

Saturday 1st. January 1921

New Years Day afloat. I had expected this a month ago and even today I can hardly realise that I am on my way to India and that I shall be lucky to be home by New Years Day 1923! It has been an enjoyable New Years Day under the circumstances. It opened better than the last two days - not quite so cloudy and the weather has become warmer again. The promise of a better day has been fulfilled and the stars are shining tonight. I went to Holy Communion this morning held in the 2nd. class Lounge. There were seven women and one man - myself. Holy Communion on the High Seas! In a little Chapel improvised in a Smoking Lounge with the Bread and Wine set out on a Lounge table and the Communicants kneeling just where there was room. But that makes no difference - God was as surely here in that small ship's corner as in the grandest Cathedral.

I have been feeling rather stale today and tomorrow I intend to join some of the Officers at 7a.m. running around the Promenade Deck - 12 times to the mile_ and perhaps a little skipping.

It has been a rather windy day and there has been a decided movement on the ship. It has pitched a bit but we haven't felt any inconvenience and I should hope we are a little better sailors after our first four days experience. It is better tonight however and the movement has practically disappeared. We plough on with nothing in sight and no land to be seen so there is now an opportunity to get some of our letters written for Port Said and I have now written all but one.

This afternoon we held New Year's Day Sports for the children - of whom there are about 40 in the 2nd. and 3rd. class Decks. There were Ordinary Races, Three-legged Races, Potato and Spoon Races, Potato Races, Thread-the-needle Races, Musical chairs Competition, and Treacle bun bobbing, the latter for the boys only who with hands tied behind their backs, endeavoured to eat treacly buns suspended on strings from the roof. The boy who ate his bun first and raced home was the winner. The kiddies all enjoyed themselves and got prizes nearly all. And we enjoyed it too. After tea there was a Conjuring Entertainment for them on the After Deck.

Unfortunately further trouble arose amongst the Royal Scots Fusiliers during dinner but this time more energetic measures were taken and some of the ringleaders captured and handcuffed. There was some excitement at first as it was feared that the rougher element among the Scots would try and get the prisoners back but things have settled down and one or two more prisoners have been brought in during the evening. It is a serious matter, mutiny on the High Seas and these misguided men have made themselves liable to 7 years imprisonment.

The Concert projected for tonight on the After Deck, though delayed, was got through successfully and I must get to bed a bit earlier tonight.

Sunday 2nd. January 1921

This morning I did not awake until just before 7 o'clock after over 7 hours untroubled sleep. It was a beautiful morning and I put on my flannels and carried out my projected bit of exercise. There were a few officers out, or rather they came soon after I did. After four times around the Promenade Deck, I did some skipping and then finished up with 6 times round (1/2 mile) at a good pace. It was perhaps a little too much for the first time - but I must keep it up now as I have felt the benefit of it all day.

I finished my letters during the morning and at 11 o'clock we all went to "Church" an open air service held at the end of the Prom. Deck. One peculiarity was that there was no kneeling, but we had the "Morning Prayer" through and sang such grand old hymns as "Rock of Ages", "Jesu Lover of my Soul", and "O God our help in ages past". The Chaplain preached at a pulpit improvised by spreading a huge Union Jack over the wide handrail of the Deck and after the Blessing we all stood at attention and sang "God Save the King". It was an enjoyable service. After lunch we went up on to the Boat and spent a lazy afternoon in the beautiful sunshine, reading and talking. I felt quite warm even in my flannels which I wore all day until I dressed for dinner. I only had on a thin vest, thin shirt, flannel trousers (no pants) and sports coat.

We now hear the welcome rumour that there will probably have to be a court-martial held on the five men who have been arrested over last night's trouble. This may mean a stay of perhaps two or three days at Port Said and if so, Rice and I intend to try a trip to Cairo and see the Pyramids and Sphinx.

After dinner we studied Baedeker hard and got our letters ready and posted those in the ship's letter box that can go that way. It is a beautiful evening and gives promise of a grand day tomorrow.

Thus ends the first part of our voyage. It has been fortunate in many ways. The stop at Gibraltar owing to the sick man being landed there and then this stay at Port Said owing to the "mutiny". We were not booked to stop at Gib. at all and it had not been intended to stay at Port Said more than 2 or 3 hours. So "it is an ill wind which blows nobody any good!".

Monday 3rd. January 1921

It was a splendid morning giving promise of another grand day and so it has proved. After breakfast we are all on deck, all eyes straining for Port Said, which is not far distant. The tall Light House was sighted eventually at 10a.m. and soon afterwards the houses along the front became visible and the tall masts of the shipping in the harbour could be distinguished. Gradually the whole shore became clear and Port Said lay in front of us. It lies low, almost on a level with the sea and is a modern production having arisen practically since the Suez Canal was cut. We took the pilot aboard and slowly made our way into the Harbour, past the

long mole? with the statue of De Hesseys standing up boldly half way along it. I took a photo here. The houses along the harbour side are many of them fine buildings, ending with the striking Custom House, up Canal.

After lunch we went ashore, conveyed in a motor launch by the ubiquitous Cook. Many people say that Port Said is uninteresting but we found it crammed full of interest from the moment we sighted it. The crowd is a strange one indeed, and in a short street one gets the impression that one has just passed representatives of most of the races on earth. There is a big native (Egyptian) population, some very primitive and dirty wearing long gaily coloured gowns and turbans or skull caps, and some quite smart in red fez and European clothes. There are Swedes, Jews, Poles, Dagoes, Niggers, Sudanese, Arabs, Norwegians, and then the French and English. There is a big French colony and it struck me that the girls were very smart and pretty, absolutely up-to-date in their clothes. The shops are very good in the European quarter and in the native streets very strange and Eastern, with the dusky merchants either quarrelling violently with one another, or squatting resignedly beside their goods. The tailors, tinsmiths, and furniture makers and so on all have their little shops where they do their work in full view of the passers by. The quaintly dressed crowds, the brilliant colours, and the movement, so intensified by the bright sunshine, make a picture almost too confusing to the Western eye. The square, flat-roofed, brightly- coloured houses some with shady inner courts, the green trees along the sides of the roads, the bright flowers, purple and scarlet in the gardens seem quite in keeping with the brilliant sunshine and blue sky, although this is only the third day of January. The streets mostly run at right angles and houses are of all sizes. The Post Office consists of a hollow-square building with a number of pigeon holes around a shady garden and many of the houses have these shady inner courts with hanging ferns and creepers. We went to the Bible Society house and had a most interesting half hour looking over it and seeing how the Bible in a hundred different languages is distributed over all the North of Africa, Arabia and Mesopotamia from this Depot.

In the evening we had tea in the Casino Palace Hotel and were much amused by the extraordinary deftness of a tiny child- conjurer, about 6 years old, I should say, who did the cleverest tricks so smartly that one was quite unable to spot how he did them. When it became dark the streets were brilliantly lighted with electric light, and in the cool, smart gaily dressed crowds promenade, and sit in the numerous cafes. It is a wonderful picture. So new and strange, and we left it reluctantly, it being 6.30p.m. A voluble Egyptian boatman rowed us back in the darkness to our ship, and being in port we did not dress for dinner. Cooling went on all night, and we went to bed betimes as we have obtained leave to go to Cairo. By "we" I mean Rice and myself, who are sworn brothers and intend to keep together as much as possible during this trip out East.

Tuesday 4th. January 1921

This morning we started our great burst into Cairo. Called at 6a.m. we had breakfast at 6.30 and at 7.00 rowed ashore, arriving at the Railway Station about

7.20 We had had hopes of getting half-fare tickets , but that important official, the Inspector General being not yet arrived, we could not obtain the necessary authorisation, so had to pay full fare - nearly £2. each. Punctually at 8 the train started, the line running along the narrow strip of land between the Canal and Lake Menzaleh. The latter is a large salt-water lake and there were many sailing boats on its surface, and flocks of birds. We passed a great group of Flamingos, which, alarmed by the noise of the train, suddenly rose from the water in a dense pink cloud. Along the side of the Canal are trees and bushes and soon we had our first sight of the distinctive Egyptian date-palms and cactuses. The Canal has a nicely stone-built bank hereabouts and at regular distances control stations which regulate the passage of the shipping through the Canal. We passed Ras-el-Eich, Tinch, El Kab, but these Canal side stations have no platforms and passengers climb up into the cars from the ground level. We were travelling 1st. class and had a comfortable compartment with wide open windows to ourselves, but the 2nd. class and 3rd. class carriages were crowded with Natives of all grades, some neat, some dirty and ill-clad, and one wondered where they got the price of the railway fare from. Some well-known middle class Egyptian was travelling by our train as there was a big crowd, all in their best clothes and red tarbushes (hats), to see him off, which made a most lively picture on the platform.

