being no room for them at my sides, to the different manholes situated at various intervals on my way. At any rate I received an extra issue of rum and 10 shillings from the chief engineer, out of his own pocket.

On the 6th of May 1904 we said good-bye to the "King Alfred" and her kindly Captain King-Hall and returned to barracks. Ten days leave was granted and I went home for my holidays, and these were spent very pleasantly indeed. Whilst I was on leave I paid a visit to my old friends in Cheadle, as I had kept up correspondence with Ted Warburton, the blacksmith's son. Of course the old construction gang had all left and the railway line we had helped to construct was now in operation. Several of my young friends had left home to join the Army and one of them had joined the Marines, and who I was to meet later in rather a surprising way.

On the 17th of May I returned off leave to the barracks and the next day I was sent to the H.M.S. "Spartiate" who was lying in dock, to help clean her up.

On the 4th of June I went aboard the H.M.S. "Assistance" that was used as a floating workshop for the Fleet, and passed an examination for leading stoker which not only added threepence a day extra on my pay, but relieved me off the fires and gave me engine room duties that were more interesting.

On the 6th of June, my birthday, I was sent to the battleship H.M.S. "Majestic" that had been recently overhauled, to do her steam trials. I stayed on her a week and then on the 13th I was sent to the H.M.S. "Kestrel" torpedo boat destroyer, which was an entirely new experience.

This class of boat is very small, lightly built, and very

fast. The crew all told numbered at that time about 40 men. They are built bigger now. The other ships I had been on, cruisers and battleships, carry about 800 or 900 men, so it was a nice change to go on the "Kestrel" that was being put in commission for the midsummer maneuvers.

We were ready for sea on the 15th and then for about a month we were on patrol in the English Channel, calling at different ports on the south and west coast of England, going ashore at the different places.

We were a jolly little crew of 40. Our boat was one of half a dozen destroyers that formed the patrol. We paid visits to Portland, Weymouth, Falmouth, St. Ives and up to Weston-super-Mare on the Bristol Channel.

While we were in Weymouth, the old prison hulk H.M.S. "Success" was in port on exhibition. This old ship years ago was used to convey convicts from England to Australia and at that time had a very bad reputation for cruelty to the unfortunates that were being exiled, and now her evil days being over, she was towed from port to port and placed on exhibition for the curious to view her scarred decks where the ball and chains of the prisoners had grooved them. The cells on board had a wax effigy of well-known prisoners that she had carried. Three that I remember seeing were that trio of farm laborers who had dared at that time to form a union of farm workers to try and better their condition and were exiled for that reason. Over one cell door was an inscription which read "The worst criminal on board". Inside the cell was a large mirror, and naturally the visitor got a shock when he or she saw their own reflection. The admission fee was sixpence. I spent quite an interesting time on her. Many people have criticised the British Government in allowing her to show the sample of justice in those hard old days.

Falmouth is a pretty place in summer with its old time villages of Penryn and Flushing near by. I took some nice walks around that locality. It is, or was then, the last home port of the old square riggers of which only one or two are left.

One day as the flotilla was steaming out of Portland, line ahead, our boat was the last one in the line. Our boatswain yelled out "man overboard". We stopped ship and sure it was. It was the body of a night watchman that had disappeared 3 weeks previous. It was impossible to handle the body as it was in such a bad state of decomposition, so some of the crew slung a piece of canvas under it and lifted it out of the water and laid it on our upper deck. The senior officer of the flotilla ordered us to take it back to Portland, and my didn't it smell. No one had any dinner that day.

We got back to Portsmouth on the 13th of July. The midsummer maneuvers commenced the next day on the 14th and lasted 6 weeks. This takes the form of a mimic war between two opposing forces, what were usually known as the Red and Blue. In this case our boat was in the Blue Squadron "defending" the home ports. The Red Fleet's headquarters was Ireland, the operations taking place in the Irish Sea.

We were dispatched from Portsmouth to Holyhead in North Wales. During the first week of the maneuvers we had information that some of the Red Squadron were going to "attack" Holyhead at night, so our boat and another one like her, the "Dove", crept out of the harbour at night to intercept the "invaders" and try to "torpedo" them. This was supposed to be done by us stealing up to the "enemy" craft in the darkness and when within torpedo range, switch on our searchlight on the "enemy" and inform them that they had just been "torpedoed". But as luck would have it the "enemy" that night spotted us first with their searchlights and politely

informed us that we had been blown out of the water, and that we, that is the "Kestrel" and "Dove", must go to Waterford in Ireland, the "enemy" base, which naturally ended our activities for the remainder of the maneuvers.

I suppose you might say on reading the names of our two boats, it was a case of killing two birds with one stone. It was embarrassing for our commander, a young lieutenant with two rings on his sleeve, to get "captured" so early in the game, but we did not mind, for the remaining 5 weeks we lay tied up to the wall in Waterford and had a good time ashore.

At the end of the maneuvers, August 24th, the "Kestrel" and "Dove" returned to Portsmouth from Waterford and we certainly had a rough passage across the Irish Sea. As I said before neither of our boats was very big, and although we were supposed to be together, we could not see each other half the time. Either they would be on top of a big roller and us at the bottom or vice versa. We staggered into Falmouth and waited till the blow had died down a bit, as we had strained some plates in the bow and our forehold was full of water.

We got back to Portsmouth on the 25th of August and left the "Kestrel" in dockyard hands for repair and went again on 7 days leave, this time to a new home, as my parents had moved from Alfreton in Derbyshire to my mother's birthplace, Lowdham in Nottinghamshire. My father had been pensioned off by the insurance company and they were both living in comfortable surroundings with their little garden and orchard. My mother's sister also lived in Lowdham with whom I have always corresponded. Another of my mother's sisters lived in Swanwick near Alfreton and one of her sons, my cousin Ernest, emigrated about this time to Canada and settled down on a farm near Gladstone, Manitoba. I was to come in contact with him in later years.

I returned to barracks on the 2nd of September and was sent back to my old boat the "Kestrel" to help clean her up. On the 22nd of October I went to the H.M.S. "Terrible" for the same purpose.

On the 10th of November I again got 7 days leave in order to go to the H.M.S. "Sutlej" which was being put in commission for the China Station. On reaching home I was sorry to find my father sick in bed. Mother said he had caught a chill working in the garden. When I told them I was going to China for 2 years, and as I said good-bye to father as he lay there in bed, he said "Kiss me my son, I am afraid you will not see me when you come back". Mother was not in the room at the time, so I did not say anything to her, but my father's words were true. I did not see him again as he never recovered from his illness and died later whilst I was out in China.

I returned from home on the 17th of November and on the 19th we all went on board the "Sutlej". This cruiser was not quite as large as the "King Alfred" being a few years older, although our crew numbered about 700 men. The "King Alfred" carried 900 men.

Our new skipper was Captain Grant, who although quite a gentleman, was rather distant and reserved in his bearing. We lay alongside what we call "Farewell Jetty" getting ready for sea. On the 28th of November we were inspected by the Admiral in charge of Portsmouth, Sir A. G. Douglas, and after being passed OK we were all mustered aft on the quarterdeck and the Admiral gave us a lecture in regards our behaviour in foreign ports, warning us against the temptations of heavy drinking and vicious living that besets all young sailors who have never been abroad. Whether he was speaking from experience or not I could not say, but I remember he certainly did have a rubicund countenance, but then again it might have been the weather that caused it. If any of us had

any visions of Christmas at home, they were to be destroyed as on the 29th of November we left Portsmouth just as it was getting dark. It had rained all day and now it was turning into snow, rather a dismal send-off.

We did not see a light or pass any ship until we entered the "Pillars of Hercules" as the Straits of Gibraltar were known in the early days. It was daylight this time as we dropped anchor for a few hours, but Gibraltar is not a place you can go very far. At the rear of the Rock on the Spanish side is what is called the neutral zone, our sentries on one side and the Spanish sentries on the other. If some luckless person gets caught within that zone after sunset, he has to stay there till next morning, for he cannot go either way past the sentries at night. The guns of the fortress command the Straits, and all craft have to pass within their range.

We left Gibraltar on the 5th and on the 7th, midway to Malta, we stopped ship for evolutions which consist of abandon ship exercise, collision quarters, fire drill and many other drills that are necessary to meet the different emergencies. All ratings, that is stokers, seamen, marines, and other craftsmen on board have their different stations during the evolutions, and the speed in which they are done is timed along with other ships' records, and it is always the dream of every captain to have the smartest crew in his command.

We again proceeded on our way to Malta, reaching there on the 9th where we stayed 3 days. Malta is really composed of 2 or 3 islands, the next largest being Gozo. The main town of Malta proper is Valetta where we lay at anchor. It is the headquarters of the Mediterranean Fleet. The Fleet was out at sea whilst we were there, so we had the place to ourselves.

The Maltese are somewhat Italian in their appearance and

manner, which is quite natural as Sicily is only 60 miles away to the north. The older women, at the time I was there, still wore the "Hood of Shame", a peculiar shaped bonnet that partially conceals the face. This hood was supposed to be worn for 100 years, an oath that was dated from the time the French captured the island on their way to Egypt. The French soldiers raped the women of the island at that time, hence the "Hood of Shame". Nelson followed up after the French, recaptured the island, and broke up the French Fleet at Abukir near Alexandria. It has been a British possession ever since. The wearing of the "Hood of Shame" is discontinued now I believe.

I paid a visit to a little church where the inside walls are practically covered with skulls and bones of the Knight Templars of St. John of Jerusalem, the original owners of the island. Goats are plentiful in Malta, they are the source of the milk supply for the island. The milkman drives his herd from door to door and the goat is milked right into the customer's container. The goats will eat almost anything. My straw sailor's hat, that we wear on foreign service, blew off with the wind right into a flock of goats and before I could get anywhere near it, it had vanished, also the name of our ship that was on the ribbon.

After taking in 500 tons of coal we left Malta on the 12th for Port Said arriving there on the 15th. There is a fine statue of De Lesseps, the French constructor of the Suez Canal, which you cannot fail to see. We tied up to a jetty for a few hours awaiting our turn to go through the canal. There was a Russian ship astern of us and a Japanese ship ahead of us and that very day the news came that those two countries had declared war. Both of the two ships slipped away that night and we often wondered if they came in contact with each other outside of the harbour. Our run through the canal was uneventful and we reached Suez at the other end on the 16th. There we took in 750 tons of coal and left on the 19th. I did not go ashore at Suez this time.

We passed down the Gulf of Suez into the Red Sea and whilst on our way to Perim several of the crew developed malarial fever so instead of stopping at Perim Island we went over to Aden nearby to land our fever patients in hospital there. Then we returned to Perim where we spent Christmas Day. We were in quarantine, and our Christmas dinner consisted of hard tack, that is the granite-like sea biscuit, salt pork of unknown age, and split pea soup. The only redeeming feature was our tot of rum. We took in another supply of coal, 1405 tons this time. You may think we were using a lot of coal, but we had 30 large Belleville boilers to keep going. We left Perim on the 27th and passed the Island of Sokotra, another British possession, on our starboard side on the 28th.

New Year's Day, January 1, 1905 came on a Sunday. I might say here that every Sunday the Captain accompanied by his officers makes a personal inspection of our quarters in regards their cleanliness. He usually has on a pair of white gloves, and woe betide any mess where he touches and soils them. A mess, by the way, consists of a long table slung from the deck above, with a bench on either side. Each mess holds 24 men. Being leading stoker in our mess I was responsible for its condition and I regret to say that this particular Sunday, January 1st, we had to rescrub our mess, as it did not satisfy the Captain's idea that day. Not a very good start for the New Year.

Colombo was reached on the 3rd and here we stayed 3 days taking in 1190 tons of coal, and that little lot we stowed in our bunkers in less than a day, every bunker being filled at the same time by a constant stream of coolies working on both sides of the ship, carrying the coal in baskets on their shoulders. The Cingalese, that is the natives of Ceylon, are a friendly race of people, chocolate brown in colour.

Even a newcomer soon makes himself at home in Colombo, which

is Ceylon's chief port and lies on the southwest coast of the island. There are several fine breakwaters that help to keep out the fierce monsoons or gales that occur in a certain time of the year. In the evening these breakwaters form quite a parade ground for all classes to stroll along. I took quite a pleasure in riding through the well-known Cinnamon Gardens and saw the Governor General's residence. Sir Hector Macdonald, "Fighting Mac", had been the governor there just before this time. Owing to some trouble that had occurred during his occupancy of that office, he had resigned, and since committed suicide in Paris. A sad end to an otherwise brilliant career.

A one-armed native diver used to take his station at the end of one of the before mentioned breakwaters and wait for the mail steamers that passed this point, coming in from the open sea. Sharks would invariably follow in the steamer's wake. He would then dive into the water, with a long knife stuck in his loin cloth, and with his one arm he would swim under the shark's belly, and before it could turn, which it had to do before it can use its terrible jaws, he would deliver a death blow with his knife, for the amusement of the passengers on board the mail boat, also for the money he can also collect from them. The one arm that was missing was bit off by a shark. Hence his alleged hatred for them.

We left Colombo on the 6th and by the 8th we got to Penang at the entrance of the Malacca Straits, where we stayed for one day and on the 9th the gun crews did a few hours practice at sea after which we arrived at Singapore on the 10th.

Here we took in 1200 tons of coal and stayed 2 days, as we later came back to Singapore for a much longer stay. I will not attempt to describe this important base until later. We left on the 12th for Hong Kong, which is quite a long run. We got there on the 21st of January.

Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge who was in command of the China Squadron when I was out here before, had retired and gone back to England. The Admiral now in charge of the Station was Sir Gerard Noel.

The first thing we had to do was to take in 900 more tons of coal. Then after we had cleaned up and made everything shipshape, 48 hours leave was granted and my what a relief. In regards to leave the ship's company, that is the crew, is divided into two watches, the port watch and the starboard watch. Leave is given alternately so that half the crew is always on board at night whilst we are in harbour. We do not anchor as a rule in Hong Kong unless there is a typhoon around, but we tie up to permanent buoys that are anchored about ½ mile off shore right opposite the City of Victoria. These buoys are reserved for the Fleet and each ship has its own buoy with sufficient room to swing with the tide. The Fleet was in harbour when we arrived. The battleship "Glory" was the flagship with Sir Gerard Noel the Admiral on board, so now having joined the Fleet we had to be on our toes. The China Squadron at that time consisted of 4 battleships, 6 cruisers (of the same type that we were) and about 6 torpedo boat destroyers. Quite a fleet, so far from home. All our orders came from the flagship "Glory" and a constant watch for her signals had to be maintained by all the signalmen of the various ships of the Fleet, regarding every movement.

During our 48 hours leave I paid a visit to the "Peak" which is a very high hill or mountain, the city being built on its sides and at the base. It has an observatory at the top from which the weather signals are flown for the guidance of the shipping in the harbour below. Visitors are requested to sign their name and address in a book provided for that purpose. A lovely view of the harbour and surrounding district is obtained. A rack and pinion railway provides the means of ascent to those who wish to ride.

The seats in the car are constructed to maintain a level position, regardless of the grade, and a locking device under the car prevents its slipping backwards should anything occur to the motive power.

On the 30th of January the Fleet including ourselves left for Mirs Bay, which lays a few miles to the north of Hong Kong, and where the Fleet does its maneuvering and gun practice. We were backwards and forwards between Hong Kong and Mirs Bay until the 31st of March with an occasional run to Bias Bay which is the home of numerous pirates which still infest this coast, but they are never around when we are in the vicinity. During that time we still seemed to retain the fever germ aboard our ship, for one of our stokers died and two others were sent to hospital. The stoker, J. Cleal, we buried in Happy Valley Cemetery in Hong Kong on the 19th of February.

Another little incident occurred on the 9th of March. A seaman by the name of Dickenson disappeared, whilst we were at sea, and everyone thought he had jumped overboard. He was found 24 hours later, hiding in one of the ventilators. He had developed melancholia. We also put him in hospital when we returned to our base.

On the 8th of April, as we lay at our moorings in Hong Kong harbour, the Fleet received sudden orders from the flagship to slip cable and proceed at full speed for Singapore immediately. Word had been received from there that the Russian Baltic Fleet, that was on its way to the China Seas in order to take part in the war that was still being waged with Japan, had demanded coal at Singapore. That demand had been refused by the authorities there as it was against the neutrality laws. So we were rushing down there to protect our interests in the event of the Russians not liking the idea.

On our way down we got all prepared for anything that might happen, and secretly wishing it would. Our Fleet met the Russian Baltic Fleet a day's run this side of Singapore on the 11th, but as no overt act had been committed by them, we allowed them to sullenly steam by. We steamed so close to them that I remember reading the name of one of their battleships on the stern. It was the "Retvirgan". One of their cruisers the "Askold" had 5 funnels and we promptly nicknamed her the "Packet of Woodbines" (a brand of cigarettes that was popular at that time - 5 in a packet).