We reached El-Kantara, the Junction for Palestine at 9.10. This was a busy station and on the other side of the Canal was the enormous camp which was laid out as the starting point of the Great Campaign which ended in the capture of Palestine and Syria and did a great deal towards breaking the power of the Turk. At Ballah we saw our first camels and had now come to plain desert stretching both sides as far as the eye could see. We arrived at the town of Ismailia at 10.00, and left the Canal to strike inwards towards Cairo. Ismailia is a large place, very busy as the junction where travellers change for Suez. It lies in a green oasis with many trees, date palms, and gardens and consists for the most part of one story little square houses, painted white or light brown. After leaving Ismailia it is desert for some distance but we soon came into the area which is served by the Nile waters and there the green fields spread more and more into the country. At Tel-el Kebir famous as the site of the Great Battle fought and won by Lord Wolseley, we bought the most delicious huge tangerine oranges 2 for a piastre, just picked from the trees with their stalks and green leaves on. We arrived at Zaq-a-ziq at 11.20 a big busy place, where Rice bought a "ham" sandwich which proved not to have ham but a sort of soft native cheese inside. From here onward the land was worked every inch and crops of cattle feed sugar, Indian corn, cotton, vegetables were in abundance on every side, with groves of date palms and orange trees. In every field were busy labourers men, women and children, and great numbers of animals - cattle, sheep, goats, donkeys, camels, etc. feeding. All this prosperity is due to the beneficent waters of the Nile which are brought in canals from which it is pumped on to the land, by oxen which turn wooden water wheels.

The road to Cairo now runs alongside the railway and it is most interesting to watch the various travellers, some on donkeys some on camels, others on foot,

and the traffic proceeding to or from Cairo. One string of 21 camels laden with merchandise was particularly striking sight but every inch there was something new and strange struck the eye. We arrived at Ben-Ha at 12. noon and at 12.30 got our first view of the Pyramids of Gizeh standing up on the sky-line, but because of their enormous bulk unmistakable.

We arrived at Cairo punctually at 1.00p.m. but our efforts to arrange for a refund of half-fare were unavailing although we got a lot of sympathy from an Egyptian official, who said he could do nothing for us as we were not in uniform.

Outside the station we were beset by a battalion of would-be guides who wanted to show us around Cairo, but we beat them off and got into a gharri or open carriage and told the driver to take us to the National Bank, next door to which is the Bible Society's house where Rice has friends. But we found it shut until 3.00. Notwithstanding our protests a dragoman or guide had got up beside our driver when we left the station and insisted on accompanying us - so paying the driver 1/6d. instead of 3/- which he demanded we told the dragoman to take us to a Restaurant where we could get lunch at a reasonable price. He took us to the St. James Restaurant where we lunched well at a cost of 60 piastres or about 12/- the two of us. We got rid of our guide who had waited outside while we had lunch by giving him 10 piastres to take a note to the Army Audit Office. He promised faithfully to take it, but it never got there!

We wanted to go to the suburb of Gizeh or Giza, as a first step, to find some friends of Rice, so jumped on a tram which our guide told us was going there, we got rid of him as he departed on his errand. The tram consisted of three cars - 1st, 2nd and 3rd class and was absolutely crowded with all sorts and conditions of natives, dirty, clean, rich and poor, in a medley heap. Those who got a seat were lucky and there was at least an equal number hanging on the side steps, and back and front. We hung on the side. There seemed to be no attempt on the part of the conductor to collect fares and none on the part of the driver to stop. Natives got on and off as it went and had a free ride. After going some distance a native conductor came to us and we told him we wanted to go to Giza. Immediately the whole car began quarrelling violently, not with us, but with the conductor and it then appeared that this particular tram only went to Zamalek, not to Giza. So we got off and approached a gharri driver, but thought 6/- too much each to Giza, and decided to wait for another tram. We just managed to hang on by the skin of our teeth to the next one that came by, and presently an amiable tram inspector turned out two natives to give us a seat, and then advised us not to pay, as the journey was not a long one! Cheap journey so far! We crossed the River Nile by the handsome Boulak Bridge and shortly after came to another bridge, spanning a branch of the Nile. This bridge, being shut, for the purpose of allowing some river traffic through, we crossed the river by a native boat, with about 20 other passengers. As I sat at the back I was supposed to take the tiller, and to my consternation when part of the way across, about 6 barges laden with rushes came through the bridge. I thought we were in for it, but by a

bit of luck managed to steer the boat through and landed safely on the other bank. As we climbed up the bank a man undressed himself in front of everybody and holding his clothes up over his head with one hand swam across with a powerful one-arm side-stroke! We just caught a tram for Giza and passed along a shady grove of camphor trees. An affable Egyptian who sat beside us entered into conversation and although he did not know Rice's friends, took us to the Zoological Gardens where an interpreter got a small boy who took us to the house of an Englishman called Capes, who directed us to the house of a Scotsman named Burns who in turn told us where Tadman, Rice's friend, lived. It was by now 4 o'clock and when we got to the house Mr. Tadman was out!

The tram line to Giza runs along a fine road on the west side of the Nile and there are a great number of magnificent stone houses or rather mansions, with gardens running down to the Nile and commanding a magnificent view of Cairo.

A young Dragoman had attached himself to us at Giza and when we found Tadman out we engaged him to take us to the Pyramids, half hour ride by tram. We arrived there at 5 p.m. Just passed Mena House Hotel we got on donkeys and rode up the hill and by the Pyramid of Cheops to the Sphynx. It is desert here and the enormous masses of the Pyramids of Cheops and Chephren appear like mountains almost. They appeared to me enormous, of course, but not so impressive at close range as they do at a distance. I was a little disappointed, as a matter of fact, but I was most impressed with the Sphynx carved out of one solid block of stone and looking out silently towards Cairo, standing weatherworn and not so shapely but just as inscrutable as when it was first fashioned 6000 years ago. Only the head and breast and back are now to be seen, the rest is covered up with sand. I took a photo of the Sphynx and the Pyramid of Cheops, but don't know how it will turn out, as it was getting dark. We went down to the mysterious temple of the Sphynx underground, where the granite blocks of huge size 6000 years old bore hardly any trace of wear. It was a colossal piece of conceit that made those old Pharaohs, Kings of Egypt, to fashion themselves such tombs, but it has its result in that people, now, 6000 years after, journey from all parts of the world to them and wonder at them. It now began to darken, so we re-traced our steps, mounted our donkeys and surrounded by our dark skinned company of cut-throats, shouting quarrelling and cursing, at last reached the security of the Tram Terminus, and took the Tram for Nasr-el-Din, where Mr. Tadman lived. Here we were welcomed and stayed to dinner, very well cooked and nicely served by native men servants. Mrs. Tadman was in Hospital (a baby having arrived) and our hostess was Miss Sadgrove, a girl who used to be one of Rice's clerks in the War Office. I knew her in the W.O. and it seemed strange to meet her here. We left at about 9 and at 10 or thereabouts we booked our room at the National Hotel, and tired out, went to bed. The beds were very comfy and supplied with snowy white mosquito curtains which however it is not necessary to use in the winter months. So ended what was, I think, one of the most crowded days of my life.

Wednesday 5th. January 1921

When we awoke at 7a.m. we found on looking out of our window on the Sharia(street) Suleiman Pasha that Cairo was shrouded in fog or rather a mist. By the time we were out however, soon after breakfast the mist had cleared away and we found our way first to the Office of the Command Paymaster from where one of the clerks escorted us to the Army Audit Office. These were nice offices and look out on the famous Ezbekiya Gardens a large square in the centre of the city. Two of the local Auditors clerks named Bampfylde and Tullach were told off to accompany us and having hired a motor car we boosted up to the Citadel, where one gets a magnificent view over the whole of Cairo. The view of the Mokattam Hills especially struck me and I took a snap of it. These are the hills from which the stone of which the Pyramids are built was obtained. We also went into the famous Mosque of Mohammed Ali, having first had thick canvas overshoes placed on our feet so that our infidel footsteps should not defile the holy precincts. The inside of the Mosque is most impressive and the enormous floor is covered by a series of wonderful carpets. All around are stained glass windows which shed brilliant colours on the interior and thousands of lamps depending from the vaulted roof illumine the scene. The walls are of alabaster. There is a large courtyard outside surrounded by an arcade, having in it's centre an ablution fountain, where pilgrims wash their feet before proceeding into the sacred Mosque. I tried a snapshot of this fountain.