It was quite a large Fleet and under the command of Admiral Rojesvinsky, but he did not last long when he met the Japanese Admiral Togo. The Russian Admiral and his flagship, with many more ships, went down with all hands during the battle. His second in command Vice Admiral Schmidt fled from the encounter with 4 ships to Manilla, where they were interned. After the war the Russian government sentenced Admiral Schmidt to be hung for cowardice. The naval battle only lasted a few hours.

Our ship the "Sutlej" was ordered by our Admiral to carry on to Singapore alone. Our Fleet turned around and followed up behind the Russian Fleet until they came in contact with the Japanese.

It was rumored at the time that our Admiral Gerard Noel was a close observer of the action that followed even to the extent of being on board the Japanese flagship at the time, but I could not verify that. I do know that quite a number of our naval gunners from our reserve list were on board the Japanese warships, but whether with the permission of our government or not I could not say. Our Fleet was not far from the scene of the battle, in fact a great many of the Russian survivors were picked up out of the water by our ships and cared for. The poor fellows had been living on black bread and tallow on their way from Russia, and when

they were supplied with bully beef and sea biscuits, they nearly went crazy with delight. They were certainly glad the war was over as far as they were concerned, for they were interned by our government until the conflict was over between the 2 countries. We were sorry to miss the fun, but orders is orders and so we went on our solitary way to Singapore, where we arrived on the 12th of April.

The guardship there at that time was a 2nd class cruiser, the H.M.S. "Thetis" and on our arrival we relieved her from her duties and she went home to England. For a whole month, we lay in Singapore as guardship and what a time we had. My duties at that time were dynamo watchkeeping. Two other leading stokers were my relief, so we were in 3 watches while we lay there at anchor. Each of us would do a 12 hour shift so that the other two could remain on shore for 24 hours at a time.

Singapore is an island, at the base of the Malay Peninsula, and situated as it is in the narrowest portion of the Malacca Straits, it commands a very strong position in regards our interests in the Far East, Australia and New Zealand. It also has one of the largest floating docks in the world, which was constructed in England and towed out in two halves all the way from there by powerful oceangoing tugs. It is one of the most interesting ports in the world for any one that has time to browse around. I used to take a special delight whilst ashore in straying off by myself to watch the different activities on the waterfront.

The Botanical Gardens is also a wonderful place to go. It also contains a zoo where every kind of animal and bird is represented. I even saw a fat old English cob pony there, as contented as if he were in some old sleepy English village.

When the mail boats used to arrive and some of the transient

passengers would come ashore to stretch their legs, I was often approached to act as a guide to the different places of interest, and I must confess many times it was easy on my finances.

The 21st of April was Good Friday (Sunday routine). On the 26th and 27th we did a little gun firing outside the harbour, also on the 16th of May.

On the 27th of May we were relieved of our duties by the H.M.S. "Monmouth" who had just arrived on the station from England. It was then I first heard the Glory song made famous by the evangelists Torrey and Alexander, sung by her crew as they lay alongside of us in the harbour. The poor old "Monmouth" was to go down in later years, as I have mentioned before, along with the "Good Hope" at Coronel.

We left Singapore on the 27th of May for Hong Kong. When we were about half way to our destination a sudden change in the atmosphere became noticeable. The sea was just like a sheet of glass, and the air seemed electrified. Noises in distant parts of the ship appeared to be magnified. It was in the afternoon I was up on deck, when I heard the engine room telegraphs ring for "Stop". Then the ship swung round from the direction in which we were going, to an almost opposite one. We concluded we were going back to Singapore.

The engines were again rung down full speed ahead. Orders were given to secure everything on deck, everyone to go below and all hatches to be closed. Then we knew it was a typhoon, one of the terrors of the China Seas, that was overtaking us. The Captain had evidently become aware of it and promptly put our stern to it so that it would not have the disastrous effect it would have if we were headed into it. The typhoon came up like a black line astern of us and the sky was black overhead. It was just like

a thick black cloth that was being rapidly drawn over it. A low moaning sound was soon heard which increased in volume until it became a shriek, and then the tidal wave overtook us and lifted us up like a cork and appeared to be 40 feet high. We were going at about 20 knots an hour, but when that wave hit us behind I really do not know how fast we were going. We just had to run with it. Any attempt to change our course would have been fatal to us.

Then the rain came, if you could call it rain. The heavens just seemed to open and a solid sheet of water came down. The noise was terrific, what with the howling of the wind and objects flying all over the place. It is then a person feels very small indeed and insignificant, when the elements are on the rampage. It lasted about 12 hours, and we must have been well on our way to Manila in the Philippines before we dared to alter our course towards Hong Kong which we were thankful to reach on the 4th of June. We coaled ship on the 6th, 1200 tons, and on the 8th passed into dockyard hands for refitting.

There were quite a number of repairs necessary to our ship, owing to the violence of the typhoon, which had broken several of our small boats on our boat deck. Several compartments had been flooded and in short we needed a general cleanup. We went into drydock in Kowloon which is on the mainland close by. Our stores are also located there, where the spare parts for the Fleet are kept.

On the 21st of July we were again ready for sea. We made a short steam trial outside of the harbour on the 23rd and returned on the 24th and took on 650 tons of coal. That day also, our staff surgeon on board who had been ill for quite a time, was invalided home to England. Our Fleet had returned to Hong Kong in the meantime and on the 27th we all left Hong Kong for Chemulpo in Korea, arriving on the 1st of August. No leave was given ashore,

and we left on the 2nd for Wei-Hai-Wei due west, just across the Yellow Sea where we arrived the same day.

Wei-Hai-Wei was our northern headquarters at that time but recently had been handed back to the Chinese government from whom it was leased. At the time I was there it was used as a coaling station. I did not find it very interesting. The only excitement seemed to be when some of our fellows got too much beer that was dynamite in quality. Known as "revolver brand" it caused more fights than ever I saw in any other place.

On the 10th we left harbour to do prize firing with our 9.2 and 6 inch guns. I am pleased to state here that our 9.2 guns crew, under Petty Officer Wise, won the prize silver shield for that year with 11 rounds and 11 hits at a target 20 feet square over a mile away. This shield is competed for annually and is open to all warships on the Station, foreign ships included, so we were very proud of our guns crew, whose glory in a way reflected on us all on board, so that we were inclined to throw our chest out a little farther when we met the fellows of the other ships on shore.

On the 19th a lieut. engineer belonging to the H.M.S. "Otter" torpedo boat destroyer was court martialled on the flagship "Glory" for conduct unbecoming an officer in the British Navy.

The whole Fleet did a little visiting around the neighbourhood on the 30th. We anchored at Quelpart Island, a Japanese possession, for 3 hours. We then left and anchored for the night in Yung Ching Bay near Wei-Hai-Wei returning the following morning on the 2nd of September. From the 4th to the 7th we did torpedo exercises outside the harbour, also heavy broadside firing on the 14th. I remember we had to take special care of our dishes that day owing to the heavy concussions of the guns.

We coaled ship on the 15th, 1300 tons, and on the 20th we left Wei-Hai-Wei for Chefoo which is a little farther along the coast. Chefoo is the American base for their fleet which operates in Chinese waters. When we arrived one or two of their ships were in port and that evening a big fire broke out on shore. It was attended by a combined British and U.S.A. fire party who made quite a celebration of it. I am not sure whether there was not more beer drank than water that was applied to the fire, but at any rate everyone that attended had a good time. It was just my luck to be on duty that night.

Peace had been made between Russia and Japan a few weeks previous to this, and as Chefoo and Wei-Hai-Wei are only just across the Straits of Pechili from Port Arthur and Dalny, the Japanese who had occupied these places, on the evacuation of the Russians, invited our Fleet to pay them a visit.

On the 22nd of September we left Chefoo for Dalny calling at Chang-Shan-Too on our way where we stayed for two days, then we went across the Straits of Pechili and anchored that night in the Elliott Islands where the Japanese had made a naval base and on the 26th we arrived at Dalny.

Before the Russo-Japanese War when the Russians had occupied this southern end of Manchuria, they had spent millions of dollars in buildings, docks, and other improvements. Now this had been laid in waste during the war by Japanese guns. Port Arthur was in ruins and the Russians, that is the combatants, had left.

The Japanese soldiers and sailors gave us a warm welcome and had, to the best of their ability, owing to the disorder of the surroundings, provided various forms of entertainment for us on shore, such as exhibitions of wrestling, jujitsu, not forgetting liquid refreshment that they had shipped from Japan to celebrate

the conclusion of a war that had ended in their favor. We stayed until the morning of the 30th of September and then we left for Wei-Hai-Wei reaching there that night.

A rivalry between our ship the "Sutlej" and the "Andromeda" 2nd cutters racing crews came to a climax on the evening of the 1st of October. A boat race was arranged and amidst the cheering from all the ships in the Fleet resulted in a win for the "Andromeda's" boats crew. It was the final of a series of races for 2nd cutters throughout the Fleet.

On the 2nd we received the news that our squadron had been invited to go to Japan to pay them a friendly visit. At the conclusion of the Russo-Japanese War, the British government and the Japanese government signed a 20 year agreement to safeguard each other's interests in the Far East. This gave the Japanese people a great deal of satisfaction, and as a result they wished to show some appreciation, so hence their invitation to us to visit them.

We coaled ship and left on the 2nd for Kobe in Japan arriving there on the 5th. The U.S.A. cruiser "Wisconsin" with the Admiral and his staff on board had also been invited to accompany us, as a matter of courtesy to the U.S.A. government.

Our Admiral Sir Gerard Noel, or Jerry as we used to call him, dispatched an order to be read by all captains in our Fleet to their respective crews, to the effect that our conduct on shore, enjoying the hospitality of our hosts, must be so that it would reflect credit to the British Navy and that any misdemeanors would be severely dealt with. The advice was very timely and I believe had a very good effect in regulating the overabundant spirits of us all.

Japan was emerging at this time from their centuries old in-

sularity, and was now being fired with an ambition to take their place amongst the other nations of the world. They had successfully won two wars, one with China a few years previous, and now this one with Russia. They were beginning to feel pretty good. They are a very polite race of people, almost to an excess according to our occidental viewpoint, but I must say they certainly went to the limit in order to give us a real welcome, and one that could not be forgotten by any one who participated in it.

Japan proper is composed of 4 large islands and a very large number of smaller ones. The island of Honshu is the largest and has the most cities and industry. Kobe is almost the busiest port in Japan and when we arrived nearly all the shipping in the harbour was gaily decorated with flags, and as we dropped our anchors they all commenced blowing their sirens and what a noise. We were soon surrounded with numerous pleasure boats carrying cheering passengers waving flags, Union Jack in one hand and that of the rising sun in the other which is their flag. One enterprising brewing firm in Kobe had a boatload of beer which they wished to give us, but as beer is not allowed on His Majesty's ships of war, the generous offer was kindly but firmly declined, much to our regret. Some of our fellows had tears in their eyes.

Representatives of the various railways in Japan came on board with card passes for every man in the Fleet which entitled us to free transportation over the railways. I still have my passes in my possession after all these years.

On the 6th our ships were thrown open to our Japanese friends, and they came on board by the boatload. We had been given little handbooks containing both the Japanese and English expressions of commonplace talk to make it easier for us to understand each other. Innumerable students came with their autograph books for us to sign with our names and addresses.

The women visitors were just as equally interested in the tour of the ships as the men, although it was sometimes rather embarrassing to be in the midst of changing our apparel and find yourself being admired by the opposite sex, as on board ship there is no such a thing as privacy in that respect. It must not be forgotten however that we were in an oriental country where the customs and our western ideas of conventions were entirely different.

On the 7th in the forenoon, the men in the Fleet were lined up on shore under their respective officers, and each ship's company headed by their splendid marine bands, formed a procession, or I should say a grand parade, through the main streets of the city to a large park where we were massed together whilst the officials of the city read both in Japanese and English an address of welcome after which we were allowed to split up and fraternise with our Japanese sailor friends and their relations. It was impossible for any of us to feel lonely or out of place. Good humor was everywhere.

Kobe has quite a large population of Europeans, as this port was one of the first to be thrown open to receive European trade. There is also an adjoining city of Hyogo and the two had combined to entertain us.

On the 8th we were again lined up, and this time we headed for the railway depot where there were dozens of empty trains waiting for our arrival. We got aboard and were taken inland to the large city of Kyoto where a similar reception to the day previous had been arranged.

It was in this city where you found the real Japanese at home as there were very few of our civilian people at all. I was taken in tow by a Japanese sailor, a stoker too, like myself. The Japanese Navy uniform is identically like ours, even to the mark-

ings on the sleeves denoting the different ratings. That was how I knew my new friend was a stoker.

Neither he nor I could understand each other only by signs, but that was good enough for us. He took me to his own home in Kyoto and introduced me to his family - mother, father, and two sisters. I do not know whether he had advised them that he was bringing an Englishman home or not, but they seemed prepared to give me a warm welcome. At first it was a little awkward under the lingual difficulty, but fortunately I had brought my mouth organ with me, and when I played them a rendition of their own national anthem on it, I brought down the house. I had practised it from hearing our own marine band playing it.

When the time came to eat I began to wonder how I was going to navigate, but the girls found me a willing pupil, if even an awkward one, in the art of using chopsticks, and it caused quite a bit of merriment watching me trying to juggle rice and fish on the end of what seemed to me to be two wooden skewers.

The only drawback to my visit with these fine people was the time element. We had to be back at the railway station to return to Kobe in the evening, and here I must give credit to the Japanese police in energetically, but kindly, rounding up our fellows from different parts of the city. In my case it was easy as my sailor friend chartered a double rickshaw, and amidst lots of cheering and waving of paper lanterns tied on to the end of long bamboo sticks by his neighbours, to my mind the whole street was out to send me off. I said good-bye to his family and got back in good time to the trains.

Here again I must say, due to the efficiency of the medical arrangements provided here and all the other places we went to after, our men were able to return in a presentable manner, as

doctors and nurses were at hand wherever needed in regards to the alcoholic effects of the potent rice whiskey and beer to which the majority of our men were unaccustomed.

We all returned by train to Kobe and marched back to our ships.

On the 9th we left Kobe for Yokohama arriving there on the 11th. Yokohama is the chief seaport of Japan. All the big mail boats on that route make it their main port of call. The reception in Yokohama was similar to the one in Kobe, even the liners that were at anchor in port joined in the greetings. It was here we made our grand stay for nearly two weeks, and for that time you could almost say the city was ours.

On the 12th we all went on board trains for Tokyo which is about 18 miles from Yokohama, and one little incident I remember well. I happened to glance at the couplings of one of the engines and I was surprised to read the maker of the engine's name and I suppose it was one of many. It was "R. Peacock and Sons, Engine Builders, Manchester, England". When I saw that I thought at the time I am not so far away from home after all.

Tokyo is the seat of the Japanese government. The Mikado's palace is also there, situated in a lovely park. We saw the palace at a distance, but we did not see the Mikado for he was then held a very sacred person in the eyes of his subjects. We had a very nice time there. The parks and trees and flowers are wonderful. The buildings were not very impressive owing to Japan being so liable to earthquakes. One of these occurred in 1923, years after the time I was there, that practically wrecked both Tokyo and Yokohama. Seventy thousand lost their lives in this city alone. It was not only the earthquakes but the disastrous fires that follow in their wake.

You get a splendid view of Fujiyama, a snow-capped mountain about 60 miles away, and if you even buy any Japanese pictures they will almost inevitably have Fujiyama somewhere in the background.

The reception at Tokyo was held on the 13th also. The authorities arranged for half the men of the Fleet to go one day and the other half the next as I suppose we were too many to handle in that important city. I did not go on the 13th, but stayed on board the ship in Yokohama. As I said before we had 2 weeks of sheer enjoyment in Yokohama. All we had to do was to turn out in the morning and clean up the ship until noon. After that the time was our own either to go ashore, or entertain visitors on board, both of which was quite interesting.

One evening in the early part of our visit, a shipmate Bob Spencer and I were strolling around an outlying part of the city. We lost our way back to the ship so I said I would ask the first European we met to give us our bearings. Along came someone in European civilian dress. It happened to be a Japanese student who said in very passable English that he would be delighted to personally guide us back, which he did. As a slight return for his kindness, I suggested that he should come down to the jetty the following day and we would be pleased to show him around the ship. Sure enough, the next afternoon, he was there together with another fellow student, so we brought them on board. They stayed all afternoon with us taking a great interest in the different parts of the ship that were allowed to be viewed by visitors. After 8 bells (4 o'clock) they left leaving their names and address which were Y. Naganawa and F. Kuroda, their address being c/o K. Sugawa and Co., 4 Chome, Yokohama. They also arranged to meet us the next afternoon ashore.

Bob and I lined up the next afternoon at the place we had arranged to meet. They were there and also 2 double rickshaws

standing by into which we climbed and away we went. They took us to their home, and after observing the Japanese custom of removing our shoes and socks at the door and washing our feet, we were given sandals to slip on, after which we were introduced to the family.

Our friends could both speak fairly good English so it was not so difficult this time as it was for me in Kyoto. They translated our remarks to the rest of the family. This commenced a real friendship between us and gave us a definite place to go during the remainder of our stay in Yokohama.

They were both connected with the firm of K. Sugawa and Co., Importers. One day they took us both through the huge warehouse and curious enough there were some bales of lace curtains with the makers name on, "Samuel Peach and Sons, The Looms, Nottingham, England". I knew the factory they came from as I was well acquainted with Nottingham, for it was there I joined the service. I explained to our Japanese friends this coincidence and they were delighted to know that and told the head of the firm who was very much interested in my description of the place where the goods had been obtained. Many times since I have been tempted to go to the factory in Nottingham and acquaint them of my experiences in knowing one of their customers, but I have never done so.

After this Bob and I used to go direct to our friend's home. We would change out of uniform into the Japanese costume which consisted of kimono, obi (or sash) and wooden sandals. No hat was worn, and we would ride around in rickshaws, passing our shipmates that we knew and hailing them to their great surprise.

We visited every place of interest in Yokohama and places of amusement. One particular feat I saw was that of a juggler who lay on his back with his feet pointing upward and balanced 12 small barrels on an end. When he had juggled the 12th barrel in position,

which was quite a height from the stage, a tiny Jap boy emerged from the top barrel waving a Jap flag and a Union Jack. He then disappeared again and the barrels came down, one by one, the juggler removing them from the bottom with his feet only, and when the last barrel came down out popped the little Jap again. It was very clever indeed.

At their home our Japanese friends showed us some tricks in jujitsu which is a very clever form of wrestling, for with that form of wrestling, the weight or height of your opponent does not matter once you get one of the numerous holds on him.

We certainly regretted having to say good-bye to our friends. I received a letter from them after I got back to Hong Kong, which I still retain in my possession.

On the night of the 19th the Fleet was illuminated and a searchlight display was given. Every ship of the Fleet was outlined in the darkness by thousands of electric bulbs which were strung up the funnels, masts, yardarms and the ship's upper rail down to the water's edge. It looked a veritable fairyland and must have been a wonderful sight for the people on shore. The searchlights weaved a pattern of light in the sky. Every ship is equipped with half a dozen of these powerful lights.

On the 24th we left Yokohama to go back to Kobe arriving on the 26th. The reason of calling at Kobe again was in order for us to attend a reception at Osaka and also Nara, both of which cities were easiest to reach by rail from Kobe. We went to Osaka on the 27th and 28th and to Nara on the 29th and 30th, the port watch going one day and the starboard watch the other, getting a rousing reception in both cities.

Osaka is the largest city in Japan and is about 30 miles from

Kobe. The streets were packed with people waving flags and shouting "banjai" which is the equivalent to our "hurrah".

Nara is about 18 miles from Kobe and is one of the old-fashioned cities that have retained more of the old Japanese ways. I remember Nara by its magnificent park, with its Buddist temples which we were allowed to enter and see the prayer wheels, which look like windmills with papers attached, which contain the prayers of the people.

On my way from the park I got aboard a street car that was pretty well filled up. I managed to get a seat. At the next stop two rather nice girls got on. I immediately proffered my seat for either one to accept and a Japanese gentleman sitting beside me pulled me back in my seat, evidently to show me that our Western custom was simply not done in Japan. Even the girls looked astonished at my attempt to do what I thought was the right thing. The equality basis between sexes was certainly not in evidence in Japan. Of course this was in 1905. Conditions may have changed since then, but I must say the women appeared to be happy and contented, and what more is required than that?

We left Kobe on the 31st of October and proceeded on our way through the inland sea of Japan, one of the most picturesque sea trips in the world. The passage lies between the larger island of Honshu and its two smaller neighbours Shikoku and Kyushu. There is no wonder at Japan being called an island empire for there are so many of them extending in a chain from Sakhalin, off the coast of Siberia to Formosa which lies just a little north and east of Hong Kong.

Kure was to be our next stop and we arrived on the 1st of November passing the northern end of a small island Akashi which almost appears to block our way. At Kure we were again met with

enthusiasm, the 3rd of November being the Mikado's birthday. A royal salute was given by the guns of the Fleet. It sounded like another war. At a certain time of that day the ceremony of dress ship was performed by all the ships of the Fleet, in honour of the event. This ceremony consists of every available man on board, dressed in his best uniform, occupying a position near the rail of the ship on the uppermost deck, the shrouds of the masts, and also the yardarms, standing with both arms extended to form a living outline of the ship itself. It forms a very pretty sight especially when viewed from shore, with a large number of warships performing the ceremony. It is only executed for very special occasions. This time it was being done in honour of the Mikado's birthday. At one bell (12:30 noon) we spliced the mainbrace as recorded earlier in my story.

On the 4th we left Kure and crossed over to Matsuyama on the island of Shikoku, where we stayed just one day. I did not go ashore there, but those that did said that they had a good time.

We left on the 5th for Sasebo, going through the Straits of Shimonoseki. During the passage through the inland seas there were times when it would appear as if the ship was headed for some huge towering cliff of rock, as the passage is hemmed in on either side at different points of our journey. The waters below our keel, or the soundings I should say, are a tremendous depth, the face of the cliffs being almost vertical. I would imagine it takes great care on the pilot's part to navigate the different channels. We anchored for the night after we had passed through the Straits of Shimonoseki and entered Sasebo harbour the next day, the 6th.

Sasebo on the island of Kyushu bears the same relationship to the Japanese Navy as Portsmouth does to ours, as it is there where the naval dockyards are situated. The biggest part of their navy

had been built in the British Isles, also many of their officers had received their training in our own navy. I believe even Admiral Togo himself had spent some of his time in our service. Japan was now beginning to build her own ships of war, and it so happened that we had the honour of attending the launching of two destroyers the very day we arrived. Probably that event had been arranged to coincide with our visit. The occasion was hailed with great joy and enthusiasm by the Japanese. They are a wonderful race of people to copy any manufactured article, but are not considered inventive. Whilst their warships were being built in Britian, it was said at the time that there was a Japanese workman standing by the British workman throughout their construction, for experience in their own future efforts. The names of the two destroyers were the "Yudachi" and the "Yugure". Japan had two other naval dockyards, one at Kure and the other at Yokosuka.

The Japanese Navy was greatly augmented by the captured Russian warships during the war. One of these vessels happened to be the "Retvirgan" whose name I read so plainly when we met the Baltic Fleet on our way to Singapore. Her name had been changed now to the "Hirgen".

On the 8th we left Sasebo for Nagasaki which is a little lower down the coast to the south, arriving there the same day.

Nagasaki is also one of the main ports of call for the steamship lines from all parts of the world. It is a very interesting and colourful port, a regular hive of activity. It prides itself on being one of the fastest coaling places in the world, a great deal of the labour being done by girls and women. The bags of coal are passed from hand to hand from the lighters alongside in a constant stream accompanied by a singsong chant that never ceases during the coaling operations.

The reception ashore was in every way just as enthusiastic as

at the other places. On the 9th the ceremony of dress ship, as I have described before, was performed again, this time in honour of our own King's birthday, Edward VII, with the usual salute of guns. Also that night the Fleet was again illuminated with its thousands of lights, and Nagasaki itself was in an uproar of fun and good humour.

On the 10th a court martial was held on the flagship "Glory", two engine room artificers from the torpedo boat destroyer "Dee", also a seaman from the cruiser "Diadem", for some acts of insubordination. Even in the midst of our festivities discipline was strictly maintained. It was regrettable, but I suppose unavoidable, for the good of the service.

Before leaving Japan I, like many other men of our Fleet, had a slight memento of our friendly visit tattooed on my right arm, although in after years, with its changes in dispositions of the world's type of diplomacy, it makes one wonder if it is really worth the while.

We left Nagasaki on the 11th for Shanghai. Also we parted company with the U.S.S. "Wisconsin" who had accompanied us throughout our tour.

We anchored at Woosung near Shanghai on the 13th. A certain Chinese element in Shanghai had, during our visit to Japan, taken advantage of the Fleet's absence, and had become hostile to Europeans engaged in business in Shanghai. This big Chinese seaport, at the mouth of the Yangtze Kiang River, is an international port. Each European country has its own little community grouped around its embassy and policed with its own national guard. The trouble mentioned was, I believe, an aftermath of the Boxer Rising which had taken place a few years before. The arrival of the Fleet at Shanghai was timely and prevented any further disturbance.

Our visit was also enlivened by a public execution of some Chinese pirates who were beheaded at Woosung on the Flats. It was remarkable the indifference of the prisoners as they went to their doom. The executioner in a startling yellow robe and black mask had a huge sword with which at one blow decapitated his victims. One of these was smoking a cigarette whilst awaiting his turn, which came before it was consumed. The executioner calmly took it out of the prisoner's mouth and stuck it in his own and then carried on with his gruesome task. He was a cheery kind of a fellow and certainly knew his work. The bodies with the heads were claimed by the relatives who sewed the head back on again and afterwards interred the remains. Several of our fellows got some good photos of the event which was attended by the usual vendors of refreshments to be partaken of whilst the executions were in progress. I did not want any.

Our holidaying over for a while, we got back to our routine of drills and exercises. We left Shanghai and Woosung on the 27th of November and arrived at Amoy on the 29th where we called for one day to pay our respects to that Chinese port and left on the 30th, paused at Mirs Bay for a little torpedo running, and arrived back at our base Hong Kong on the 1st of December. We coaled ship and cleaned up and then till the 9th we were doing more torpedo work and experimental firing. On the 13th the boiler rooms and engine room were inspected by the chief inspector of machinery for our station. On the 14th our Admiral Sir Gerard Noel came on board and inspected both men and ship after which we were given 48 hours leave which seemed tame after our Japanese festivities.

On the 21st we went into dry dock at Kowloon to have our underwater fittings examined and came out on the 24th. Whilst in dry dock I climbed up and painted my initials along with countless others on the face of the rock where the dock is cut out of, but I guess it has all faded out by now.

Christmas Day, 25th of December. I have not before properly described a Christmas Day on board ship, and as there happens to be a little story attached to this particular one, I will do so. Naturally all work other than what is absolutely necessary is all suspended for that day. It is customary to decorate the mess deck with coloured paper and anything that can be found that looks attractive, and also the mess tables are laid in preparation for the special dinner that we usually get sent aboard from shore when we are in port as the ship's supplies do not cater for Christmas.

On the tables too the men usually decorate them with photographs of their wives, sweethearts, or mothers as the case suits. Just before dinner the Captain and his officers make the rounds of the ship wishing us the compliments of the season. Then dinner is served and after that those that wish to go ashore may do so, or else enjoy the music of the band which plays for us that day.

In connection with the custom of placing photographs on the table, a curious incident occurred on our ship. After dinner we all usually take a walk around the mess tables looking at each other's pictures. A stoker in the next mess to me had the picture of his wife, whom he had married in Portsmouth just over a year ago, in fact just before we left to come out to China. A ship's carpenter happened to stray into the mess and seeing this particular photo, asked who the lady was. The stoker proudly said that it was his wife. "Oh", said the carpenter, "that happens to be my wife". "Impossible", said the stoker. "Alright", said the carpenter, "you come along to my mess and I will show you an exact duplicate of that photo". The stoker went and sure enough both photos were of the same woman, and also taken at the same studio.

I might say here that the carpenter had been out on this station a year longer than our ship, as he had been transferred from another ship that had come out a year earlier. The two men

decided to present their case to the Captain, who after deliberation, decided to send the carpenter who had the prior right to the woman, home to England to clear things up.

We got information after, that when the carpenter arrived home, he discovered that she was again married to another sailor in Portsmouth. It was found out later that she had gone through the form of matrimony with 4 husbands all living and away on different foreign stations, also drawing half pay from all of them. The original, or first husband, got his divorce and the other three their freedom. The woman got lots of time to think it all over in jail. It was the unexpected transfer of the carpenter from his ship to ours that had destroyed her plans.

1st January 1906. This brand new year started off on the wrong foot, as during the day our stream anchor got foul of the moorings, and two divers were required to go down to straighten things up, otherwise we had a quiet day.

We coaled ship on the 5th, 1200 tons, and on the 8th we left Hong Kong for Manila in the Philippines. This port had, since the Spanish-American War in 1897, become the United States Naval Base in the Pacific. As I look back over the years to that time, it seems to me that the 20 year's agreement that was signed between Japan and Britian started something, for shortly after the United States Navy was invited over to Portsmouth, England, and also the "Entente Cordiale" was signed with France. Our King, Edward VII, was a great diplomat and certainly earned his title, that of the "Peacemaker", hence our fraternal visit to Manila and afterwards Saigon, French Indo China. Of course then, in my young days, I never gave this subject any consideration at all as all I was interested in then was going somewhere and having a good time.

We anchored for the night of the 10th in Sudia Bay just to

the north of Manila, and entered Manila Harbour on the 11th. This splendid harbour is considered to be one of the finest in the Far East. The U.S.A. China Fleet was laying at anchor when we arrived and gave us a great reception. That same day a select few of our men were entertained on the U.S.S. "Rainbow", the depot ship.

On the 13th we all attended a grand reception on shore contributed by the men of the U.S.A. Fleet and American citizens of Manila. The city was decorated in honour of our visit. Everything to eat, drink, and our transportation to different parts of the city were entirely free. We spent a very pleasant day. Both Fleets mixed well together without any unpleasant features, which sometimes was the case in other ports. But I must say that it was unwise for any other nationality to mix in, for then it was the English speaking nations against the remainder.

We left Manila on the 14th for Labuan, anchoring on the 15th and 16th at Kalutan Island, and on the 17th arrived at Labuan Island which lies just off the northwest coast of Borneo. We stayed one day there and left on the 18th for Saigon, French Indo China.

We arrived at St. James Cape on the 20th and anchored for the night in Camrali Bay, proceeding to Saigon the next day the 21st, where we stayed until the 24th. The French cruiser "Guichen" was in port to give us a welcome. This cruiser had 4 funnels like our ship, but instead of being at equal distances apart as ours were, she had two forward and two aft.

The French sailors were very glad to have us in port and we got along together fine, Waterloo and Trafalgar being forgotten for that time. The French citizens of Saigon gave us a very kindly welcome.

On the 23rd we coaled ship from our collier the "Mercedes",

who had followed us around on our tour. She was a huge steamer belonging to our Fleet and carried about 8,000 tons of coal. Her duty was to provide the Fleet with fuel when we were away from our own ports. We took in 1,410 tons of coal and said good-bye to our French friends, and sailed on the 24th for Bangkok, the capital of Siam.

This country lies in between the Malay Peninsula and French Indo China. Bangkok, the chief port and capital, is at the head of the Gulf of Siam. We arrived there on the 27th. These waters are literally alive with sharks that were constantly circling round our ships as they lay at anchor, looking up at us with wicked eyes, hoping some of us would drop overboard.

No leave on shore was given to the men of the Fleet, the officers only attending the several functions provided in honour of our visit.

On the evening of the 29th permission was granted by our captain allowing us to catch a shark. This was a novelty for the majority of us. The details regarding its capture were in the capable hands of the boatswain and his mates. We were the interested onlookers. A big strong barbed hook was made by our blacksmith, on which was impaled a large piece of pork. Attached to the hook was a long piece of chain, and to the chain was tied a strong manila hawser. This assembly was made fast by a lighter piece of line to the end of the boom or long pole that sticks out on either side of the ship and is used to tie up the smaller boats to whilst the ship is at anchor. The bait was kept afloat by a small piece of timber acting as a float. The other end of the manila hawser was passed around the steam capstan.

When everything was in readiness the bait was allowed to enter the water, which was wonderfully clear, to a depth of 2 or 3 feet.

A couple of small sharks came along and suspiciously sniffed at the bait, and whilst they were investigating a huge fellow came up, thrusting aside the smaller ones, and swallowed the bait, hook and several feet of the chain, and proceeded to bolt with the whole works.

The light line broke away from the boom, as was intended, and then the manila hawser took up the strain. The capstan was allowed to run free until the boatswain who was in charge considered that enough of the hawser had gone over the side. Then he applied the brake to the capstan, which brought the shark to a stop at quite a distance from the ship.

Then the fight commenced. It lashed the water to a white foam in its endeavour to free itself of the restraining hawser, and the hook held like grim death. The boatswain then applied steam to the capstan and started hauling him back to the ship. Fighting every inch of the way, Mr. Shark was slowly and surely brought alongside. Then the boatswain let him away again on the end of the hawser for another run and brought him back again. This was repeated quite a few times until the shark got tired.