We started back at about 10.40 and to our consternation got a puncture in the native quarter. We at first thought all was up for us, but the driver had a spare wheel which he quickly fitted and although we had to call at the Audit Office on the way we just caught the 11 o'clock train for Suez with about 2 minutes to spare. This was narrow enough, as had we lost it, we should have been landed in Egypt and the ship would have left Suez without us, the Captain having decided to sail at 6.00 p.m. whether we had returned or not. (so we found later). From Cairo to Ismailia the line traverses the same route as we came by yesterday and although it was the second time we had seen it we could well understand the term applied to the country - "the smiling land of Egypt". This is the "land of Goshen" where the Israelites lived in the time of the Pharaohs, and I could not quite understand their desire to leave so beautiful a land or the reluctance of the Egyptians to let them go and so get the land for themselves. We changed at Ismailia at 2 p.m. and our train for Suez departed at 2.30. We now passed through very different country speeding south. To the west was desert and except for a strip along the canal, to the right was desert also. We sighted the Great Bitter Lake at 3.00 and stopped at the picturesque little village of Fayed at 3.30. We stopped at El Fathija at 4.30 where we saw a British aeroplane crashed in the desert. Presently the aviator came running up unhurt and joined our train. The railway line runs at a distance of a mile or so from the canal, but we could see the steamers quite plainly, slowly making their way through at an even speed of 4 m.p.h. The country is not wholly barren as there is plenty of low scrub which seems to support herds of goats and sheep. Presently we came to a beautifully

cultivated part where date palms abounded and after passing the big Camp for Indian Troops arrived at Suez at 5.00p.m. This is a big busy place with a motley crowd something like Port Said, but more Eastern in character. We were agreeably surprised as we watched from our big windows to see one of the Officers of the ship, Lieut. Dennison, approaching us. He had been sent by the O.C. to find us and bring us back. The court martial had not been held after all and was to be postponed until we reached Bombay so that the ship had been ready to sail at 2.00 o'clock and had been waiting for us! There was a Naval Launch ready and after some delay we got going and reached the ship at 6.p.m. precisely. It was touch and go whether we got there in time but we just did it and 5 minutes afterwards the crew were hauling up the gangway. As we sat in our cabin and talked things over we were convinced that nothing short of Providence could have ordered things for us so wonderfully, and gave thanks accordingly. Had we been by ourselves we could never have arranged for a Launch or reached the ship by 6.00 and would have been left behind. After a splendid dinner we retired to our bunks at 9.00 and were soon fast asleep. So ended a perfect day.

Thursday 6th January 1921

My dear wife's birthday. I hope it will be a happy one, although I am not with her, and that my telegram reaches her safely. God bless and guard her.

Notwithstanding the turmoil over our absence yesterday there seems strangely little excitement today. Rice went to the C.O. last night and apologised for our having unwittingly delayed the ship. He was very nice about it and didn't seem to mind a bit, but I believe the Captain wasn't over pleased. We were the only people out of the whole boat who did the trip to Cairo and considering what we did in the short time that we had there, from 1p.m. on Tuesday to 11a.m. Wednesday I regard our effort as almost heroic. It was well worth the money it cost, viz: £7 each, of which £4 was spent on the railway fare. After the rush of the previous two days today seems quite peaceful. We are now making good speed down the Gulf of Suez, running between high rugged rocky mountains on either side. We passed Mount Sinai plainly seen in the distance at about 10a.m. It stands out well in the Sinai peninsula but both shores seem very barren and during the whole morning the only sign of human habitation we saw was some small boats drawn up on the beach at one place. We pass very few ships considering the narrowness of the sea here - one would have expected many more. The day has been cloudy but close and the temperature is much higher - so that thinner things will soon be wanted.

We entered the Red Sea at 11.20 a.m. At 5.45 all the members of the Audit Staff assembled at the Ship Hospital for inoculation. This is supposed to convey protection against three diseases, typhoid, and paratyphoid A and paratyphoid B. These are 3 distinct types of typhoid fever prevalent in the East and since the proper virus has been discovered has very nearly been wiped out. We were done high up on our left arms in the fleshy part of the shoulder. First the part was painted with iodine and then the needle plunged about an inch in and so much

virus pumped in. I had a good dinner, but about 8 o'clock I began to feel the effects. My arm began to hurt and I felt chilly, so I went to bed at 9, and although I sweated violently I didn't feel much the worse next morning. Some of the officers have had a very bad time over it - but only two of our party suffered anything much - Prater and Dawes.

We passed two fine bold rocky islands - called "the Brothers" at 6.00, just as we came away from inoculation and I am told that this is the last land we shall see until we reach Perim.

Friday 7th. January 1921

Had a good nights rest notwithstanding the inoculation but my arm is a little swollen and feels rather sore. The chief symptom that I have "taken", however, is the feeling of complete listlessness. I haven't the desire to move hand or foot. I feel "seedy". Everyone seems to have found last night very hot and close, so that my sweating may have been due to that and not to the inoculation. Nevertheless it may have helped to put me right again. We are now making good progress down the Red Sea, something over 280 miles daily and the air is getting much hotter. I always had the idea that the Red Sea was a place of heavy sweltering windless heat where we should steam steadily through calm oily warm seas. That may be true of some seasons, but today the sky is overcast and there were dark heavy clouds sometimes that in England would have meant a storm. In this region however, although often over-clouded, rain never falls, only very heavy dews at night. And it blows hard continuously, so hard that one finds it difficult to stand up against the wind when in the forward part of the deck. But with it all the wind is so hot that it is not much pleasure to get out into it and I, for one, find most comfort in an easy chair in a shady sheltered part of the boat. The wind doesn't seem to get into the Rooms or Cabins and we have all the fans going continuously in the Dining Saloon, Lounge, Smoke Room, and in our Cabins, and they are a great blessing.

Tonight we had a concert on the Promenade Deck for 1st. and 2nd. class, but I didn't think it quite came up to the previous ones. Capt. Lees did some conjuring, not very convincing, and I am afraid we have been rather spoilt for the ordinary stuff after the extraordinary tricks of the "gelli gelli" tribe at Port Said. Rice and I didn't sit it all out, and retired to our cabins before 10, quite tired.

Saturday 8th January 1921

I found it necessary to wear thin pyjamas last night, and have only worn during the day the least possible clothing. My heavy underwear, overcoat, mackintosh, bed socks etc. have not been necessary at all on the voyage. Notwithstanding the heat, we are still steaming against a very strong headwind which is causing a considerable swell, which got worse as the day wore on - so much so that I had eventually to retire to my cabin, the pitching of the ship being too much for my comfort. I gave tea a miss, and had my dinner in my cabin. I am all right in my

bunk but I felt that I might be sick again if I went down to meals.

I had my hair cut by the ships barber this afternoon and while there heard the "man overboard" siren, but thought it was merely a practice call, such as we had had once before. But when I got upstairs I found that one of the troops, a man of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers had actually jumped overboard. He is said to have suddenly stripped to his vest and pants and saying "I am now going for the best swim I have ever had", jumped on to the side and dived in. The ship soon left him well behind, but immediately began to circle round. By the time it had got near the boat with 5 men in it was ready and was let into the sea. The man, by this time quite sobered was swimming about and was soon hauled on to the boat, which was not many minutes in regaining the ship, although the heavy sea was still running. I got a snapshot just as the boat reached alongside and the crew are fastening on the tackle preparatory to hauling themselves up. The rescued man is lying in the bottom of the boat, just under the end man, the opposite end to the rudder. The boat was speedily hauled up to the Boat Deck and no time was lost in getting under way again. The rescued man seemed a big muscular fellow and must have been a bit drunk when he jumped off the ship. The sea sobered him and well it might, for our 3rd Officer told me that he owed his life to the roughness of the sea. Had it been smooth the sharks would have had him but they keep low during rough weather. He is a bad character, and is awaiting court martial at Bombay for breaking into a shop at Southampton before sailing and stealing boots. But it was a mad thing to do, in any case, as it is none too safe a matter to launch a small boat in a sea like this, and the man will get it hot, I expect, for his escapade.

Sunday 9th January 1921

Today has been a really splendid day - fine and with a cool wind. I am told that we are very lucky to have had this head wind during the whole of the voyage down the Red Sea. Very often it is a following wind blowing from the North, when it just neutralises any breeze that the movement of the ship might have made and makes it a dead sweltering calm enough to stifle one.

After my bath I dressed in my flannels and went to Communion - held in the Smoke Room at 8 o'clock. - and it was a quite nice service this time about twelve other men being present. We also, most of us went to the Voluntary Service on the Promenade Deck at 11 a.m. We passed a large island on our left at 12 noon and a series of twelve rocky Islands also on our left between 2.30 and 3.30, with a fine Lighthouse perched high up on the end one. They were all quite obviously of volcanic origin, many being simply heaps of lava still lying in folds just as it had poured out of the volcanoes which had formed them. On some the old craters could be distinguished. They become almost red hot during the hot weather I am told - pity the poor lighthouse- keepers.

We had a really first class dinner tonight. Just to illustrate I will give the different courses I had:-

1. Potage a la bonne femme
2. Brill something or other
3. Asparagus a la something
4. Chicken a la Beatrice (cold with salad and tomatoes stuffed with chopped potato salad)
5. Roast Lamb, baked potato and cauliflower.
6. Gooseberry Tart and baked custard
7. Cheese Straws
8. Fruit (grapes) and Nuts.

Lemon Squash.