Then the question of what to do with him when we had got him aboard, for he was still full of wickedness with his huge mouth opening and closing. He was hauled up on the fo'c'sle, and a carpenter settled the question by stepping in close and severed his backbone with an axe. I think he must have done it before by the way he went about the business. The shark was then cut up into small pieces for anyone who wished to sample it. The flesh is somewhat similar to beef with the fat and lean mixed, but it has a very strong flavor. The natives eat it and it was to them we gave it with the exception of the larger bones which were cut up for souvenirs for the crew. It measured about 20 feet long. At any rate it afforded a very interesting evening's enjoyment for all.

On the 30th the Crown Prince of Siam and his Prime Minister came on board and inspected us. Of course he had his umbrella bearer with him. He later became King but in these last few years, whilst he was on a tour of the world, his people deposed him and the country became a republic. King Prajadhipok is now living in retirement in England, which seems to be the haven of all monarchs that have retired either voluntarily or otherwise.

We left Bangkok on the 30th for Hong Kong, calling at the Pulo Condor Islands, a little cluster of islands at the mouth of the Gulf of Siam, on the 1st of February, where we exercised torpedo dropping from our steam pinnace. On the 2nd we did cannon tube firing and target practice with our 3 pounders. We arrived in Hong Kong on the 6th and coaled ship again on the 8th (840 tons).

The battleships of our Fleet received orders to return to England so we said good-bye to the "Glory", "Canopus", "Ocean", and "Albion", also our Admiral Sir Gerard Noel who was relieved by Rear Admiral Bridgeman. Only cruisers and torpedo destroyers were left on the Station besides of course the river gunboats. The cruisers were the "Monmouth", "Bedford", "Hogue", "Andromeda", "Diadem", and our ship the "Sutlej". The "Bedford" later went ashore in Japan and became a total wreck and the "Hogue" was one of the three cruisers that was torpedoed in the North Sea early in the Great War. Only once did I ever read of any account of our ship the "Sutlej" after I left her, and that was a few years ago. I read where she went on a little excursion of her own with 10 men on board, after breaking away from two tugs, who were bringing her down the Channel to be broken up. She evidently resented the idea. However she was caught and judgment was executed.

One cruiser's name that I omitted from my list of ships left on the Station was that of the H.M.S. "Amphitrite", and I ought to mention her, as a fatal accident occurred to one of her stokers.

His duty at the time was oiling in the engine room. Whilst the great engines are turning round we have to "feel" or let our fingers come in contact with the bearings to ascertain whether they are receiving the proper amount of lubrication as they whirl around.

In this particular instance, the unfortunate man was feeling the crosshead, or the upper part of the connecting rod. He was wearing a massive silver ring on his finger at the time. In some way the ring was caught in the moving machinery, which lifted him up off his feet, above the steel guard in front of him, and dropped him into the crank pit where the huge big end of the connecting rod revolved. On its next revolution it crushed him to a jelly in the bottom of the crank pit. Death came instantly. After that accident occurred all engineers of the different ships of the Fleet received orders that in future rings were not to be worn whilst on duty.

In Hong Kong harbour the old transport "Tamar" lay at her moorings. This ship had originally, with three others like her, been used for the purpose of conveying troops to foreign stations. Now, these days being over, the "Tamar" had had her engines and some of her boilers removed, and was now known as the receiving ship for the Station, for ratings who were waiting passage to England or accommodating those just out, in the event of the Fleet being away from port. The "Tamar" had also another duty and that was to be the prison ship for all men of the Fleet that were guilty of various crimes, where sentence of over one month was prescribed.

A vacancy had occurred in the mechanical staff of the "Tamar" owing to one of the stoker petty officers being invalided home to England. I applied for the job never dreaming that I would get it, but to my surprise I did, so on the 23rd of February I packed my bag and said good-bye to my shipmates on the "Sutlej" and went

aboard the "Tamar". The crew on board was small, as of course she never went to sea. It just consisted of the Captain and his officers, a few deck hands and the marine guards for the prisoners aboard. The engine room staff was composed of a chief engine room artificer in charge of three stoker petty officers, one of whom I was relieving, and a few Chinese firemen for the boilers. These firemen were really attached to the Royal Navy, but did not go on sea-going ships.

The prisoners were below deck and the only time we saw them was when they were allowed on the upper deck in the fresh air for 15 minutes in the forenoon and afternoon. Then they were compelled to march around in single file with heads bent, looking neither left nor right, under the watchful eyes of the marine guards. We were not allowed to come within 6 paces of them whilst they were exercising on deck. It was not a pleasant sight and one I always avoided if possible. Under the harsh discipline to which they were subjected, it either reformed them or broke them entirely and very often the latter. Some of them really went mad and had to be completely isolated from the remainder. They were hard old days and in years before had even been worse, as flogging had not been abolished long before this time. Conditions are different now and the prison ship "Tamar" has been done away with. A new up-to-date prison has been built on shore, with I hope, more merciful treatment to the unfortuante prisoners.

Our dynamo room was on the same deck as the down below exercise room for the prisoners, and although a steel bulkhead separated the two rooms, it was possible to hear the heavy shot drill being done by the prisoners. This consisted of carrying a heavy cannon ball of the old style that was used in the muzzle loaders, from one pile to another with back bent and not being allowed to straighten up until the exercise was over. You could also hear the stern commands of the guards in charge, and almost the groans of the prisoners.

I was always glad to go on shore after I had completed my shift. As far as we were concerned it was a real nice job, for as soon as our shift was over we could have a nice bath and change into shoregoing clothes, come up on deck and report to the officer in charge of the gangway, hail the first native boat to come alongside and go on shore until our turn came to go on duty again.

I was standing one day on the upper deck near the gangway interestedly watching a new detachment of marine guards joining the ship. They had just arrived from England. So the first marine stepped over the gangway and I looked at him with surprise as I recognized him. He was none other than one of my boyhood friends I had left in Cheadle, Ted Yeomans. As soon as they were allowed to dismiss I went to him, and although he knew I was in the Navy somewhere, he never thought of ever coming in contact with me. We had some good times together ashore in Hong Kong.

At the latter end of April 1906 I received a letter from my mother conveying to me the sad news of my father's death, also asking me to come home and procure my discharge from the Navy. I showed my letter from Mother to the Captain. He was a real gentleman to talk to. He told me that he would leave that to me to decide, also pointing out that my past record was excellent and that I should be leaving a good berth on the "Tamar", but if I should decide that I would like to go home to get my discharge he would give me his permission to take passage in the first ship homeward bound.

I thought the matter over and decided to go home. I have often wondered since as to whether my decision was to my best interests but I have come to believe that "what is to be will be", for during my life I have found it so. Something comes along to influence a change in the routine of life, even done on the impulse of the moment as it was in this case. I have ever known men fired

from their jobs, that they have thought at the time represented their only hold on life, eventually find that it was really the finest thing that could have happened, for no one knows what the future holds, and at my age now on looking back, I find I have nothing really to regret in regards to the different changes that have taken place in my life as far as I am concerned. But it is curious how a chance conversation with another person, or even an overheard remark, will sometimes completely change the trend of one's life, and throw them into entirely different surroundings, and into another circle of acquaintances.

I was sorry in a way to leave my friend Ted Yeomans in such a short time, but I promised to look his people up and tell them that I had been in his company.

The H.M.S. "Andromeda" was returning home to England so the Captain on the "Tamar" effected an exchange between myself and another stoker petty officer on the "Andromeda" who did not wish to go home. On the 2nd of May I went aboard that ship, and we left Hong Kong that day homeward bound.

We passed Singapore on the 8th without calling and arrived at Columbo on the 13th, leaving on the 17th. The "Andromeda" was a cruiser exactly like my old ship the "Sutlej" but she was a Devonport commissioned ship, and as I was about the only Portsmouth Depot man on board, I had a light duty job on my way home.

A fleet out in foreign waters is usually made up of ships that are commissioned from the three naval ports, Devonport, Portsmouth, and Chatham, and it is the friendly rivalry between the different dockyards that keeps each ship on its toes, to be just as good, or even better, than the other. The "Sutlej" whom I had left behind was of course a Portsmouth ship, so I had to be careful what I said or did on the "Andromeda".

Aden, our next stop, is the base of the East India Squadron, and is a desolate dried out port on the edge of the great Arabian Desert. It is a very important base for it practically commands the entrance to the Red Sea. It is not a healthy station however, and very few care to be stationed there. It also has a naval prison on shore, which was at that time considered a hell on earth, what with the terrific heat and the prison discipline.

On board we had a 2 year term prisoner who had been guilty of striking an officer, one of the worst crimes in the Service. He was to serve his time at Aden in the prison there. In the evening he was allowed ½ hour exercise on the upper deck in between two marine sentries, pacing up and down the deck apart from anyone else.

The evening before we arrived at Aden he was as usual taking his exercise on deck when he suddenly broke away from his two guards and leapt over the side of the ship into the sea. The ship was immediately stopped and boats were lowered, but no trace of him could be found. It was supposed the sharks got him before the boats arrived at the spot. It was a sheer case of suicide rather than spend 2 year's imprisonment at Aden. It cast a gloom over the ship for a while.

We arrived at Aden on the 24th and after coaling ship left for Suez on the 25th, passing through the Straits of Bab el Mandeb or Hells Gates as we used to call them, into the Red Sea and arrived at Suez on the 29th, through the canal to Port Said on the 30th and arrived at Malta on the 3rd of June. It was a lovely Sunday morning when we arrived and I went in the evening to the Roman Catholic Cathedral to hear the music of the choir. Of course the service was in Maltese but the music was grand.

We left Malta on the 7th, called for a few hours at Gibraltar on the 9th, and arrived at Plymouth (Devonport) on the 13th, back in England once more.

I had become very friendly with a Scotch shipmate on the "Andromeda" by the name of Jock Wright. He belonged to Glasgow and he also was applying for his discharge, although for a far different reason than mine. It appears whilst he was on the Australian Station attached to the H.M.S. "Eurglus", and during a visit by that squadron to Christchurch, New Zealand, he had become acquainted with a girl as she was leaving a theatre. The girl had been insulted by a man under the influence of liquor and Jock Wright, who happened to be near, had pulled the man up smartly and made him apologise. Jock naturally escorted the girl home, who introduced him to her parents. Her father was a foreman in a big machinery plant there in Christchurch. The outcome of the affair was that Jock was now on his way home to procure his discharge from the Navy in order to go back to New Zealand and marry the girl and settle down. He tried to persuade me to go back with him, but I had Mother to think of. I promised some day I would go out there to him so he gave me his address and told me that I should be warmly welcomed if ever I did go. Another curious working of fate, as it was through his acquaintance that altered my further wanderings.

On our arrival at Plymouth we found that the midsummer maneuvers were about to commence, and instead of paying off as we expected, we had to remain in commission until they were over, which meant I could not apply for my discharge till I got back to Portsmouth.

It was very annoying for both Jock and I, but there was nothing we could do about it, as the Navy has its own time in disposing of such minor affairs as ours, and it was not until the 16th of July that we were able to leave the "Andromeda" and get to Portsmouth. For a whole month we were scurrying up and down the English Channel in imaginary warfare, now and then going in to Portland to coal ship. At last I was entered up into the barracks

again at Portsmouth and after putting in my application for discharge to Commodore Logan who was in charge of the barracks I went home on a month's leave of absence.

When I arrived home I found a great change in my poor mother during my absence. It had been a hard blow to her in losing a faithful partner in life as my father had been. I spent a quiet month at home trying to comfort her and I told her it would not be long before I would be home for good.

On my return to barracks I interviewed Commodore Logan in regards to my discharge, and he tried every means to make me change my decision, but my mind was made up. All the same it was not until the 12th of September that I was able to get my final discharge which cost me £21 or roughly $100. I paid it myself so that it would not inconvenience Mother. Some men were not so fortunate in obtaining their discharge and would feign sickness or even insanity in order to obtain it.

One story that used to be told, how true it was I could not say, was that of one man who was endeavouring to get out through the medium of insanity. He would prowl around the parade ground picking up bits of paper, and after examining it, he would throw it down again and mutter "That's not it". This went on for a while and eventually the doctors gave him up and recommended his discharge. On the day that he obtained it, he waved the necessary paper over his head and exclaimed, "That's it, that's what I was looking for." I will say this however, I found the Navy, despite its rigid discipline, to be a good school for any young man who could control himself and adhere to the rules and regulations, which I'll admit at times was not so easy, but I never found any cause for complaint with my experiences with the Senior Service, as the Navy is called.

After I had been home for a week or two, I began to look for

a job. The city of Nottingham is only 8 miles away from Lowdham where Mother and I lived, so it was there I began to look around. I eventually found work in a motor works on Trent Street, and started on my new job on the 9th of October. The automobile was just at that time getting popular, and the better class of people were dispensing with the horse drawn vehicle in favour of the automobile.

The head of the firm, Mr. A. R. Atkey, was himself quite a motorist as he was the first man to drive an automobile from Johannesburg to Capetown in South Africa, which was considered quite a feat in those days. My work was to wash and clean the customer's cars when they came in for attention. I bought a bicycle and pedalled the 8 miles to and from Lowdham morning and evening. It was a nice change although the wages were small, but Mother was comfortably provided for even without my allowance.

The main floor, or street level of the motor works, was for automobiles. The basement was on a level with the canal which ran alongside the works, which made it suitable for repairing motor boats.

On nice days we would sit and eat our dinner just outside of the big basement doors on the side of the canal. The young fellow whose job it was to fix the tires on the different cars conceived a brilliant idea of partly filling a soda water bottle, the type that has the glass marble inside the neck for a stopper, with carbide, then completely filling it with water. He would wait until sufficient gas had been formed to hold the marble in the closed position, then he would throw it into the canal. In about 10 minutes the bottle would burst and throw a column of water up in the air 4 or 5 feet high. One day after the bottle had been thrown in, and we were all waiting for the explosion, just as it occurred we heard a voice say, "Whatever is that?" We looked

around and there stood Mr. Atkey, the boss. No one seemed to want to give an explanation so I offered the suggestion that it might be a water main that had burst below the canal. We were all scared for our jobs as carbide cost money in those days. Mr. Atkey evidently accepted the idea, for he went and phoned up the Nottingham Water Works and they sent their men down to investigate for nearly two days, and none of us dared breathe what had really happened.

Christmas Day was spent at home this time. My sisters came down from Alfreton, and with our cousins in Lowdham we had a very nice holiday. We sung Christmas carols under the bedroom window, late at night, of the local veterinary surgeon who was a confirmed atheist and got a large jug of cold water poured on our heads for our evangelistic efforts. Our top hamper may have been dampened, but not our spirits.

Spring came and I was getting along fine with my job until that evil genius, the tire repairman, came along with another "good idea" which proved both my undoing and his.

A smart new motorboat was in for slight repairs. It had been faithfully promised to be finished by Saturday noon. About 11 o'clock in the forenoon the tire repairman, who really had nothing whatever to do with the boat, suggested that he and I should take it for a little run up the canal. I foolishly caught on to the idea and away we went. The other fellow was supposed to know all there was about a gas engine, and I was to steer the craft. We got a few miles up the canal, and on turning around to come back, the engine "died" and refused to go. We were in a dilemma for it was nearly 12 o'clock and the owner would be waiting for his boat. We hailed a passing barge and the bargee obligingly towed us back to the works, but sad to say the damage had been done, for when we arrived Mr. Atkey and the owner of the boat were waiting for us. We could not offer any explanation for our conduct, only mischieviousness, so we both decided to accept our resignation on the

27th of April, 1907. It was really a silly exploit for me as really I might have made good at that place.

I do not tell this story with any attempt to glorify this act of mine, but just to show what looks foolish now, was thought a good idea at that time. I was very sorry for it in regards to my mother. My sister Florris decided to come down from Alfreton and stay with Mother, so I got the roving fit again, and decided I would go back to sea, in the Merchant Service this time.

I went to Liverpool and signed on the old Allan liner "Ionian" bound for Quebec and Montreal. I told Mother I would only be away on short trips and not to worry. I often think I gave her lots to worry over, and you do not realise it until you are older.

The "Ionian" was full of emigrants coming out to Canada, as all the other ships on this route were. She was not what you could call a first class boat, as she used to ship cattle back on her return trip. Nationalities of all the countries in the old world were represented on board amongst the passengers, many of whom had never seen the sea at all until they had commenced their long journey to Canada.

One little amusing incident occurred whilst we were going over. A stout middle-aged Jewess had been ordered up on deck by the ship's doctor to get fresh air. She was so seasick that she absolutely refused to leave her cabin for anything so the stewardess got one of the stewards to help her up the companion ladder to the upper deck, but she was too heavy for them, so as I happened to be near, they asked me to help. I got behind the lady, the steward was in front walking up the steps backward holding the Jewish lady's hands, and somehow he let go when we were about half way up, which threw the whole responsibility on me, which was more than I had bargained for. Consequently we all went in a heap,

with me underneath at the foot of the companion ladder. I felt sorry for the sick lady, in fact I was a little depressed myself, but it must have been very humorous to the onlookers. The Jewish lady's husband was already employed as a glazier in Montreal and the steward and I were invited to their house, where we laughed over the incident and really had a good time. We arrived at Montreal on the 24th of June, 1907.