I had all these and felt very well afterwards. There were about half a dozen other things on the menu, but I had to miss some out! We passed another series of islands on our left at 9 p.m. called The Twelve Apostles, but we could only see the Lighthouse which stands on one of them. The swell which was so much in evidence yesterday has died away now we have got down nearly to the south end of the Red Sea and the boat has got quite steady again, much to my delight. Also my arm is quite alright again. Verily it has been a grand day

Monday 10th January 1921

As soon as we awoke this morning I jumped out of bed and on to the deck, remembering that we were to have passed the Island of Perim, at 5 a.m. Sure enough just astern was Perim, which we had passed almost to time. It is at the extreme South end of the Red Sea, and guards the S. entrance. It belongs, as you know, to England. It is of no value now except its position, and for that reason we cannot leave it for anyone else to step in and take. I had formed the idea that it was a stern, rocky islet, rising sheer out of the sea, crowned by formidable fortifications. Instead I found a low flattish island not looking even a bit rugged from the distance, and not in the least impressive. Another place I had formed a wrong impression of was Aden, which I will describe presently. Truly it is a wonderful thing to see the world. All sorts of wrong impressions are put right, and chiefest of all, one sees the native as he is, and no pen can ever adequately picture that.

At 6.30 Prater and I had a little exercise canter 6 times round the deck - about 1/2 mile. Quite enough, as a matter of fact, although it sounds so little, and then a refreshing bath, finishing up with a shower.

We were now running almost parallel with the Arabian Coast, and a very

inhospitable shore it seems to be, great mountains, sharp and rugged running along the sky-line. About 12 we came in sight of the two headlands that lie on each one each side of the Harbour of Aden and after lunch we got a very good view of Aden itself. Aden, on the S.W. corner of Arabia faces south and possesses a spacious harbour, one of the few in all Arabia. The town lies mostly on the lower lying mainland behind the great rocky headland which forms the Eastern arm of the Harbour. The land behind, which also belongs to England, is mostly desert and rain never falls here, except on very rare occasions. I took a snap of the great bluff, but doubt if it will make much of a picture. The tall Marconi wireless masts could be plainly seen, and there were many little sailing boats about, fishing. A big school of porpoises followed us for some time, jumping every minute high out of the water, but I failed to snap them. The afternoon was occupied by the first heats of the obstacle race round the ship, and this provided a very merry entertainment, some of the obstacles, such as the long canvas tubes to crawl through, the greasy ropes to climb, the overhead net with meshes a foot square to crawl over, were quite original and more difficult to negotiate than the land obstacles.

One of the troops bought a monkey at Port Said and the funny little animal has been a great source of amusement on the lower deck and to us, too, but this morning it bit a man and was sentenced to death. This afternoon, however, the Doctor pronounced the bitten man to be quite alright and the monkey was reprieved but it must expiate its crime by being kept in a box until we reach Bombay. In the evening there was a Boxing Tournament, by electric light, but I gave it a miss and played cards and read.

All the afternoon we have been steaming parallel with the South Arabian coast, with immense rocky mountains in the background. It has, however, been a beautiful cool day, brilliant sun, and quite enjoyable.

Tuesday 11th. January 1921

The weather continues strangely cool with a fine breeze, although the sun is blazing overhead. The beautiful calm deep blue sea brings a wonderfully soothing effect to one. By calm I do not mean "oily", but a sea having sufficient movement (small waves) in it to create light and shade to it, although not enough to create movement (pitch or roll) to the ship. The life of the ship, both military and social goes steadily along, day by day, and it still seems hard to me to realise that every day, even every minute, is taking me further from England. I still feel that I am not very far from Home. I am quite clear, however, as to what is in front of me and I am beginning to long for letters. If only I could get a letter I should be content.

We passed the last point of the Arabian Coast to be sighted at about 12 noon and now it is a bee-line for Bombay, our estimated hour of arrival being noon Sunday 16th January. This morning at 6.30 Walden, Prater and I turned out for exercise, 1/2 mile around the deck. Running or skipping and some jogging up and down

exercise is necessary for the liver. During the afternoon there were some very good tug - of - war heats on the Promenade Deck.

Capt. Jeakes and I are to run the sweep for the 24 hours ending 12 noon tomorrow and it is to be an Auction Sweep. So we collected subscriptions after lunch and obtained the record sum £5:9:0 We then got the draw through (I drew two blanks) and after tea we had the Auction, where I was the Auctioneers Clerk. The Total Pool finished at £14:15:0 from which we deduct £1:15:0 for charity. I have half of one ticket 271 which I bought for 1/6d. only: I did a lot of bidding for the other tickets but stopped when the bidding went above my figure.

We saw one lot of flying fish - small flat looking fish which go in shoals and leap out of the water, being able by spreading their wide side fins, to skim quite a decent distance (say 30 feet) about a foot above the surface of the sea. They look very pretty, shining silvery white in the sun.

We had a Dance on the Promenade Deck tonight to which the 2nd. Class were invited. There were quite a number of girls there and they danced the dances I knew, but I didn't join in it, although rather tempted to, but went and read in the Lounge.

Wednesday 12 January 1921

These days across the Indian Ocean are proving much less eventful than their predecessors - everybody feels lazier, I suppose, owing to the heat mid-day, when the sun appears very nearly overhead. If it were not for the continuous breeze we should be flopped out.

In the early morning four of us turned out for exercise, Barkham, Prater, Walden and me, and the gentle run finishing with 150 yards sprint does one's liver good, I think. In the afternoon the Officers had their obstacle race round the ship followed by the semi-finals of the Tug-O-War and in the evening there was a Boxing Tournament held by electric light. It was a wonderful sight to see the Tommies perched on every available inch of space in the afterdeck - on sheds, on booms, up the rigging, on spars and rails. I didn't go, however, to the actual boxing, but stayed and read in the comfy lounge. We had rather a good run up to 12 noon today - viz: 285 miles, so that my number 271 was worthless. One man who had bought 285 and 290 outright won 1st. and 2nd. prizes £6:10:0 and £3:5:0 = £9:15:0 -not so bad!

Thursday 13th January 1921

Throughout today the wind has been blowing hard from the Northeast, and as we are steaming almost due East, we have been rolling about a bit. The sea has got much rougher and there has been quite a swell on. I am afraid that I shall never make a sailor, as I feel it all the day, but I have had all my meals and not felt sick. As I told my friends at table at dinnertime "this is the stormiest night I have

ever sat down to dinner at sea", they laughed - but they don't understand what it is to have a tender tummy. Rice and I retired to bed just before 10 (I had had a jolly evening at Solo) and I fell asleep immediately. At about 11.15, however, Heaton came in and woke us. We tumbled out and saw that we were passing through a wonderful stretch of phosphorescent sea. The water did not appear to be on fire, as it seems to be sometimes, but it was a beautiful chalky whiteness in the bright starlight, with here and there a patch of greenish light floating by. It was six miles long and the ships sides stood up black against it. One old hand said it was only the second time he had ever seen such a strange sight. Away out beyond the edges of the white patch the ordinary sea looked jet black, but in the patch the water was calm and ghostly. We passed out of it at 11.30 and we went back to bed. This strange whiteness is caused by millions upon millions of tiny little animalculae which live in one large colony together. They don't get properly phosphorescent until a little later - but they are already powerful enough to make that strange patch of milky sea we passed through.

Friday 14 January 1921

Today has been employed in writing letters for posting in Bombay when we disembark on Sunday and in packing trunks for storage, suitcase for present needs, and dirty linen for washing if we get any sort of stay there. But there is a rumour that we may re-embark for Mesopotamia on Monday (if we are regarded as part of the "draft" for Mespot.) so that we might not have much time there.

The weather yesterday was very windy and there is still a lot of movement, pitching and rolling, on the boat, owing to the North-East wind which hits us on the slant. But I have managed it very well all day and feel that I am a bit better sailor than when I started.

During the afternoon we had some more children's races, and afterwards races for the Officers, so that the time passed very merrily. In the evening there was a Grand Final Dance from 8 - 12 midnight on the Promenade Deck. I should have liked to have danced, but we had been inoculated at 6.0p.m. and received our second dose (a double one) of anti-typhoid serum. I was done again in my left arm and when the serum had been pumped in it raised a knob under the skin about the size of a shilling and half an inch high. I played cards during the evening, but I certainly feel that I shall be seedy tomorrow, especially as I am told that we are running into the tail-end of a storm which is passing south about 200-400 miles off the Indian Coast.

It has been decided that, instead of making individual tips to our stewards, there shall be a fixed payment of 35/- all round which will be pooled and divided among the stewards according to their duties and importance. This is perhaps the best way, and it certainly has the advantage of being somewhat cheaper. This gives about £6:00 to our cabin steward for the voyage, and a similar amount to our mess steward, with diminishing sums to other stewards viz: bathroom steward, deck steward, lounge steward and so on.