As the "Ionian" was tied up alongside the dock for a day or two, waiting for her return cargo, I was looking around Montreal. I got information that men were required at the C.P.R. Angus Shops so I took a walk around there. I happened to stray into what is called the "frog" shop where the switches, crossings, and other rail devices were made up. I stood watching a man fitting up switches for a while, and he asked me if I was looking for a job. I said "yes". He told me that he was leaving at the end of the week, and advised me to speak to the foreman in regards to it, so I walked up to the foreman and asked him for the job and I got it.

I decided to stay in Montreal for a while. I obtained room and board with some Newfoundland people by the name of Percy on Chausse Street, one street east of Deloumier Avenue. One of my fellow boarders at this place attended the East End Methodist Church on the corner of Bertrand and Demontigny Streets, so I went with him and became a member of the choir and also of the church.

I was making fairly good money at the railway shops, and I was beginning to feel like a real citizen of Montreal. I was also a member of a male voice quartet in connection with the church, and we were invited to sing at quite a few of the protestant churches in the city.

A Scotch boilermaker by the name of Stewart, a member of the church, enlisted my aid to start a Sunday School for the protestant

children in our neighbourhood as it was too far for them to go down to the church. The district in which we lived was almost entirely French Canadian. We approached the day school authorities and received permission to use one of the classrooms, then he and I made a personal canvass to the English-speaking families around and soon we were able to gather up quite a number of children to attend. Of course my friend Stewart conducted the Sunday school. My part was to play the hymn tunes on an auto harp that I had bought. After a while the parents of the children began to take an interest in the work, and an adult bible class was formed. Also we got the loan of an harmonium which I played instead of the harp.

I do not wish to invest myself with any particular religious glory, but I was young at that time, and I found it very interesting, also it kept me out of mischief, into which I could have very easily got. This modest endeavour of ours laid the foundation of a new church in that district with a regular minister, I found out in later years, and is known as Fairmount Methodist Church.

The people I stayed with were very nice too. The man, Mr. Percy, was an invalid, being totally disabled from the waist down with a disease called locomotor ataxia. They also had a wee baby, which died whilst I was with them. On the day of the funeral Mr. Percy was unable to go, so Mrs. Percy and I, with another lady friend, went to the cemetary, and I held the little coffin on my knees in the automobile. It was very sad. They did not have any other children.

I constantly massaged Mr. Percy night and morning until after a few months he was able to stand on his feet and also shave himself. I heard years later that he had returned to a light duty job at the railway shops.

Christmas came around once more, and this year it was to be spent in Montreal. They have a custom there for the ladies to stay home that day, and the gentlemen friends hire a sleigh and call on the ladies to wish them the compliments of the season. The male members of our choir hired a conveyance large enough to hold us all, and we certainly had a Merry Christmas calling on all the ladies of the choir.

I found Montreal a very friendly city in regards to its social life. Spring came along and the St. Lawrence River began to show signs of breaking up, and also I began to feel as though I should be on the move again. There was some talk in the railway shops about an impending strike so I thought I would get out before it came off, which afterwards I learned it did in 1908.

So I packed my bag and said good-bye to my friends in Montreal, and went down to the U.S.A. Immigration Bureau on St. Antoine Street to get my pass to New York as I did not wish to ship out of Montreal. I had been informed by an acquaintance that if I told the U.S.A. officials that I had been in Canada for 3 years I would not have to pay the necessary head tax of $4 required to enter the United States. Of course I fell for it. I knew perfectly well that I had only been in the country 9 months, but I suppose I wanted to be smart, but I found that other people were smarter and that was the U.S.A. officials.

When I applied for my pass they asked me how long I had been in Canada and I said unblushingly 3 years. Then the query came what boat and what month. I gave them the name of my old ship, the "Ionian", giving the month of June, 3 years previous. The official then looked up the passenger list for that year and month for my name, and of course it was not there. He looked at me oddly and asked me if I was sure of my dates, and my self-possession gave way, and I had to confess that my name was not even on any

passenger list, and that I had "jumped" the "Ionian". He became angry then and declared that my type was not required in the United States.

I felt very small, and I thought of the shame of having to meet my church friends after falling from grace. An idea came to me that the minister of our church, Mr. Brown, was an American and he might be able to help me, so I went to him and confessed my sin of trying to mislead the U.S.A. authorities. After hearing my penitent story, he smiled a little and said that the best of us slip sometimes and after giving me a little talk, he told me that it so happened that he was personally acquainted with the official at the bureau, so he gave me a letter to give to him. I thanked him and he warmly shook my hand and wished me God speed.

I took the letter to the U.S.A. bureau and after the official read it, he smiled and said I was very fortunate in knowing a man like Mr. Brown, but he said, "In future young man, watch your step".

I was then allowed to buy my ticket and I left Montreal via the C.P.R. on the 17th of April 1908 which was Good Friday that year, in the late evening of that day, and curling myself on one of the seats, I slept through the night. As the train roared over the International Boundary, I was not even woken up by the customs, and next morning I opened my eyes to see a nice young lady sitting on the opposite seat with all the ingredients of a nice breakfast spread out. I straightened myself out and after a wash and brush up, I returned to my seat and found myself invited to breakfast with the lady. We had quite a friendly conversation on our way to New York. She was a school teacher on her way home from the Easter holidays, and was very much interested in knowing that I was a seagoing man. She was full of questions, and I knew most of the answers. She got off the train on the outskirts of New York,

but before she left she gave me full instructions on how to get to Water Street and the Seaman's Mission.

It was Saturday afternoon by the time I arrived there and found that all accommodation was full up. I was however able to leave my bag there in safekeeping. It is also a place where you can leave any extra money that you do not need at the time. A receipt is given for the amount cared for and the charges are very small.

A financial panic had hit New York just about that time and things were as dead as a door nail. There must have been hundreds of seamen walking up and down Water Street where nearly all the big liners dock. I managed to get a room on Charles Street in between 10th and 11th Streets and what a room. In fact, it really must have been a storage space for the rest of the house as it did not contain any windows in it at all. The only light during the day came through the transom over the door. The landlady bore the euphonious name of Mrs. Punch, and she looked as tough as her name. I was also not alone in my room as there were hundreds of those interesting nocturnal creatures whose presence drives away all hopes of a decent sleep.

On Sunday, which was Easter Sunday, a sleety snowstorm was driving down through the air, so I attended service at a big Methodist Church. I forget its name or exactly where it was. I sat well at the back for my best clothes were in my bag at the Seaman's Mission, but the church officials seemed to make everyone very welcome.

I also attended a Roman Catholic seaman's mission on Monday evening where a concert was to be held. The chairman was the priest, a great big Irishman standing well over 6 feet. The artists at the concert were seamen of the different ships, who had volun-

teered to entertain the rest of the crowd. The chairman priest spaced the items on the programme with witty remarks, and also took advantage of the situation to bawl out several delinquents from mass, as he recognised them here and there amongst the audience. The way he called them by name and the lecture he gave them for their omissions struck me at the time as being very funny. I thoroughly enjoyed myself.

I had been asked to go to the mission by a fireman off the "Mauretania" who was alongside the dock. He also told me that 6 firemen had "jumped" at New York. What I mean by "jumped" is that they had deserted her, instead of doing the round trip back to Liverpool. He mentioned that if I could manage to get aboard that night and get hold of the 2nd engineer first thing in the morning I might stand a chance of getting back to Liverpool. I did so and interviewed the 2nd engineer as soon as he turned out of his cabin the following morning. He examined my naval discharges which seemed to satisfy him, so I got signed on for the return trip. I went ashore and got my bag from the Seaman's Mission and thought myself lucky in being able to get away from New York so soon.

That day, Tuesday, I paid a visit to the aquarium in Battery Park which is not so very far away, and spent quite a time looking at the different kinds of fish in the big glass tanks. The fire-boats also lay alongside Battery Point with steam up, ready at all times to dash away to subdue any fire that might occur on the different ships in the harbour. I also took a little walk up famous Wall Street, but I did not see very much money floating around. The well-known Bowery was to me rather disappointing, as I did not see any great difference to what we are accustomed to seeing in any of our big cities, in a like locality.

The last night I spent in Mrs. Punch's boarding house was to prove both exciting and embarrassing for me. My little box room

opened out into the corridor and was right opposite the bathroom. In the early part of the morning I had occasion to go there, so as everything seemed to be deadly quiet in the house, I did not bother to dress but just slipped in there. There was no light in the bathroom, the only light being in the hall outside. Whilst I was in there the door opened and what I thought was a ghost walked in. It was a woman in her white nightdress and being in the dark she did not see me. On coming in contact with me, she gave a surprised yelp and fled, and so did I, as fast as I could, for my own sanctuary and I bolted my door. In a minute I heard a clamour down the hall and a man's angry voice mingled with a woman's chattering, although it was in a foreign language to me. He tried my door, and I improvised a good imitation of a snore, and after a little while everything quietened down. Early in the morning I got out and stayed out.

On Wednesday, the 22nd of April we left New York about noon, passing the Statue of Liberty on our starboard side. I was not on shift as we left so I had a good chance to take in my surroundings. The "Mauretania" was a new ship in those days, in fact I believe this trip that I was on was about the third or fourth one she had made. Her sister ship the "Lusitania" who was in later years to be torpedoed during the war just outside Queenstown, Ireland, was not quite finished. Our ship held the blue ribbon of the Atlantic for speed, and continued to do so for many years after.

The Statue of Liberty that I mentioned before stands on an island of its own, and is a huge statue of a woman holding aloft in her right hand a torch which at night is lit up and forms a beacon. The statue was presented to the United States by the French nation and is supposed to be the largest of its kind in the world. The shoreline on the port side on going out, which is New York, is terraced by the huge skyscrapers that lift themselves one above the other, making an impressive sight when viewed from the deck of a ship. In the distance on the port bow lies a dark streak

which is Long Island, the playground of the millionaires, and Ambrose Light as you pass it, says good-bye to the United States of America.

I found my job of firing the boilers a little stiff after my absence from that kind of work. There were 48 big Scotch marine boilers, each with 4 furnaces, making in all 192 fires which had to be attended to with clockwork precision in order to maintain a full head of steam to supply the huge turbines. One of the trimmers, or the men that supply us the coal from the bunkers on either side of the ship, had a nasty accident in our stokehold. He was standing by the bunker door with his hand just inside. The ship gave a little heel over which caused a run of coal to come down from the upper part of the bunker, and his hand was crushed between the door frame and a large lump of coal. I was near him when it occurred and helped him up to the doctor's. He had to have the ends of 3 fingers amputated. The reason why I mention this incident is that I came in contact with him again in after years.

We arrived at Liverpool on the 28th of April in just over 4 days, which was a record run from New York, tearing along through the fog off the coast of Newfoundland. The food for the crew on a ship of that class is excellent and not only that, but at 8 o'clock in the evening the firemen always got what we call the "black pan". That is the remnants of the first class dining tables menu, which consisted of game and choice joints which had been partly used. That, with other delicacies, was placed in a huge pan for us to divide up amongst us. The contents of the pan may have appeared a trifle messy to anyone with a delicate stomach but to us, after 4 hours hard work below on the fires, it proved a source of epicurean enjoyment.

When we arrived alongside, the Royal Mail receives first

consideration above everything else. We, that is the crew, form a double file extending from the ship's hold to the mail cars on the train that is waiting alongside, and pass the mailbags rapidly hand to hand from the hold to the cars, under of course the watchful eyes of the officers, and then and not until then, are we allowed to go on shore to the pay-off table.

A shore gang comes aboard as we leave in order to clean up the ship and get her ready for her return trip. Those of us may sign on again if we wish, but do not join her until she is ready to sail. I had no desire to go back on her as I wanted to go home to see how my mother was.

I did not find her so well in regards her health. In fact I could see she was failing fast, so I promised her I would not leave England again until at least she showed some improvement. I stayed with her a few weeks, as my finances were in fairly good shape, and I had saved up quite a bit during my absence. I again paid a visit to my friends in Cheadle near Manchester where I had worked on the new railway a few years before.

Near Cheadle is a large institution called Cheadle Royal which is a private asylum for the feeble minded of the better class. Amongst the patients are members of the aristocracy under commonplace names, hiding their true identity. It was there I was advised to try for a position of attendant, as my naval discharges would no doubt assist me in obtaining it. I interviewed Dr. Scowcroft who was in charge, and it so happened that one of the attendants was leaving the establishment. The doctor, after examining my discharges from the Navy, accepted my application. It was a distinct change in my life to find myself responsible for the actions of these poor unfortunates.

The institution consisted of a huge building set in an exten-

sive piece of property with lovely trees and driveways. In fact it was set out like an estate of a rich landowner. The building itself was set back at quite a distance from the main highway and was built in the form of the letter E, the centre being the main entrance with a large reception hall with locked doors on either side. To the right lay the female section of the establishment and to the left the male, with the domestic arrangements occupying the centre at the rear.

The staff was composed of the head, Dr. Scowcroft, and his assistant, Dr. Sutcliffe, with the head attendant, Mr. Stott. The two wings, ladies' and gentlemen's wards, were in three divisions. The first ward was for patients under observation and mild cases. In the second ward were patients who had a possibility of recovering, and in the third ward were the incurables. I was allocated to the third ward and with two other attendants we had about 30 patients of the incurable type to look after. Many of them were suicide cases.

I commenced my duties at Cheadle Royal on the 12th of June, 1908. Many tragic and even amusing stories could be told of these unfortunates, some of them wonderful artists, musicians and singers, who were allowed to follow out their inclinations in their saner moments. One musician especially could take any simple air suggested to him and transform it into a beautiful rhapsody that would be delightful to listen to. I was even taught how to play chess by one of the patients in our ward.

One little amusing incident I should mention is that one day the head attendant asked me to return a book that he had borrowed from the matron on the ladies' side. It was the first and only time I had been in that part of the institution. I crossed over the main hall and was admitted into the first ward of the ladies, and whilst trying to find the matron, one of the lady patients,

a very heavy massive woman, came up and said, "Antony, my Antony", and she flung her arms around my neck and by sheer weight bore me down to the floor. Luckily a couple of nurses came to my rescue and saved me from a very awkward predicament. Of course the joke was too good for the nurses to keep, and so I had a fine time with my fellow attendants and also the nurses whenever I met them.

One of the best days we had however was on the day we held our annual outing. All the nurses and attendants that could be spared for the day, and I was fortunate enough to be included, hired a large conveyance with 4 horses and we had a picnic at a place called Lymm in Cheshire, a pretty little village near the river about 15 miles from Cheadle. We had a nice drive and took lots of good things to eat, and spent quite a nice day.

Just before we started to come home, one of the attendants thought it would be a good idea to pose as suffragettes, as that movement at that time was going very strong in England. So he and another attendant purchased a couple of yards of white cloth and with the aid of two broom handles and some black paint made a banner with the inscription "Votes for Women" and other suitable captions. Then we formed a parade through the village, headed by the banner and myself playing a mouth organ. Followed by a curious crowd of residents of the village we proceeded to the centre of the village where a few of our leading spirits made mock speeches in favor of women's suffrage. Unluckily someone discovered from the charioteer of our conveyance that we had come from Cheadle Royal and that name was enough to destroy our reputation, so amid much fun we climbed aboard our wagon and headed for Cheadle.

It was there also I met the girl who was to become my wife. Both her parents were on the staff. Her mother was cook and had charge of the culinary department of the establishment. Quite a few maids were required to assist, for over 200 persons had to be

provided for. Her father was in charge of the stables attached to the institution. My girl was employed in the silver pantry, her name being Edith Aldington. At Christmas it was intended for us both to go to my home for the holiday so that I could make her acquainted with my mother, but it was not to be, for Mother passed away quietly even before I could get home. She was laid to rest beside my father in Lowdham churchyard.

After the funeral was over and the last wishes of my father and mother had been carried out, which entailed the sale of the home and its contents, I then realised that the ones who had been responsible for my welfare in life, from the time they had taken me as an unknown into their hearts, had passed away.

I had no desire to stay any longer in England. I returned to Cheadle Royal and talked the matter over with Edith and her family, expressing my wish to be married and then to emigrate to New Zealand, and join my old shipmate Jock Wright who had already gone out to his girl.

I have often thought since it seemed cruel on my part to rob that little family of their youngest daughter on such a short notice, and that they should have seen fit to entrust her in my keeping so many miles away. After all I had only been acquainted with the family two or three months. It made me always believe that we follow God's plan of our lives, and if full trust is placed in Him we never go astray, even if at times when our lives are overshadowed, we are prone to doubt and ask the reason why such things should happen.

After gaining Edith's parents consent, we both gave a month's notice to the institution and both Dr. Scowcroft and Dr. Sutcliffe gave us a kindly lecture on our future. They had both known Edith from a baby. We left Cheadle Royal on the 30th of January, 1909.