Saturday 15th. January 1921

Today has been rather rough and very windy we having run into the prophesised "tail of the storm". I haven't suffered much inconvenience from the movement of the boat, but I certainly have from the effects of the inoculation, which has made me feel seedy all day. Appetite good, but no energy, and not so cheerful as usual. My arm has swollen and is inflamed from shoulder to elbow. It ought to go down a bit tomorrow, however. We have completed our packing for disembarkation tomorrow, and the "pool scheme" for the stewards tips has been cancelled, the stewards themselves having said that they prefer individual tips. Breakfast tomorrow is at 8 so we mustn't be late to bed, particularly as the clocks are put on 51 minutes tonight to bring us up to Bombay time.

Tonight after dinner we had our Grand Final Concert, at which I sang "A Ragged Vagabond" and gave as an encore "Italiano". The concert was for the troops who were arranged all around the Poop Deck, the singers singing from the end of the Promenade Deck. It was rather an ordeal facing about 1000 men - the first time I have ever done it, as you know, some up the rigging, some standing on top of the deck houses, some on booms and spars. I wondered why some didn't fall into the sea. I had a fine reception, so much so that the Colonel had to bawl through the megaphone that I hadn't another song with me. I must end my journal here, as we don't know what is in store for us at Bombay and if we have to sail again on Monday we shall have a busy time tomorrow. My next instalment will describe Bombay (if we stay) and the voyage to Basra.

Sunday 16th. January 1921

During the night the clocks were put on 51 minutes to bring us up to Indian Standard Time, and the consequence was that we lost that much sleep, and it was still dark when we awoke, about 6.00a.m. But soon the old Sun arose and at 7a.m. land ahead was reported - INDIA. It was rather hazy and one could only at first make out the outline of high coast-line but after breakfast Bombay came into view, and presently the shipping in the harbour, - liners, sailing boats, tugs, small boats - completed the picture. The most striking object was a magnificent white stone building standing by the waters' edge, the Taj Mahal Hotel, the first hotel in Bombay. The inevitable small boats selling oranges, bananas etc. were soon by the side of the ship, but two tugs soon took charge of the vessel and slowly began to tow us in and at 12 o'clock we berthed in the fine Alexandra Dock.

Bombay is a fine picture from the sea, there being so many fine white stone buildings, and citywards, fine spires and domes could be seen. We had hopes of being able to see some of it, and great was our disappointment when the Embarkation Staff Officer came aboard to learn that we were to sail on the next day at 12 noon by the S.S."Vasna". This meant that we should only have practically the afternoon and evening of Sunday and perhaps an hour or so in the morning of Monday in Bombay, as all had to be on board by 10.a.m. So, immediately after we had arranged with Grindlays, the Baggage Agents, to collect

our baggage and transfer it to the "Vasna" and had lunch, Rice and I hired a gharri and set off to the city. I was much amused to see my beautiful baggage trunk carried in state along the Quay on the heads of four Indian coolies, one at each corner. They evidently realised that it was a wonderful box and were treating it accordingly. These Indian natives carry everything on their heads from the largest articles, such as trunks, to the smallest, like a tin of jam. There is a great deal of building going on in Bombay mostly fine imposing buildings of stone, surrounded by the flimsiest and craziest scaffolding it would be possible to imagine. The scaffold poles are short and very crooked and fastened together with rope hardly thicker than good thick string. Whatever would the British workman say to it? But it evidently serves its purpose, for the buildings are built and fine buildings they are. Our gharri took us past some really fine buildings to Hornby Road, where we soon recognised the Bible House. Fortunately we found Rice's friend, Mr. Adams and a friend of the latter's, Mr. Roberts, indoors though asleep, so after some consideration we decided to wake them up. They were as nice as could be about it, and after a chat in came tea, and very good it was. The drawing room was large and airy, nice and cool, with the large electric fan going, which surprised me as it was 90 in the shade, and everybody said it was unwise to walk about unless one had a topee on. It was very good to be ashore for a bit and have a friendly chat over a decent cup of tea.

After tea we made a few purchases and then hired a gharri and drove up Malabar Hill, the show place of Bombay. The first part of the route lay through some fine streets, but although so many of the big shops were shut, it being the European Sunday, the strange little native shops were open and the streets were full of life and colour, as the natives appeared to be making common holiday. Gharris were dashing by, motors, slow native carts drawn by bullocks. The bull is a sacred animal to the Hindus, and is treated with the greatest respect and kindness. He roams about loose, on the city paths sometimes, and no-one dare turn him off. No-one ever steals him and, of course, he is never killed and eaten - at least by the natives. We passed a native marriage procession on foot, the bridegroom gaily attired and the bride carrying a basket of fruit on her head. The others were playing tom-toms and cymbals and singing to the weird tune, quite a jolly group. The Parsees with their strange tin hats, were conspicuous in the crowd but judging by their different head-dresses there were representatives of every sect in India. We were now commencing to climb the hill and passing some very fine mansions, mostly of wealthy natives, although many Europeans also live in this part. Every man has his full name and distinctions posted up over his gateway, and sometimes the name of his father! This is the West-End of Bombay apparently, and I was much struck by the care and attention lavished on the gardens, which are very pretty and beautifully kept. They are full of colour as flowers of all sorts were in bloom, red, mauve, yellow; helianthus, the small sunflower could be seen everywhere. So the whole road was to the top of the Hill, where there were some prettily kept public gardens, full of brilliant flowers. At the top is the Parsee Tower of Silence, a round enclosure with a high brick wall, where the Parsees place their dead, laying them naked on slabs. The vultures

then come and pluck the flesh off, leaving only the bare bones, which are then swept into the pit below. We could see the vultures sitting around on the trees near by waiting for the next corpse. There is no accounting for tastes, either on the part of the Parsees or the vultures. I took a snapshot of Bombay from the Hill at 5.45 Bombay time.

We now commenced our return journey and reached the General Post Office at 6.30. The driver asked 5 Rupees 8 annas for the drive but we only paid him 3 R. 8a. (about 5/-) These people always ask about twice the proper price for everything as a start-off, and you offer something less than you think it is worth. You then haggle and argue until you agree on a price, the merchant bringing his price down and you raising your offer, until you meet. So, after this success, we thought we'd go to church, which we did, much to our enjoyment and spiritual well-being. We found our friends Adams and Roberts there (at the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland) and having bidden them good-bye returned by gharri to our Hotel.

I had forgotten to say that as Bombay was very full, accommodation had been booked for us at the Ballard Pier Hostel, or Hotel. This had only just a day or two before been opened for the accommodation of people staying a night or so in Bombay and it certainly bore evidence of being rather unfinished still, as regards the sleeping apartments. The dinner was very good and after a short walk, we retired to our room. Before I got into bed I killed two fine big beetles, but it was the bed that amused me, not a vestige of any covering, sheet or blanket, being supplied! Apparently one is not supposed to want any in Bombay. In front of the room were two large folding doors. These were wide open, and just covered by a large rush curtain. As we had a room by the entrance and were on a level with the street, anyone could see us in our room, and all our friends as they returned walked in through our front window to have a chat.! However we got to sleep in due course, although I was chilly all the night and prefer something over me or someone with me.

NOTE:

I have omitted to describe the G.P.O. which is a fine large and airy building which could hold about 20 times as many clerks as it does, I should think. The Victoria Railway Terminus is, without doubt one of the finest Railway Stations in the world, with its palatial marble Booking Hall. It is a most beautiful building and Bombay people say it is the finest in the World! The Midan is a large open flat space perfectly level and mostly covered with grass and when we passed it was crowded with natives in whites (mostly Parsees) playing cricket. Don't forget that this was the 16th. January! There is a fine electric tram service in Bombay but Europeans don't seem to use them much.

Monday 17th. January 1921

Up early this morning at 6.30 and bathed and shaved etc. The wallah (servant)

brought chota husri (this was how it was announced to us - it means "little breakfast") at 7.00 - consisting of a cup of tea, piece of bread and butter and a banana. At 8.00 we had our ordinary breakfast and soon afterwards set off citywards in a gharri. We bought our topees at a native shop getting them for 8 Rupees each although the dealer first asked 10 Rupees each for them. We had an interesting drive and saw another marriage procession - this time preparing to start. The bridegroom was sitting in a native carriage, very gaily dressed, with three merry friends beside him; the bride was still on the path, surrounded by her friends the latter in flaming red or orange draped dresses. They were, I should say just ready to start, for the driver took a large coconut and dashed it on the ground in front of the horse. It smashed and the milk splashed all around - I expect that was symbolic of plenty of something or other and the excellent way it smashed a good omen for the future.