We were married on the 20th of February by the Reverend Brewster at Gatley Church where I had been choir boy in the old railway construction days. The driver of the conveyance in which we rode to and from church was the son of Mrs. Clark, the farmer's wife with whom I used to board in the old days. On our return from church, some of my fellow attendants followed the old custom in that district of roping off the highway on our approach and refusing to let the cab pass until I had paid the usual fee of the price of a few drinks at the local inn.

I booked our passage, also the passage of my wife's second sister who had expressed a desire to go with us, and I was glad, for it made it easier for my wife to leave home. As far as I was concerned I was used to that end of the business. We then paid a visit to our relatives all around in different parts of England which took a week or two to do.

On the 11th of March we left Liverpool on the "Tunisian" bound for Canada, as I had booked to Vancouver, B.C. first, then we intended sailing from there to New Zealand. We had a good run over the Atlantic and it was quite a nice sensation to be a passenger on the ship, instead of having to go below on the fires.

We arrived at Halifax, Nova Scotia on the 20th of March and left for the west the same day. As I have said before our intentions were to go to New Zealand, but fate again had intervened in the shape of a young farmer who was returning to his homestead at Cartwright, Manitoba after a visit to England. He had developed a hopeless passion for my unmarried sister-in-law, and when we arrived at Winnipeg, Manitoba he induced us to get off the train and go and visit a married sister of his who lived on Victor Street. His sister's husband, who worked in the C.P.R. shops, spoke of the glorious possibilities of western Canada and so we decided to stay in Canada. We obtained a rebate on our passage money to Vancouver, and I began to look around for a job.

The minister at the Immigration Hall procured a situation for my sister-in-law with a nice family. As my wife and I were walking down Main Street we noticed in an employment agency's window that a cookee was required at the Winnipeg Street Railway Power Plant at Lac Du Bonnet. I did not know what a cookee was, but I thought it was worth while investigating. I found that the job was really a cook's mate and as I felt confident I could handle a job like that, I paid my dollar and got it. Then I mentioned that my wife was outside and I could not very well leave her in Winnipeg alone. The agent suggested that I take her with me as it would be perfectly alright.

On the afternoon of the 31st of March we left Winnipeg for Lac Du Bonnet via C.P.R. It was late at night when we arrived there, and to our unaccustomed eyes the end of the world. Snow was still thick on the ground and we found a teamster with a sleigh waiting at the station to take us to the camp over the frozen lake. It must have been a wonderful experience for my wife just out from England but to me it was just another journey somewhere. New Zealand was forgotten. We thought it a wonderful ride in the sleigh to the camp through the starlit night.

When we arrived the cook and his wife had prepared a good supper which was waiting for us and we were good and hungry, not having eaten anything since leaving Winnipeg.

The cook was an ex-army guardsman and he and I got along together fine. His wife also was a very nice woman, and said she was very glad to have my wife for company. I was also glad to have my wife with me, for I found there was lots of work to be done.

There were about 50 men in the camp to be fed. They were employed at the hydroelectric plant. The cook had to make a batch

of bread, cake and pies every day, besides the cooking of the different meats. The vegetables and lighter cooking came in my work, also cleaning the dishes, utensils and tables after each meal. In the evening we would all sit and peel potatoes ready for the next day. We had another man known as the bull cook whose duty it was to keep us supplied with water and wood for the fires. There was no lack of food. We had a storeroom in the cookhouse stacked to the ceiling with everything that an ordinary grocery store would carry. The meathouse outside was full of sides of beef, pork and other meats.

It was our first experience of camp life and we found it very interesting. The cook made out a little routine of our work, which made it much easier for us. Sunday was no exception. It was just as busy for us as any other day. It was my duty, when the mealtime came around and everything was ready, to strike a large triangle with a bar of iron to summon the men from the bunk house "to come and get it" which they certainly did, and no error.

The camp superintendant called around in a day or two and expressed satisfaction in the way everything was, but he certainly swore long and loud when he received the news about 2 months later that he would have to get a new cook and cookee, for the cook told me that he was returning to Winnipeg. So I said in that case I would as well. So the four of us left the camp in charge of our successors and left for Winnipeg on the 13th of May. We stayed overnight in the hotel in Lac Du Bonnet and arrived in Winnipeg on the 14th.

During our absence from Winnipeg we found that my sister-in-law had developed a bad attack of homesickness and wished to go home. The episode with the farmer from Cartwright had terminated. We tried to persuade her to stay but our efforts were useless, so she packed up and went back home to England. It looked as if she

came out with us just long enough to frustrate our plans in going to New Zealand.

We rented a cottage on Victor Street and on the 26th of May I got a job at the Manitoba Bridge and Ironworks operating a punch. Whilst I was there we had one or two big contracts such as the Osborne Bridge and the Grand Trunk Shops at Transcona which kept us very busy. I put in a lot of overtime that summer, and on the 4th of October we bought a lot on Banning Street and had a little cottage erected on it. We began to feel as if we were real residents of Winnipeg.

On the 20th of May, 1910 we had a daughter born to us, whose arrival brought much happiness to us both. We had become members of a Church of England Mission on the south side of Portage Avenue which has since become St. Margaret's Church. It was in charge of Reverend Woods who used to come and visit us occasionally. I also sang in the choir and it was there our baby Dorothy was baptized on the 24th of July, 1910.

Winnipeg at that time was a busy city. Real estate was active and the building trades were never better. We did not however enjoy the comfort of our little home on Banning Street long as my wife expressed a desire to take a trip to England. We could not both go, in fact I did not feel that I particularly wished to go. We sold our little cottage on the 16th of February, 1911 for $250 more than it cost us in the first place so we gained a little on our first venture in real estate. I booked a passage to England for my wife and our little girl and on the 16th of May they left for England. I certainly felt lonely, which was a new experience for me, as I had never felt that way before.

I had left the Manitoba Bridge and Ironworks on the 28th of March and on the next day, the 29th, I had secured a far better

job with more pay at the Dominion Bridge Company which at that time was overloaded with work. Several large buildings and theatres were in the course of construction, besides numerous bridges for the country which kept us on overtime work all that summer. I did not have much time to be lonely which was perhaps a good thing.

I received cheerful letters from my wife in England stating how glad her parents were to have her and the baby with them. When the summer had passed and the damp foggy weather commenced, as it does at the latter end of the year especially in the Manchester District of England, my wife wrote to say that she was ready to return to me. I was certainly glad to receive the news, so I immediately dispatched her return passage money, and rented a small cottage in Brooklands as it was nearer my work. My wife and daughter returned to Winnipeg on the 23rd of October, 1911. We were again a happy little family.

Work was plentiful at the Dominion Bridge Company with lots of overtime and the wages were good, as prices of commodities were then. On the 19th of July, 1912 we added a little son to our home and my wife began to assume quite a matronly air.

During my wife's absence in England I had neglected attending church, and I am almost too ashamed to confess that I had become, through reading atheist literature, a non-believer. I was at that arrogant age when I thought I knew a great deal, but I was to be brought up with a round turn to use a nautical expression.

In the spring of 1913 our little son Noel, as we called him, became sick. He had not been baptized owing to my disbelief at that time of anything sacred and although my wife and friends urged me to have him baptized I stubbornly refused. Our baby boy got worse and the doctor had given him up. Even the old nurse who was attending him advised me to make the necessary arrangements for our little one's passing away.

I suddenly took a change of mind and went in quest of the Reverend R. A. Sawyers who was the Methodist minister in Weston at that time. He came right away to our home and baptized our little son as he lay apparently lifeless. He then took me to task on my standing. After he had left I took all my atheistical literature and burnt it. My wife stood watching me with tears of joy in her eyes, for I must say she had never endorsed my ideas on this subject. From that day our baby boy commenced to recover to the amazement of both the doctor and the nurse. But three of us knew why and that was the minister, my wife and I. I do not say that it was the act of baptism that saved our baby, so much as it was my change of heart and my surrender from that arrogant defiance I had adopted.

In the early part of 1914, I cannot give the exact dates, a terrible accident occurred on the rolling machine that I was operating at the time. We had a contract for some water softening tanks for the C.P.R. Some of the plates for the tanks were triangular in shape. These plates, after having the holes punched, required rolling to bring them back to shape. They were roughly about 6 feet long by 4 feet at the base of the triangle and about 3/8 inch thick.

I had two helpers with me, a Scotchman who had not long been in the country and a Ruthenian. As I had to enter the point of the plate into the rollers, I had instructed them both to stand at the back end, or base of the plate, whilst holding the point into the rollers and not on any account to change their position. As soon as that plate got in motion they were to let go of it entirely, as the machine itself would then take the weight. We had done several of the plates. I was standing at the controls operating the rollers when to my horror the Scotch helper forgot himself for the moment and stepped in at the side of the plate, just as I had started the machine. I reversed the rotation of the

rollers in a flash, but in that brief instant the plate had caught him in the middle of the body and doubled him into the rollers. Had the rollers continued the way they were going, he would have passed entirely through them. As it was he was so badly cut by the plate, he died at the hospital the next day.

At the inquest that followed I was exonerated from all blame, and even complimented on the speed in which I had reversed the machine, but it left a scar on my memory for a long time after. Even after that I still had the remainder of the plates to finish, but with two more experienced helpers.

We had quite a few Germans working at the Dominion Bridge Company and somewhere, I think in the middle of May 1914, they held a social gathering in their club room just west of Sherbrook Street. Several of us English-speaking fellows were invited as they were raffling off a harmonium and we had all bought tickets. The Germans as they drank would raise their glasses in some toast or other unknown to us. As the party advanced, the time for the draw took place. The winning ticket was held by a Scotchman, and of course we congratulated him on his good luck. However, this did not seem to suit the German element who wished to retain the instrument. This naturally started an argument which commenced an exciting episode in which everybody seemed to be mixed up in, myself included. We managed to haul the harmonium out on the street and after borrowing a rig, unknown to the owner, we hoisted it aboard. As we did not have a horse, the English-speaking gang hauled it up Logan Avenue to Brooklands, whilst I played suitable tunes on the harmonium. Where the limbs of the law were that night I could not say.

The Germans, shortly after this incident, quit the Dominion Bridge Company with the excuse that they were returning home to better employment, but the war clouds that gathered shortly after disclosed the real object of their departure.

About this time too, everything seemed to go dead in regards to work. We did not have any contracts in and many got laid off in consequence. Then came the War. Shortly after it had been declared I sent my name and address, together with my naval records, to Ottawa and on the 16th of August, 1914 I received the necessary papers for my meals and transportation, with orders to report to the Commanding Officer in charge at Halifax, Nova Scotia. Winnipeg was in a state of excitement. All the army reserve men of the different old country regiments were receiving their orders to return to England to join their various units. I packed my bag and said good-bye to my wife and our two little ones, who were then 4 years and 2 years old, fortunately too young to know what it was all about.

I left Winnipeg for Halifax on the 18th of August, 1914. The train I went down on was full up with returning army reserve men of almost every regiment in the British Army, which naturally made a pretty lively crowd. I could only find one other naval rating on board the train who was going to Halifax as I was, so we got together for the remainder of our journey.

It was on the evening of the 22nd of August that the two of us arrived in Halifax. My acquaintance on the train was also a member of the Black Squad like myself, that is to say, belonging to the engine room department. It was pouring with rain at the time. A warrant officer in an oilskin coat met us at the depot and after asking us if we were the only two naval men on the train, he then piloted us through the dockyard gates to the barracks. We were supplied with a hammock and after getting something to eat from the cook's galley we turned in.

I was surprised the next morning to find so few of us in the barracks. Afterwards I learned that the old "Niobe", a cruiser like my old ship the "Sutlej", had been transferred from the

British Navy to Canada and had recently been put into commission. She was now out on patrol in the Atlantic, which had practically taken every available man out of the barracks.

The "Good Hope", sister ship to my old ship the "King Alfred", with Admiral Cradock on board, had left Halifax the day before and had left behind a steam pinnace for the use of the Intelligence Department which had just arrived to take over the Port of Halifax. A stoker petty officer being required to run the engine of the steam pinnace, I got the job taking with me my stoker acquaintance on the train. A Royal Naval Reserve coxswain had the wheel with two deck hands so we made a nice little crew of five.

Our duty was to convey the secret messages from the Intelligence Department to the various ships in the harbour. It was a good job and shortly we got a relief crew to divide up the work which made it better still, as the messages required instant attention day and night.

As the war continued and we received the news of the sacrifices being made by our men at the front, many of us felt a little ashamed of staying in the comparative safety of our jobs in Halifax. In fact some of the men interviewed the Commanding Officer to ask him to allow them to be transferred over to the other side. He bluntly told them that we had our duty to do here which left the only alternative, that of deserting and rejoining, under an assumed name, the overseas drafts of soldiers who were beginning to come down to Halifax, and which some of them I believe really did do.

So I do not want my future pages to be read as a war experience at all, but as they contain what might be interesting coincidences I will carry on with the story. I write this in the event of these pages being read by some who really did suffer from those terrible years of strife.

We had all been in barracks about 3 months and still there was not any signs of a pay day. My wife had written to me telling me that she was reduced almost to the last cent and was getting uneasy. The same problem also affected the rest of the married men in barracks, so we formed a delegation to interview the officer who was supposed to be the paymaster. He listened sympathetically but stated that he had not as yet received any money from Ottawa for that purpose. In the office during our interview also sat Commander J. K. L. Ross, the millionaire sportsman, who had recently placed at the disposal of the Canadian government his private steam yacht the "Grilse" modelled somewhat like a torpedo boat destroyer and equally as fast. He also had heard our complaint in regards to not having received any pay. He was very indignant at the laxity of the pay office and immediately asked the paymaster to furnish him with the names and addresses of all the married men in the barracks. There must have been about 30 of us. We went out thankful that somebody had taken an interest in our case. In my next letter I received word that my wife had received a telegram authorizing her to draw $100 on the bank. Commander Ross had certainly gone the limit. He had presented every married man's wife with $100 the same day he had heard of our trouble, out of his own pocket.

A month after that we got our proper pay with no reduction for the previous $100, and also the back pay that was coming to us. My wife said she had so much money coming all of a heap, she hardly knew what to do with it. Still it reflected a very kindly spirit of thoughtfulness and generosity on the part of the Commander. He was certainly aces high with us after that.

I kept up a weekly correspondence with my wife in Winnipeg and in respect to this a curious incident occurred. One night, or I should say early morning in November while I was on duty, our little steam pinnace was laying alongside the jetty. I was

the only one on board. The rest of the crew were in the barracks taking 40 winks whilst waiting for a call, which also I was doing, laying on my waste locker in my little engine room. I was fast asleep at the time and in what must have been a dream. I heard my name called twice, "Frank, Frank". I recognized the voice as that of my wife. It was so startling. I woke up and rolled off the waste locker in surprise. I knew I was alone on the boat at the time so I dismissed the subject from my mind as just a vivid dream.

In the next letter I got from my wife, she wrote and told me that one night she woke up and heard someone outside the house at the coal shed door, so she called out my name twice thinking it would scare the intruder away, which according to her letter it did. When I read the letter the incident of my dream came back to me, so in my next letter to her I asked her to give me the date and also the time of the occurrence in her next letter to me, which she did. Now I am not by any means a spiritualist, but I must say that taking into consideration the difference in the time between Halifax and that of Winnipeg, the time she called my name twice coincided exactly with the time I heard it in my dream on board the pinnace. I will leave this story in the hands of those who make a study of this type of phenomena to mull over as it is outside my longitude or latitude.

In the beginning of November we received the sad news of Admiral Cradock's defeat at Coronel in which the old "Good Hope" and "Monmouth" were sunk in action with Admiral Von Spee's German squadron who were more heavily armed. This defeat was speedily avenged by Admiral Sturdee who was dispatched from England with the "Indomitable" and "Invincible" to even things up which he certainly did at Falkland Islands where he came in contact with the German Admiral Von Spee and sank both him and his squadron. Admiral Cradock had himself gone down with the "Good Hope" in connection with this.

I happened to take a walk one day entirely around Bedford Basin, a huge sheet of water that is landlocked and only reached by passing through Halifax Harbour, and comprises a walk of about 24 miles. But I started early in the morning and it was night by the time I again reached Halifax. On my way round I called at a little wayside cottage for a drink of water, and the old lady who lived there got talking and mentioned that a nice old gentleman with a companion had called one day with a similar request. He had also left his card with her which she proudly showed me. I nearly fell over when I saw it. The name on the card was Rear Admiral Sir Christopher Cradock, R.N. He had evidently taken a walk around there with his secretary whilst his ship the "Good Hope" lay in Halifax just before he left on his unsuccessful venture with Von Spee. I should liked to have had that card, but I did not have the nerve to ask the old lady for it.

The little steam pinnace that I was running took on a special reverence for me, for she was all that remained of the Admiral's flagship, the "Good Hope". The only members of the crew of that unfortunate ship that did not go down with her, were a few seamen who had been left in Halifax to act as runners for the Intelligence Department and a small detachment of signallers who had been left on a barren headland at the foot of South America to keep in touch with passing British ships.