I sent Joan a registered letter from the General Post Office containing some Egyptian and Indian coins and we then went back to our Hotel, collected our bags and so to the ship that is taking us to Basra, the "VASNA." It is an Ambulance Transport, used on the way from Basra to India for hospital cases but on the outward journey for troops etc. going to Mesopotamia. It is a nice, roomy, clean ship, but this time I am not with Rice, who is sharing a cabin with the O.C. Troops. I have a cot in A1 Officers Ward, a well ventilated and airy room containing 10 beds. Our baggage all safely on board we put off at 1 p.m. and were soon out to sea and found it was blowing hard. The boat, of course started to sway about a bit but although I wasn't ill I'm hanged if I like it and at 6 p.m. I retreated to my bed and had my dinner there. Some of the others looked mighty miserable as they came in one by one after dinner and went to bed - so I don't think I did a silly thing. The boat is beautifully clean, being an oil-driven steamer and thus there is no smoke. She is all white being a hospital ship, and all the rooms are light and airy. I slept like a top, as my cot gives to the motion of the ship, being slung like a baby's cot. My arm is still not well from the effects of the inoculation last Friday, the elbow being inflamed and swollen, but the doctor says it is now getting better.

There are only about 30 officers on this boat, the remainder of the 1st. class Saloon being the ship's Medical Staff of Doctors and Nurses and the Ships Officers. They are a very nice lot of people, however, not so noisy and "sporty" as those on the "Huntsgreen" - although some of them were on the "Huntsgreen" with us. The crew of this boat are all natives and the stewards are Goanese, or men from Goa, a place in India belonging to Portugal. There is a fine wide promenade Deck and plenty of comfy easy chairs on it. Which is all to the good!

Tuesday 18 January 1921

Today had started well and I much enjoyed chota husri at 7.00a.m. tea, toast and a luscious, large tangerine orange, one as large as a good-sized ordinary orange, and round, not flat like those sold at home. Bath and up on deck for a stroll and then full breakfast at 9 a.m. Tiffin (or lunch) at 1 p.m. tea at 4p.m. and dinner at

7 p.m. We have now adopted Indian fashions and lunch is called "tiffin" There was still some motion on the boat and one of our men soon retreated to his bed, but I have done well and not only survived, but have eaten and enjoyed all my meals to the full. We have steamed the whole day out of sight of land and really this part of the voyage as regards conditions is nearly ideal. This beautiful steady, spotless white boat, so neat and comfortable is more like a millionaire's yacht than anything else. I have taken things at my ease all day and yet at night I retired to my bed tired yet contented (so far as contentment under the circumstances can go) and slept perfectly. Tomorrow we reach Karachi so I have written up my journal and written my letter home so that I may lose no time in the morning. The weather has turned cold again.

Wednesday 19th January 1921

This morning soon after we awoke we found that land was in sight and it was evident that we were running into Karachi Harbour. So we did not waste too much time over breakfast, but were up on deck betimes. The Harbour is almost a bay, broad and deep and I should think would be capable of sheltering thousands of ships if need be. I was greatly astonished to find such a fine and spacious anchorage. There is no doubt that we British do manage to get hold of most of the Harbours worth having.

Right at the sea end of the long ridge of land which forms the western arm there is the inevitable fort with long range guns mounted, and a red and white lighthouse. Winding our way in we made our way to the quay and anchored, and finding that we could have nearly three hours ashore made up two parties and hired motor-cars to take us up to the town, which is three miles away. It is, of course, not a patch on Bombay, but it is interesting nevertheless and quite a busy place. There are some very comfortable looking buildings standing in spacious grounds, which contain many trees, such as date-palms, papaws, coconut palms and many others strange to me, and plenty of plants and creepers in full flower. The roads are wide but very dusty, and we raised quite a cloud as we sped on our way to the Zoological Gardens. Here we got out and strolled around, among the shady avenues seeing the various animals amusing themselves in open sunny spaces, more like their natural conditions than we get in our own Zoo. There is no fee for entrance except for vehicles. We saw the lions and tigers fed and having enjoyed a good half hour in such strange and pleasant surroundings returned to the ship. The monkeys and baboons and mandrills appeared to be very happy, I thought, this being their native country - and we were very careful not to amuse ourselves at their expense, as the monkey is regarded as a sacred animal in India, and there were plenty of turbanned, gaily dressed natives there. The heavy carts here are drawn by camels and very strange they look - low flat carts on small wheels being pulled by the tall ungainly animals. There is a big trade done here, Karachi being the port for the rich country through which the River Indus and its tributaries run, and we passed great mounds of rice, corn and cotton stacked in sacks etc. It only rains during certain months here and there is no need to protect

them during the dry season.

We were embarking a battalion of native soldiers and having disembarked several ladies and children who had occupied cabins I, as the senior Major on board, became entitled to one of the berths vacated, so I have moved into Rice's cabin, the O>C> Troops who was with him before, having now taken a cabin to himself. My new quarters are really luxurious, replete with comfort, and kept spotlessly clean, all in white enamel and brass, with an automatic telephone by one's berth, Axminster carpet on the floor and so on.

We steamed away at 1p.m. and passed a cargo steamer on fire, with a cargo of cotton. We were now passing parallel to the Baluchistan coast but it is barren and uninteresting so having passed the rest of the day lazily and comfortably it was a pleasure to go to my luxurious cabin at night.

Thursday 20th January 1921

This is a Hospital ship and there being so few of us now on board (officers) there is not nearly so much doing as there was on the "Huntsgreen." We walk a good deal more as the Promenade Deck is so wide and spacious, which is a blessing, but we have no sports or boxing, the troops being Indians, and no concerts or dancing; I suppose the journey is such a short one that no one has considered it worthwhile. We bring out our songs and sing them in the evening, and read or play cards - but nothing is organised. Today we had a sweep, but the total subscription was on 27 Rupees as against 80 - 100 shillings on the "Huntsgreen". I won nothing the number I drew being 311 and the run actually 317miles. We watch the coast as we pass along but it is too far away to see anything and if we were nearer we should see little as it is Baluchistan and the coast is rocky and absolutely barren.

One gets tired of doing nothing on board so in the afternoon Rice and I retreated to our cabin and had a sleep, being aroused by our gentle steward with tea and cakes which we ate lying in bed. After tea I went down to the Dispensary to have some Acetic acid put on my cranial wart. It is very comfortable below deck with hundreds of cots. I am told that on each of the last two voyages there were 300 - 400 cases on board - but this is not a great number considering there are 100,000 troops in Mesopotamia. They were mostly malaria and pneumonia the latter due to the cold weather, and it is mostly Indians who go down with it, not being used to the cold. It is getting colder every day now and one requires overcoats in Mespot., there being frost nearly every night. The Indians on board seem to feel it - one can see them sitting shivering in the early morning - but it is getting more like home to us. One hardly expected this after the heat of the Red Sea and Bombay. But it will warm up all right later on and during the months of July, August and September temperatures of 120 in the shade are not uncommon. However one need not worry about this now.

Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. So far the news is that we take in oil at

Abadan between 1 - 6a.m. on Sunday and arrive in Basra about 2p.m. Sunday.

Friday 21 January 1921

It was so cold this morning that I had to go down after breakfast and put on my pants and waistcoat and after a good half hour's walking on deck I felt warmer. During the morning we were in sight of the Arabian coast, the kingdom of Muscat or Maskat but a more rocky or barren coast it would be difficult to imagine. It is one continuous huge rock, huge sharp jagged ranges following one another and higher rocks, or I suppose I should call them mountains, behind. Here the sun shines all day, there is no rain, and the brown rocks become covered with a hard dirty grey crust which never gets washed off. We were now in the Gulf of Oman and about noon passed the extreme eastern point of Arabia, which juts out into the Straits of Ormuz. We could see the coast of Persia on the other side, but it looks just as barren and rocky although the rocks are not so high. The coasts of these countries at this point are hopeless whatever the land may be like inland but there are a few busy ports here and there, although we could not see them.

Several of our fellows have suffered a little from stomach trouble and I think it must be due to the change of food. On the "Huntsgreen" we had English food cooked in the English fashion. Here we have many entirely new dishes, served in the Indian fashion. They are very nice but of course they want getting used to. Tonight our menu was as under:

1. Pea Soup with Croutes and herbs
 2. Lamb Cutlets with braised Celery
 3. Boiled Mutton with Caper sauce
- Baked Potato and mashed Pumpkin
4. Chicken Pilau
 5. Oyster Toast
 6. Alderney Pudding
 7. Italian Cream
 8. Dessert and coffee

I went through the menu and enjoyed it immensely. It is much to do with the service, I think. Our Goanese stewards stand around, not watching so far as one can see, but as soon as you are finished your clean plate is brought and you help yourself to the next course, as little or as much as one wishes. Their complexion is dark brown and they have black hair and moustaches, and never wear boots. They are clean, efficient and noiseless. It is the same with our cabin and bath

stewards. They are models. They wear white clothes and all you see of their person is the face hands and feet, and as those parts are dark brown you don't know for certain whether they are clean or not, but as they leave no marks, one supposes that they are. They know enough English to understand you, or make themselves understood, but generally they say very little, and this emphasises their quietness. There is no doubt this is a restful boat, and I must say I can do with a lot of this.