Towards the latter end of 1915 the "Niobe" was withdrawn from service on patrol in the Atlantic by the Canadian government. Whether it was because of the expense entailed in keeping her at sea or not I do not know, but it is to her credit to state that she had held the record of intercepting more ships with contraband cargo than any of the others. Captain Corbett who had charge of her was one of the rough old style sea dogs belonging to the Royal Naval Reserve. He had every need to be too, for the crew of the "Niobe" was a mixed lot. It contained the remnants of the

Canadian government's attempt to form a Navy prior to the war. The majority of the remainder of the crew were men who had at different times deserted the Navy and who now had been given a King's pardon at the beginning of the war. With this cosmopolitan crew and her roughshod skipper the "Niobe", on one of her steam trials during the war, broke all her former records for speed, including the time she was attached to the British Navy. I remember when she belonged to the Mediterranean Fleet years before the war. She was considered then to be the lame duck of the Fleet. It seems strange that she should have to come to Canada to redeem her reputation in that respect, and with a mixed crew at that.

Captain Corbett, her skipper, left the "Niobe" when she was tied up for the last time alongside the wall at Halifax. He went to the armed liner "Justinian" which was later torpedoed by a German submarine. When the "Niobe" was tied up the Intelligence Department moved their quarters from the dockyard to her. Our little steam pinnace was also discarded in favor of the "Niobe's" picket boat which was both larger and faster. So after that I went to live on board the "Niobe", to run the picket boat together with another stoker petty officer for a relief.

One Saturday night near the end of 1915 a gale was howling out at sea. Even the water in Halifax Harbour was choppy. The night officer or watch of the gangway of the "Niobe" received a message that a fishing schooner was ashore at the entrance of the harbour, and that assistance was required to bring the men off the schooner before she began to break up. Our coxswain was ordered to take the picket boat and go to her assistance. I had noticed the coxswain and his two deckhands making preparations for a rough trip. The coxswain lashed himself to the wheel with a light length of rope, bidding the other two men to go below in the forepeak until he required them. I closed my engine room hatch and the fireman closed the boiler room hatch. I told him

that he was not to open it on any account, as our safety depended on the waterproof sections of the engine and boiler rooms. The engine room signal bell was the only communication between the coxswain and myself with the hatches being closed. The schooner was ashore on a sandbar on the eastern side of the entrance to the harbour, and so we made our way down to her, past St. George's Island and McNabb Island, and then we began to feel the edge of the gale.

We had a good coxswain, a strong levelheaded fellow that knew his business, which was a good thing for all of us, for we were tossed up and down like a cork. I was very thankful for the strong steel roofing over our heads for we must have been like a submarine half the time with the water dashing over us. I saw now the wisdom of the coxswain tying himself to the wheel, and it must have taken very clever handling of the wheel to have kept our little craft head on to the waves. All I had to do was to keep the engine plugging away and answer his signals of the bell. We managed to come alongside as near as we dare. The schooner had keeled over broadside on to the sandbar. She was an American fishing vessel hailing from Gloucester, Maine and had about 12 of a crew. They seemed amazed at the size of our little craft coming to get them. We dared not go close enough for them to jump on board, so our upper deck crew rigged a line between the two of us and hauled the men on board our boat one by one. They all tied themselves together with rope to different parts of the upper deck, and then we started back to Halifax. The return trip was not quite so bad, as we had the gale on our stern.

It was about 4 o'clock Sunday morning when we managed to scramble alongside one of the city's wharfs. The skipper of the schooner insisted on us going with him and his men to a hotel on the waterfront, and after knocking up the proprietor whom he knew, who mixed up a huge jorum of rum punch for us all together with a

hearty breakfast, we all felt pretty good. We left them there and returned to the "Niobe" and reported all "OK". The schooner became a total loss as she broke up that day.

About this time I became acquainted with a very nice family, who were residents of Halifax, by the name of Martin. Mr. Martin was skipper of the dockyard repair boat and my acquaintance with him there led him to invite me up to his house, which was the beginning of a warm friendship between myself and the family which lasted until the end of the war. I regret to say that Mr. Martin died in 1916. His eldest son Alfred was about my age, and was employed as a checker in the railway yards in Halifax. We became fast friends and I spent most of my time ashore at his home where I was considered almost one of the family.

The family itself on both parent's side originally came from Ketch Harbour, a little fishing village near the entrance of Halifax Harbour, and where my friend's grandparents on his mother's side still lived. Their name was Fleming and my friend and I very often walked down at the weekend to Ketch Harbour to visit them or sometimes we were able to get a passage on any of the boats that happened to be in Halifax. Ketch Harbour itself was a little narrow inlet about 1 mile long by 1/4 mile wide with a Roman Catholic Church standing at the landlocked end of the harbour.

One little amusing incident I remember was that which happened one Sunday when my friend and I were down there on a visit. We had gone down on the Saturday afternoon and the next morning being Sunday we had all gone to church. Down there no one is excused. Even visitors feel that they should attend. I was not acquainted with the service but they make you feel welcome. The inhabitants, as I said before, are all fishermen and times had not been so good of late. One man is usually excused from church to

be stationed at the mouth of the harbour to report fish if any. This particular Sunday as we were all in the middle of the morning service, the lookout gave a signal that fish were on the run. Immediately everyone left the church, the priest included, and made a beeline for their boats and away out to their nets. My friend and I went too in his cousin's boat. It was quite an experience for me and I thoroughly enjoyed it. Only two families and their descendants seemed to live in Ketch Harbour, Martins on one side of the harbour and Flemings on the other so my friend was related on both sides. His grandparents on his mother's side, the Flemings, were a very old couple full of interesting stories of bygone days that I was always delighted to listen to.

One story his grandmother told me in connection with Ketch Harbour was that at a certain time on a summer's moonlit night a Navy ship's boat with six rowers and the captain in the stern all dressed in white, row up the harbour towards the church, but they are never seen to return, but disappear at the head of the harbour which as I have said before is landlocked. The old lady swore to the truth of this story, as she had seen it herself when she was a young girl.

Of course there are many stories told of buried treasure in that district, as it was supposed to be the haunt of that famous old pirate Captain Kidd. My friend's grandfather, old John Fleming, told me a story that is really true in regards his father who was a pilot in the days when the north and south of what is the United States today, were engaged in civil war. A confederate ship of the south was loaded with provisions and lying in Halifax Harbour waiting for an opportunity to evade two Yankee men-of-war who were waiting outside of the harbour to capture her as she left.

Halifax Harbour has really two entrances. The main entrance

is of course a deep, wide and safe navigable channel, but the other is not so well known in these days as it cannot be used by vessels drawing very much water. It is a shallow, rocky and tortuous passage that runs to the eastern shore of Nova Scotia and is known as the eastern passage.

The confederate ship the "Tallahassie" was beginning to get anxious, as the Yankee men-of-war still patrolled off the entrance of the harbour waiting for her to come out. John Fleming, the great grandfather of my friend Alfred Martin, volunteered to pilot the "Tallahassie" through the eastern passage which would enable her to gain the Atlantic unknown to the Yankees who were waiting at the main entrance. After a great deal of persuasion by the pilot John Fleming, the skipper of the "Tallahassie" gave him permission to attempt the passage.

At night under great secrecy, as there were Yankee spies in Halifax, the pilot took charge and ordered all of the "Tallahassie's" small boats to be put over the side and to be manned by her crew. They then formed a line ahead and towed the "Tallahassie" over to the eastern passage and under the skillful pilotage of John Fleming gained the open sea. The "Tallahassie" got clear before the Yankees were aware that she had left. At times, the grandfather of my friend told me, there was hardly enough room for the hand to pass between the rocks and the ship's keel. This story was for some time included in the Nova Scotia's text books at school.

One last little incident whilst running the picket boat occurred during the summer of 1916. We received word that the German battleship "Von der Tann" had escaped the British blockade and was now racing over the Atlantic to knock spots off Halifax. No British cruisers were in Halifax at the time, and the "Niobe" had been practically dismantled as a fighting ship. The news

caused quite a bit of excitement. The night the "Von der Tann" was expected to arrive, all the shore batteries were on the alert with everything in the shape of resistance ready.

The "Grilse", Commander Ross' boat, had been converted into a torpedo boat destroyer and received orders to proceed to the mouth of the harbour to try and intercept the battleship and try to torpedo her in the darkness. Our picket boat was ordered to accompany her to act as scout, also we were supposed to divert the attention of the battleship whilst the "Grilse" got in her dirty work with her torpedoes. We both left in the evening. It was a nice night without any moon and the sea was calm, fortunately for us. We hung around the entrance of the harbour all night but it appeared that the news or rumor had not been correct, as further investigation proved that no units of the German Fleet had left their home ports. Still it was exciting for us at the time, for we thought if we could have bagged the "Von der Tann" we could have called it a day and gone home. But the Lord knows what we would have done for all the armament the picket boat possessed was a one pounder gun mounted forward.

Shortly after this I asked the lieutenant engineer on the "Niobe" for a change of jobs. My application for a change being granted, I was sent to the "Margaret" to relieve a stoker petty officer who had gone to hospital. The "Margaret" was a Canadian government fisheries protection vessel that was now doing duty as patrol around the coast. She was a trim little craft almost new and looked somewhat like our 2nd class cruisers. Our patrol took us in many of the numerous harbours up and down the Nova Scotia coastline.

We were laying in Halifax on the 16th of December, 1916. That morning the "Grilse" had left for Bermuda, West Indies. The barometer had been falling all day and towards evening a strong

gale was beginning to blow. A message had been sent to recall the "Grilse" but Captain Wingate who was in command of her at that time, thought probably that he could outrun the gale and continued on his way to Bermuda. Late that evening we received a message that the "Grilse" was in difficulties and that assistance was required. The "Margaret" immediately put out to sea to try and locate her. When we got out into the open sea it was blowing a hurricane with a blinding snowstorm to accompany it. I have seen some dirty weather, but the night that followed was the worst one I ever put in at sea.

I had the middle watch, that is 12 midnight to 4 a.m. in the morning. The stoker petty officer that I relieved told me that he had had difficulty with the bilge pumps as the suction from the bilges kept choking up with small coal that had washed down from the bunkers with the huge volume of water that was continually breaking over our ship. It looked a sorry mess down below and as more water came pouring down from topsides our condition got worse. The firemen were endeavouring to keep the fires going under difficulties, standing on the angle iron framing supports of the boiler room floor plates, as the plates themselves had become displaced with the water rolling from one side of the ship to the other. My problem lay in trying to keep the bilge pumps working in order to keep the water down that was getting dangerously close to the ash pits of the boilers.

The engineer in the engine room had his hands full looking after the main engines which were in danger of tearing themselves loose every time the ship lifted her propeller clear of the water due to the violence of the storm. The only way to keep the suctions of the pumps clear was by going under the water in the bilges and with my fingers grovelling the small coal away from the screens to allow the water to get to the suction pipes, and this I had to do. I would take a lung full of fresh air and dive

under the water for a couple of minutes digging away with my fingers and then come up again for a blow. This procedure carried on all my shift and also the next as the stoker petty officer that should have relieved me was prostrated with seasickness.

A broken water gauge glass in one of the boilers did not improve matters as two of the firemen had to leave their fires temporarily in order to hold me down to the gratings, so that I could use both hands to put a new glass in the water gauge on the boiler. We managed to keep the water down in the bilges. In fact, we gained on it considerably and by the time our reliefs had come down, conditions were looking a little better.

During the forenoon of that day, the 17th, we received a wireless message that the "Grilse" had been able to stagger in to Shelbourne Harbour, so it was there we made our way. We had a good navigator who knew the coast like a book, which was fortunate for us, as it was impossible to see more than a ship's length ahead on account of the blinding snow and sleet. However we managed to nose our way into Shelbourne Harbour and when we tied up to the wharf the "Grilse" lay ahead of us having got in there about 6 hours before, and what a sorry mess she looked. I thought our condition was bad enough, with nearly all our small boats broken up and some of our top gear down, but it must have been terrible on the "Grilse".

I got a very good description of her adventure from her ship's carpenter, who even now works in the railway shops where I am also employed. His version of the disastrous trip was that when the "Grilse" left Halifax it was not too bad. But as she got further out on her way to Bermuda the weather gradually got worse. They received the message to put into the nearest harbour or if possible return to Halifax but the captain trusted too much to the speed of his vessel as he had an idea that he could outrun the weather.

The first casualty they got was that of a seaman who had been ordered to secure the lashing of the tarpaulin covering the torpedo tube. A big sea broke over the bows and knocked him down into the torpedo runway and broke both his legs. Two seamen went forward to get him aft, but before they could get to him, a huge sea swept them over the side. The captain managed to get the "Grilse's" course headed for Shelbourne, the nearest harbour. In doing so the "Grilse's" cutter which was lashed in chocks over the engine room's skylight, commenced to break away, and endanger the safety of the engine room by banging up and down on the skylight. The gunner and another seaman attempted to secure the cutter by further lashings but they too were swept over the side. The wireless antenna broke and one of the two wireless operators climbed up on the roof of the pilot house to repair it and he went over the side also. Then the chief engineer climbed out of the engine room in order to report the condition down below to the captain. He had no sooner got clear of the engine room hatch when a sea broke over the ship and overboard he went.

That made 6 men lost overboard out of about 50 men on board. The cutter eventually broke away and in doing so took the engine room skylight with it. The second engineer was up to his middle in water endeavouring to keep the engines operating. If it had not been for the forced draught fans and the watertight boiler room, there is no doubt the craft would surely have foundered. Her funnels were battered in, and by the time they staggered into Shelbourne the crew were absolutely exhausted.

The people of Shelbourne came nobly to the rescue and took all of the crew into their homes and gave them every care and comfort. A queer coincidence was that the first casualty of the "Grilse", the seaman who had his legs broken and who had to lay out there in the torpedo runway, was saved and lay now in Shelbourne Hospital.

We stayed a week in Shelbourne until the crew of the "Grilse" had rested up, and then in order to relieve them of further work or care, we took the "Grilse" in tow and hauled her back to Halifax on the 24th of December 1916.

I spent Christmas Day, 1916 with my friends the Martins in Halifax. On New Year's Day, 1917 we went back on patrol for a few weeks. Near the end of February the stoker petty officer that I had relieved whilst he was in hospital returned back to the "Margaret" and I went back to the "Niobe".

My next job on the "Niobe" was to be in charge of the double bottom party. I had a leading stoker and 3 stokers in my gang. Our duty was to keep the double bottoms, or the watertight compartments next to the outer shell of the ship below the boiler room and engine room floor plates, painted. Also we had to keep check of the coal and water that was used on board. It was a good job. I could have had my old job on the picket boat, but I preferred this one for a change. It allowed me to have every weekend off on shore, usually staying at the home of my friend Alfred Martin.

Just at the end of their street was a Church of England so I attended there and joined the choir, and even went to the extent of taking charge of a boy's class in the Sunday School at the request of the Vicar, that a lady teacher had given up in despair.

I occasionally took long walks around the neighbourhood usually by myself. One day I had gone over to the neighbouring town of Dartmough on the other side of the harbour, and I had followed a shore road which led to the Dominion Sugar Refining Company's plant as I thought I would like to take a look through it. I took a short cut off the main road on a trail that led through the woods. On my way I heard the sound of someone

hammering so I stepped off the trail to where the noise came from. In a clearing where a little cottage stood, a venerable old lady was busy hammering shingles on the side of her cottage. I offered to help her in her work and stayed an hour or so until the job was finished. She seemed a little peculiar in her ways, but I put it down to her advanced age. She did not say who she was, and did not even want to know who I was, so I continued on my way.

I stopped in Dartmouth on my return at the home of some people that I had become acquainted with. I mentioned about helping the old lady with her shingles. On being told the location they said, "Why, that would be Hetty McNabb". When I asked who she was they told me that she was a descendant of a local hero of his day, later to become the owner of that fairly big island that lays in the fairway of the entrance of Halifax Harbour, known as McNabb's Island.

The story goes back to the days when the French and British were at war, both at home and here too. Halifax then was the stronghold of the British as Quebec and Louisburg were to the French. Out in the Atlantic a French squadron of men-of-war were being closely pursued by a British squadron. The French at the entrance of Halifax Harbour picked up a pilot by the name of McNabb who told the French commander that he could pilot them through the harbour and out through a passage to the Bay of Chaleur to the north, which was a lie, for he knew full well that Bedford Basin that lies at the northern end of the harbour is landlocked with no escape to it. The French commander evidently took McNabb on his word and allowed him to pilot the French Fleet into the harbour and through the narrows into Bedford Basin. At the narrows McNabb jumped over the side and swam ashore. The British followed the French ships into Bedford Basin and sank them there. The pilot was rewarded for his falsehood by being given the island that now bears his name, and the old lady that I had helped that day was one of his great grand-daughters.

Halifax, to the majority of people who enter Canada by that eastern gateway, appears drab and uninteresting. But to those who care to examine the history of the old city, and visit the different places in the district, will find a veritable mine of interest. I used to take a delight in rambling around asking questions about the different places such as old St. Paul's Church, built of wood that was shipped from Boston long before that memorable tea party that split the English-speaking races of this continent. Under the nave of this old church lies buried notable figures of past colonial history. In a small graveyard near the dockyard also lies the bodies of those who were killed in action in that historic naval duel between the U.S.S. "Chesapeake" and the H.M.S. "Shannon", the bones of both conqueror and conquered lay side by side.

In the museum section of the Parliament Buildings are the boots of that famous Cape Breton giant Angus McCaskill who for a wager stole an anchor weighing half a ton and carried it away on his back. My friend's grandfather, old John Fleming, told me that he had helped to dig that vast grave that holds the victims of the shipwreck of the "Atlantic", an emigrant ship that struck on the cruel Sambro Ledges, those iron bound rocks not far from Chebucto Head at the entrance of the harbour. This huge square grave, dug near the scene of the disaster held, I believe, over 300 bodies. The Bishop of Halifax conducted the funeral service, after which it was filled in. Pages could be written of stories told in connection with the rocky shores of Nova Scotia.

I happened to drop into a place of refreshment known to us as the Long Bar. Standing next to me was a sailor who, as he paid for his drinks, I noticed had 3 fingers missing. I looked into his face and recognised him as the coal trimmer that I had on board the "Mauretania" years before that met with the accident mentioned in my previous story of my trip over in her. He was now

on the "Caronia" which was in port at the time. We had quite an interesting talk together interspersed with liquid refreshments. In fact, by the time we had finished our conversation I felt as if I had known him a lifetime.

At the latter end of 1917 I put in a request to the captain for 1 month's leave of absence which was granted and on the 17th of November I went home to Winnipeg. I arrived in the evening at the C.P.R. depot where my wife was waiting for me. She told me that she had left our two kiddies at home in bed, and when we arrived there they had got too sleepy to keep awake for me so I did not disturb them. Noel was now 5 and Dorothy was 7. I was sure glad to be back with them. I spent a very pleasant month at home, which seemed to fly away on wings.

Whilst I was home on leave came the awful news of the Halifax explosion that occurred on December 6, 1917. Under the circumstances I was expecting a recall back to Halifax, but none came, so I finished my leave on the 17th of December and returned to Halifax. It was then I saw the effects of that terrific blast. The whole of the suburb of Richmond which lies opposite the narrows where the explosion had occurred had been swept away with just the basements of the houses showing cut off at the level of the ground.

After reporting on board the "Niobe", at the first opportunity I went to see how my friends had fared. They lived at the back of the hill that Halifax is built on, so they had not been damaged very much, with the exception of cracked walls and broken windows. In regards windows, it was reported at the time there was scarcely a whole pane of glass left in the entire city. Hundreds of buildings were cracked so badly that they were almost beyond repair. When you think of 1,500 lives being lost, in as you might say the twinkling of an eye, it almost seems incredible.

The eastern States of America responded nobly to assist in the reorganization of the shattered end of the city, as did the whole of Canada, and to a great extent the whole of the continent of North America. Food, lumber, clothing, and all the necessities of life flowed in to Halifax to relieve the distress. A second explosion might easily have occurred if the huge reserves of ammunition kept at the arsenal had exploded. Happily they remained intact. Owing to the danger of fire which followed the explosion, this danger was averted by removing the ammunition to a safer place. Great heroism was shown by the soldiers and sailors in removing the menace, as it had to be moved through the danger zone and could easily have prematurely exploded.

Bedford Basin, which is landlocked as I have stated before, was used as an examining place for all ships, before they were permitted to cross the Atlantic. Suspected vessels of all nationalities were escorted into the basin to be examined in order to see that no contraband goods were enroute to the enemy. I remember two interesting passengers that were picked up and brought ashore by our picket boat whilst I was on her. One was the Captain of the German cruiser "Emden" which did so much damage to our shipping before being destroyed by the Australian cruiser "Sydney". The Captain of the "Emden" was for some time a prisoner in the Citadel of Halifax. The other passenger I referred to was Von Papen, the German Ambassador to the United States, who after the States entered the war thought he was free to go back to Germany unmolested, but to his great displeasure he and his ship were compelled to call at Halifax to be examined before they would allow him and his suite to go over to the other side.

The cause of the explosion was, as most people have read, the result of two ships coming into collision in the narrows which lies in between Halifax Harbour and Bedford Basin. On the morning

of December 6th, which was a bright, sunny morning, the S.S. "Mont Blanc" loaded with T.N.T., a very high explosive, benzine in large iron drums and copper plate, unknown of course to everyone but the proper authorities, was proceeding on her way through the narrows to the basin. At the same time the S.S. "Imo" had left the basin and was also in the narrows on her way out through the harbour to sea.

It is customary for ships that are about to pass each other to blow a blast on the siren to convey to each other the method of passing. One blast means "I am going to port" and two blasts means "I am going to starboard". The first ship to give the signal is responded to in a like manner by the second ship, that is to say they repeat each other's signal. If one blast is sounded by both ships they both go to port, which naturally keeps them safely apart from each other. This may read a little confusing to anyone who is not acquainted with this procedure. It does not matter really whether both ships go either to port or starboard providing they both go to port or both go to starboard. But if one should go to port and the other go to starboard a collision will ensue, which unfortunately occurred in this sad case owing to mistaken signals on the part of the pilots. It is not my place to record the blame to any one in particular, but it was unfortunate that those ships should have been allowed in the narrows at the same time, owing to the dangerous nature of one of the ship's cargo. In the ordinary course of events both ships had ample room to pass.

When the collision between the two vessels occurred, fire broke out forward on the one loaded with the explosive. The benzine which had been stowed forward became ignited and the containers, or drums, blew up in the air, the sight of which naturally attracted hundreds of people on shore to crowd down to the waterfront to watch this unusual sight. No one of course,

other than those who were supposed to know, were aware of the terrible danger of the cargo stowed in the after part of the doomed vessel.

The Halifax fire brigade rushed down from Halifax to its suburb Richmond to stand by if required. Also our picket boat, the one that I had been relieved from, got an order to proceed to the burning vessel in order to ascertain whether they could be of any assistance. As they neared the doomed vessel the explosion occurred. The fire or heat had at last reached the terrible contents which was about 15 or 20 minutes from the time of the collision. The picket boat with her crew of five including the stoker petty officer who had taken my place disappeared entirely, no trace of the boat or crew being left. Had I returned to my old job, in all probability these lines would never have been written. Some people call it luck, but I say it is the will of God who holds our lives at his entire disposal.

The effect of the explosion swept the hillside on which Richmond is built like a broom carrying people, houses and everything to destruction. Halifax I am sure will never forget that terrible day. A blizzard that followed the day after made the sad work of recovering bodies of the victims much harder and many were never found. New streets have now been built on that once desolated ground and named after the various cities and states that so nobly responded with its help at that distressful time.

On the 2nd of March, 1918 I was sent to be acting chief stoker on the "Acadia" which was in peacetime an icebreaker for the Canadian government but was now doing duty as an armed vessel for the purpose of guarding the convoys of merchantmen leaving for the other side. The submarine menace had grown to such an extent that it was no longer safe for them to proceed without the accompaniment of an armed guard. Sydney, Cape Breton was in

future to be the port of departure for the convoys so it was there we were to make our headquarters.

We left Halifax on the 20th of May, 1918 and on the 21st arrived at Louisburg. We stayed there 3 days. On the 24th we went out to tow in the S.S. "Anjouleme" who was laying disabled out at sea. We brought her into Louisburg and left her there and proceeded on to Sydney. Leaving there on the 29th we escorted a convoy to Cape Race, Newfoundland. Leaving the convoy we called at Port au Basque, Cape Ray, and St. Paul's Island on the 1st of June. On the 2nd we lay off Bird Rock as it was too rough to land a boat. The only inhabitants of this rock are the light-house keeper and millions and millions of sea birds who make it a sanctuary. When the birds are at rest on the rock it appears to be covered with snow with the white wings of the birds. A sudden discharge from a gun sends them up and wheeling around in the air literally darkening the sky. The rock itself is covered several feet with that valuable fertilizer guana, the deposit of the birds through hundreds of years. I do not envy the lighthouse keeper his job on account of the aroma.

We anchored for the night at Bryon Island. On the 3rd we again passed Bird Rock and carried on to the Magdalen Islands. This little cluster of islands is situated in the Gulf of the St. Lawrence and seems to be isolated from the rest of the world. In the winter they are practically cut off entirely as ice forms around them, and they have to wait until spring when an ice-breaker like our ship opens up a passage to them. Lobster fishing seems to be the main industry and we certainly had a good cheap meal of them whilst we were there.

On the 4th of June we anchored for the night at Bay St. Lawrence and proceeded at daybreak past Cape Norah and back to Sydney. On the 5th we filled our bunkers with coal and left to

go to the assistance of the Dominion Coal Company's boat, the S.S. "Hochelaga", who had got on the rocks but by the time we got there she had scrambled off of them again.

On the 14th of June we again got a call for assistance and this time it was from the S.S. "Ascania", a big Cunarder who had gone ashore on a reef called Black Rock near Perse Blanche about 50 miles west of Port au Basque, Newfoundland. The fog was so thick you could cut it with a knife. However we found her I don't even know yet, but we certainly heard her bellowing. Her siren was blowing about every 5 minutes, which perhaps was a good job, for it helped us to locate her. She had been on her way to Montreal via the Straits of Belle Isle. Evidently the navigator had changed his course too soon in order to run north up through the Straits for he had missed Cape Ray by about 50 miles which he should have been to the west of, and piled up on the reef this side of Cape Ray. The "Ascania" had entirely gone over the first reef and lay cradled in between that one and the next. We took off all of the crew, even the cats, and brought them back to Sydney. One of the firemen belonging to her told me that was the seventh ship that he had been on during the war that had been lost mostly by submarines. He seemed very philosophic over it, just as if it was a matter of course.

We went back to the wreck with some big salvage pumps to see what could be done with her. After a careful diagnosis as to her condition, we gave her up as hopeless and left her to her fate. I might say here that the Cunard Steamship Co. gave each of us on board the "Acadia" a cheque for $50 for our services in connection with the "Ascania" which came in very handy.

We were back at Sydney on the 21st of June. We laid up for over a week while we cleaned our boilers out and on the 4th of July we celebrated Independence Day by doing a little gun practice

at sea. On the 5th we again escorted another convoy past Cape Race, and on our way back we called at St. Pierre and Miquelon. These two small islands are all that is left of the French possessions in Canada as they were ceded to France after the termination of hostilities between France and England for the possession of Canada. They were intended to be used as a base for the French fishing fleets. Liquor is very plentiful on these islands as there is no duty on it and the price is very low.

We had a little fun here. The skipper sent a boat ashore with a message, and they failed to return. So he sent another boat's crew to look for the first one. That one also failed to return, so he went himself with another boat and returned with the whole works. They were all feeling pretty good. I regretted at the time that my duties below compelled me to remain on board. The skipper was a good scout and the Frenchmen ashore had been very kind to their visitors, so we all forgot about it and returned to Sydney.

On the 9th of July we were again called out to go to the assistance of the S.S. "Overbrook" who had got on a sandbar at Frambois Cove. We managed to drag her off and brought her in to Sydney with us. On the 12th of July we attended the Orange Celebration at New Waterford and what a day.

On the 15th we did a little more gun practice at sea. The German submarines had even had the audacity to cross right over the Atlantic and sink several vessels off the coast of Maine. Two Red Cross liners, the S.S. "Stephano" and the "Florrigel" were both sunk. These boats used to run between Halifax, St. John's and Portland, Maine. We scouted around for the submarines but apparently they only paid one visit over here.

On the 20th we left for Whitehead arriving there on the 21st which was Sunday, so we all dressed up and went to the church

ashore. It is only a little fishing village with one church, so I guess we helped the finances for that day a little. The reason we went there was it had been reported that the Germans had a base in the vicinity for their submarines, but the rumor was unfounded.

We went on to Louisburg and stayed there until the 2nd of August. In the meantime, whilst we were there, on the 28th of July which was Sunday, I took a solitary walk about 7 miles up the coast to the old ruins of the French fortress of Louisburg. I saw a date on one of the stones 1745 but whether that was the date the British captured the fort or not, I could not say. I was greatly interested in browsing around the old ramparts. I had quite a talk with an old man who was the only living creature I could find around.

On the 31st of July we went to the assistance of the "Afghan Prince" that was ashore near Gian Island. We waited for two tides to try and haul her off, but we were not successful in this venture so we returned to Louisburg and returned to Sydney the same day.

On the 3rd of August we took a trawler in tow to Pictou which in summertime is a lovely place. I went for a walk ashore there and it was such a lovely afternoon I lay down in the woods and fell asleep. I woke up with a start to see a lady all dressed in white, with a large dish of ice cream in her hand. I thought for a minute I must have gone straight to heaven but it turned out that I had strayed into a private camping ground belonging to some American tourists. I was introduced to the camp and the next day I took my old auto harp ashore with me and we all had a good singsong in the evening. I found them real nice sociable people.

We left Pictou on the 10th of August but when we had got

about 65 miles out, we broke the shaft of our circulating pump so we had to return to get it fixed. We again left on the 14th and got back to Sydney on the 15th.

On the 17th we had to escort two ships belonging to the Dominion Coal and Steel co., the S.S. "Maskilonge" and the S.S. "Lingan" to Wabana Belle Isle to load iron ore. We waited until they were loaded and brought them back to Sydney on the 22nd.

On the 27th we had just come back from escorting a convoy. I found a telegram waiting my arrival with the sad news that I had lost my dear wife. I could hardly believe it for my letters from her had not given me any warning of sickness. I interviewed the skipper who immediately sent me home to Winnipeg.

Even on my way west I could not seem to grasp the idea that the girl I had brought out from England had passed on. I was met at the station by some friends of ours and went straight to the King George Hospital where my wife had passed away. The house doctor was very kind but did not think it advisable for me to see her.

On the 2nd of September I laid her away in Brookside Cemetary. I felt so helpless I was like a ship with the rudder gone. I was grateful for the assistance I received from the Orange Lodge that I was a member of for they took charge of everything for me. The Daughters of the Empire took my two little ones into their Home for cases similar to mine, and there I left them sadly, as I had to return to my ship. I am afraid I went back with a bitter heart, but on my way down I got in company with the Reverend Salem Bland who was on his way home to Quebec. After hearing my story he gave me such a kindly talk that helped to restore my faith which possibly I may have at that time discarded. It was only a talk but it was wonderful to me and I shall never forget him.

I left his company at Montreal and carried on to Sydney. When I arrived my ship had gone to Halifax so I got back on the train and went to Halifax where I arrived on the 25th of September. I went aboard my ship and strange enough we left the same day back to Sydney. From then until the 10th of October we were on convoy duty and that was the last convoy we despatched across for we left that day for Halifax where we stayed until the 6th of November. We had in the meantime installed apparatus to fly captive balloons from our deck. The U.S.A. had sent some air pilots up to Halifax to practice parachute jumping from the balloon, so we went to Baker's Point near Halifax for that purpose.

On the 11th of November came the glad news that the war was over. It almost seemed unbelieveable. I didn't know really how I felt, whether to be sorry or glad, for I had not yet recovered from my loss.

On the 22nd of November we left Halifax to make a final cruise calling at Sydney. Leaving on the 2nd of December we passed through the beautiful Bras D'or Lakes in Cape Breton where Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone, had his summer home, passed through St. Peter's Canal and anchored at Areschat. We left on the 4th and anchored in Isaac's Harbour, called at Beaver Harbour on the 5th and back into Halifax on the 6th. On the 9th we went to Canso calling at Ship Harbour and on our way back at Liscomb Harbour, finally winding up at Halifax on the 13th of December.

I had passed my examination for chief stoker on the "Acadia" and on the 19th I left her to go back to the "Niobe" to wait for demobilization.

Christmas Day, 1918 I spent quietly with my friends, and on the 29th I said good-bye to them, and also the Navy, arriving

discharged in Winnipeg on the 2nd of January 1919.

I am drawing to the close of my story but just to show how fate again stepped in, I had intended taking Dorothy and Noel back to England as their grandmother, Edith's mother, wanted them over there, and that I would return again to the Merchant Service. When I took charge of my two children from the Khaki Home, the Regent of the Daughters of the Empire that was in charge of it, advised me strongly to let them remain here in Winnipeg. As she said, they were born here and that they would have a far better chance in life by doing so. I thought it over, and afterwards changed my mind in regards taking them back to England. Instead I found work where I am today and where I will say good-bye.

I have found many real friends in many countries of different nationalities and creeds, and have come to the conclusion that after all, the world is only one large family, with its good and unruly children that compose it.

April 17, 1937.