Saturday 22 January 1921

Today the sky has been more cloudy and never very warm, but the wind has dropped and the sea has been almost oily in appearance all day. We are making good speed, too, 316 - 318 knots, at an overall of 13 knots. There has been nothing to do except to walk around the decks, or sit and read. The only diversion I have had was to have my hair cut in my cabin by a native barber for which I paid 8 annas. (an anna is about 1d. there being 16 to a Rupee which is now worth about 1/5d. There are 12 pies in an anna)

Very strange that today one of the Officers on board, a Lieutenant in the Royal Engineers named Barnes, in conversation insisted that he was certain that he had met me before (he had mentioned this before). While he had gone out of the Saloon for a minute I suddenly remembered him and it turned out right: we used to be in the Middlesex Yeomanry together 1900 - 1905 and it is indeed strange that after an interval of 16 years we should meet again on a Transport going to Mesopotamia. So we had a good yarn together recalling old times and recollected dozens of incidents that had happened in those good old days.

The world is a very small place.

We could see the coast of Persia most of the day - but it was just the same rocky, jagged barren shore. But barren as the land may be, the sea is full of fish if the numerous porpoises are anything to judge by. They still amuse themselves sporting in and out of the water and I should imagine that the sea teams with fish. But as so few people live on these shores, there is no demand for the fish and so they live unmolested. We are due at Abadan early tomorrow morning to "oil" if we can cross the bar at the mouth of the River Euphrates and we shall arrive at Basra about tiffin time. If we lose the tide it will be later. The pilot was awaiting us on board the Lightship, the usual Pilot boat being at Fao, so we lowered one of our own boats and fetched him. He came on board about 9.30 and proved to be an Arab with a white turban. There was no trouble in launching our boat as the sea was dead calm, nor in bringing her back again. The Bar was * miles ahead and was marked by green and red lights. When we got near it a seaman stationed in a special stand by the Prom. Deck "heaved the lead" every 2 or 3 minutes and called out the sounding. As he was a Lascar I could not understand him but we passed the Bar with 4ft. to spare, the depth of water being 21 feet and our draught 17 feet. We are still some distance from the oiling station. We are steaming through a dead calm sea, with the moon shining

brilliantly above. It is cool and the weather is just perfect. The only noise one hears is the rush of the water along the ships' sides as we go through it. We mightn't have a crew or troops on board at all for all the noise they make. I like this luxurious manner of life, I am afraid and I am sorry we are almost "there".

Sunday 23 January 1921

Once over the Bar, which is a great ridge of mud and silt which forms in the sea at the mouth of the River, we are in the Shatt- el-Arab, the great river formed by the junction of the R. Euphrates and the R. Tigris, and it is not many miles to Abadan, in Persia, where the oil from the wells of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company is brought by a great pipe-line to the sea. I think it must have been the smell of the oil which awoke us while it was still dark, and we found that we were moored. At 7a.m. when our cabin steward brought our chota husri. I looked out of our cabin window, and saw the dull muddy river, with masses of dead reeds floating by. The opposite bank, which is Mesopotamia, was mud, rich brown-yellow mud, and on the level were forests of date palms which stretched as far as the eye could reach. We dressed and found that we were moored to the landing stage of the Anglo- Persian Oil Co. at ABADAN and that we were taking in fuel oil through a huge flexible pipe. When the pipe was pulled away I noticed that the oil is a thick treacly fluid looking exactly like dark Jeyes fluid. This may have been a picturesque village once upon a time but it now bears all the marks of civilisation. It is a place of smoking chimneys, cranes, refineries, and furnaces. Brick buildings and storehouses have taken the place of the mud houses and the Arabs and Persians are now the labourers and porters of the Oil Company. Ragged and filthy most of them were and they have to work harder now than in the days of their forefathers.

At 10 a.m. we cast off and re-started up river 37 miles to Basra. The River is about 1/4 mile wide here and ocean-going steamers can go nearly 50 miles up-stream. The first ten miles cover a large bend where we don't meet a very great number of smaller boats as these use the direct canal between Abadan and Mohammerah. The banks are still just solid mud but presently they are carefully embanked with stone or tree trunks. The levels on both sides are however still a forest of date palms planted closely in straight lines, millions upon millions of them, so that one wonders whatever do they do with the dates they get. One can see what wonderful soil this is and what wonderful results it must give, irrigated by this never failing water. It is only a few feet above the river and when the tide rises the water flows all over the land and waters it. We were now past the canal and the River became busy with sailing dhows, motorboats and river boats (bellums) We passed several mud villages with more pretentious houses here and there. I was interested in the native fish traps where the fish swim into at high water and are left stranded on the mud when the tide goes down. They are formed of square shaped enclosures made of reeds on the mud banks.

We next passed the considerable town of Mohammerah in Persia where the River Karun joins the Shatt-el-Arab; there is a very fine yellow painted palace of the

powerful Sheikh of Mohammerah a short way up the River Karun, and another Palace belonging to him a short way further up the Shatt. Just past here and the two white boundary stones indicating the boundary between Persia and Mesopotamia. The date palm forests still cover the land on both sides of the River, with here and there patches of green crops.

The Officers Hospital having been passed on the left, eventually Basra itself came in sight, heralded by the six tall wireless masts. Many ships are moored in the River, some quite large boats which were used in river work against the Turks transporting troops etc. Basra occupies at least a mile of river front on the left bank going upstream and there are numerous creeks which go into the town and the smaller boats can go almost anywhere. Most of the buildings are low one-storied affairs, devoted to Army purposes, or Hospitals, but there are many larger buildings, evidently of importance. I cannot say I am greatly struck with the place as viewed from the river it looks so low and flat and muddy, but a proper description of the place I must defer as we don't disembark until tomorrow morning at 9 a.m.

There are plenty of birds about, such as wild geese, pigeons and so on but I only saw a very few weedy looking cattle on the banks. I noticed a dead tortoise floating downstream but I didn't see a single horse or camel.

Monday 24 January 1921

This morning has turned out wet and it rained on and off until about 11a.m. It was not long before the roads and paths became churned up into a thick clayey mud, sometimes 6 inches deep and so holding that one's foot nearly came out of one's shoe when walking. We engaged a gang of Arabs, none of whom knew a word of English, to bring our luggage off the ship and pile it up in the ox-wagons which were waiting to carry it to our destination. We were all seated in the motor char-a-bancs ready to drive away when up dashed a motor vanette with Pickard, one of the Audit Staff here, in it. He explained that they had only that morning been notified that we had arrived and was very much put out that he had not been able to turn up before. However Rice and I went with him to the Audit Office, and had a hearty greeting. Williams and Pickard and the Assistant Local Auditor were the only men here whom I knew, but the others, about 20 in number, seem very nice fellows. The Office is an Arab house in the Strand, a street running alongside a picturesque canal called Ashar Creek. Opposite are the inevitable date groves and nearby are the Electric Power Station and Post Office and the principle Banks. It is an important street and to the right leads to the Bazaar and to the left to old Basra city - the old Bussorah of the Arabian Nights. The mud here today is indescribable. The whole place is built on a mud marsh and the roads(?) are cut through date groves and the military buildings and camps are situated also in date groves, except where the groves have been cleared away to make open camps. It is not a closely built town but spread over a very big area, and gives one the idea that acreage is no object. This is not the magnificent Bussorah of the olden days but a dirty ill-paved, ill-kept squalid

Eastern town, with very few buildings of any style. I haven't seen the old city yet however and there may be something finer there. This is the newer town of Ashar which is an extension of it, and the growth of which is due to the war.

The first arrangement was that I should remain at Basra (pronounced Busra) and Rice and I accordingly moved into our billet, an Arab house, a little further up the street. It has an open courtyard with a garden and our rooms are on the first floor, which has a wide verandah running all around on the courtyard side. We have two rooms at present, bedroom and sitting, comfortably furnished, and we have decided that we shall be able to make them very comfy indeed.

Tuesday 25th January 1921

Slept well although it was a cold night. I had four blankets over me. It was a very pleasant day, turning out quite hot and sunny. We have our meals at the Audit Office where they run a proper Mess, and there is a fine large dining room with a big table. Breakfast is at 7 or 7.15, work from 7.30 until 1.00, Tiffin at 1.00 or just after, Tea at 4.00, Dinner at 7.30. The Office hours are 7.30 to 1.00 and then one is finished for the day. The afternoon is devoted to sport - tennis, football, golf etc. and in the evening they play cards, ping-pong or have a sing-song to the music of the gramophone. There is no piano yet. Nobody seems bored, there is plenty to do, and most of the staff say that the climate has agreed with them and they like Busra. Most of them agree that it is better than Baghdad as it is cleaner(!) and not nearly so smelly.

This morning I had a drive round with Pickard seeing something of the country, but it is a devil of a job keeping ones seat. It must be very pleasant in the early summer, before the hot weather, when everything is fresh and green. There is plenty of shade and the roads are dry and vegetation is thriving at its height. There is plenty of work to do and I could see it was going to be interesting. It was therefore with rather sad feelings that I received the news that the chief (Mr. Toplis) has telegraphed for me to be sent to him at Baghdad. This is a double blow as I shall be parted from Rice just at the time when we thought we should be so happy together. However, what is to be, must be, and I shall have to pack up again and to Baghdad in a few days time by river steamer to Kut (4 or 5 days) and thence by train (1 day)

In the afternoon I turned out for football and just as I was beginning to feel my feet a bit I turned my foot over and sprained my ankle badly. I could take no part in the match, therefore, but Prater turned out for me and we won 3 goals to 2. The team we defeated was the Sanitary Company R.A.M.C. The Audit Office team is quite a good one.

I am sorry that I am going to Baghdad for the reason also that one's expenses here are so low. The mess bill is only about 4 Rupees a day and one can do very well on a monthly total of about 250 Rupees. So that I should save over 200

Rupees monthly of my extra allowance, which at 1/6d per Rupee = £15.00. Living at Baghdad is much dearer, and other expenses are higher too. My foot has turned out very painful and I bathed it in hot and cold water alternately in the evening and at night when I went to bed put a cold compress on it. The last two days have gone very quickly. I suppose it is because we have now got some work to do, and the interest of meeting ones friends and settling down.

Wednesday 26 January 1921

This morning I found that my foot had swollen considerably although the pain had to a great extent gone. So I didn't get up for breakfast but had it brought to me by my bearer, or native servant. I anointed it 4 or 5 times with ?Esmolin which I imagined did it good.

I forgot to say that our bearers arrived yesterday. Rice has got a splendid man, Usman Khan, and I have got a Punjab Indian, a Mohammedan whose name is Imam Ali. He is a young man about 25-30 but he is growing a beard. He has a pleasant face, wears a turban, and a sort of baggy white trousers, and a khaki shirt which like so many Hindus he wears outside like a coat. He is clean, but speaks very little English. He is also not very proficient yet and a bit slow, but he is anxious to do well and when he is attending me watches me like a cat. I shall be able to get him better, I think and also to improve his English. I don't want to have to learn Hindustani, his language, he must learn mine. I didn't get up until 11 and then I went up to the Office. After Tiffin, Barkham, Walden, Nyillasy and another man already at the Audit Office got ready for the journey to Baghdad. They went by Launch and two other men from the Audit Office and I went by motor car to see them off. They are going by the Paddle Ambulance No.4 to Kut and thence by train. We had a good look over the boat, which was regarded as a very comfortable one. There were many Indian troops also on board.

We discharged our motorcar, and came back by Launch, and had a very enjoyable trip of about 4miles along the river front and up the busy Ashar Creek. The creek was getting near high water and consequently numbers of Arab sailing boats and barges were making their way up and down and hundreds were moored, some loading some discharging cargo. In the bright sunlight this made a very Eastern scene, the strange craft and their stranger crews.

After dinner Rice and I returned to our comfortable billet and wrote our letters as the mail closes tomorrow at 7.30. According to latest information I sail for Baghdad on Friday 28th January.

Thursday 27th January 1921

The cold compress I put on my foot last night has done it good I think and it is less painful although the swelling hasn't gone down much. During the morning I

occupied myself getting an insight into the work done by the Audit Staff in Mesopotamia, which may come in useful in making a start when I get to Baghdad. The work covers a tremendous field, and the difficulties of audit here are tremendous. We are engaged in disentangling things from the mess the Indian Audit Department left things in. So far as I can see at present, effective audit was non-existent until we took things over and it is proving a very big task getting the military people out of the old slack Indian methods of accounting. The work entailed in watching affairs during the big business of handing over so much that was under military control to the Civil Administration (now that an Arab Government has been formed) is very tricky and wants very careful handling at every step. It looks to me as if the Audit Staff here may save the country some millions before it is finished. However I shall be able to say more of that 6 months hence.

During the afternoon we had a walk round the Ashar Bazaar, a group of narrow streets not far from the Office. The streets are about 10 - 12 feet wide and have no paths. They are crowded with all sorts and conditions of natives, mostly Arabs, and a villainous lot they are, or look. When in addition to the people, motor-cars, gharries, strings of camels and donkeys, all fully laden, are also making their way along, the congestion can be imagined. Most of the shops consist of small booths about 6 - 7 ft. square, all the goods displayed on shelves, and trays sloping from the ground upwards, the shopkeeper sitting cross-legged among his goods or standing in a space about 2 ft. square. Prices are seldom marked on the goods and the merchant gets as much as he can for the articles. I wanted a shoe-horn (having broken mine) and having found a man who had one for sale, he asked 1 Rupee (16 annas) for it. I promptly offered 8 annas, and gave him to understand that I thought it a most undesirable shoe-horn. After a little haggling, the shopkeeper accepted my offer when I made as if I was going away and I got my shoe-horn. (But I'm not at all sure it was worth 8 annas) At many shops foodstuffs, sweets, dates and all manner of eatables were on sale. At the cafe's, in one street, the customers were mostly sitting cross-legged on benches outside. There were six or seven barbers shops all together, with customers inside, all open to passers-by, tailors sitting at their work, shoemakers, tinsmiths mending pots and pans, groups of beggars howling for alms, ragged porters hustling along with enormous loads on their backs, and the combined smells were indescribable.

After tea Rice and I called on Mr. Barney, of the American Mission, which is almost opposite our billet on the other side of the Ashar Creek. He gave us a friendly reception and invited us again. He has a very comfortable house and we quite enjoyed our chat about his work, our work and Mesopotamian affairs in general. There is an Arab compound near by, consisting of huts made of rush mats - all huddled close together. Some are about as big as our coal shed, some twice as big. Apparently the whole family lives in one, and judging by the babies and youngsters about they certainly seem to manage their married life to satisfaction.

Friday 28th January 1921

Last night we sat in our sitting room with our overcoats on and then shivered, it was so cold. It was bitter this morning when got up (6.45a.m.) and we were not surprised to hear that there were 5 degrees of frost during the night. And yet in the afternoon all our fellows were in flannels playing tennis, and I sat by and stewed in the midsummer heat. What a contrast! You can't imagine it in England but it is the natural everyday thing here. I wished I could have played, but my foot is not well enough yet.

I employed my morning in studying things at the office but although we had a big charcoal brazier burning in the room I had to wear my overcoat. I received the news that I travel to Baghdad tomorrow (Saturday) so I shall have to start packing again. And now again as soon as the sun is down it is very cold again and I am writing this with a blanket over my shoulders. But so long as one is careful to dress accordingly there is nothing dreadful about such a climate. One never drinks water, unless it is boiled (such as in tea or coffee) but always mineral waters.

Saturday 29th January 1921

Today began wet and kept wet all day, raining on and off, and as a consequence the mud appeared everywhere again. When I got back from breakfast I found that my man with the help of Rice's man had got all my things packed and we were all ready at 9.00! I had unpacked my suits and put them in the wardrobe when I thought I was staying in Basra - goodness knows how they have repacked them. These bearers when properly trained will do everything for their masters - and, except that one pays them 30 Rupees per month are almost like slaves. They are absolutely honest, and I feel so sure of my man that I have even given him the keys of my boxes, I think I can train him to be a very useful man.

The wagons which had been requested for 12.30 not having arrived at 1 o'clock, we made arrangements by 'phone for motor transport and soon after 2 o'clock 2 motor vanettes and 1 motor lorry arrived. The lorry being duly loaded with our luggage and our two bearers, Cairns and I set off accompanied by Rice and Hiron who were coming to see us off. Our little procession splashed through the mud to the berth at Magill, and four Arabs put our luggage aboard, the difficulty being my big trunk, as usual. It is a bit big for travelling in the wilds.

The boat we are going by is the Paddle Steamer P.S.55, which is about 50 ft. wide and 150ft long. The cabin we have been given is quite a roomy one, not over clean, and having only mattresses, no bed clothes. We use our own. My man was not long in making up my bed, and setting out my toilet things and putting the cabin comfortable. I have some of my packages in my cabin. The rest are stacked in one of the corridors and my man looks after it and sleeps on it at night.

On our port side we have an enormous oil tank barge nearly as big as the steamer, and on the other side a similar sized barge loaded with wood. The task of leaving these having been completed we started away at about 6 o'clock, just as it was getting dark. We had a good dinner at 7.30 and afterwards I had a yarn with Lieut. Barnes (who is on this ship) in his cabin. The others played bridge in the saloon. There are 9 Officers on board including the Captain, and about 150 troops. I was tired and slept well. It is not nearly so cold tonight and there is a clear sky, giving promise of a better day tomorrow.

Sunday 30th January 1921

Today is the same as any other day on board a River boat. We have no chaplain, nor any medical man for such a short journey, nor are the conditions anything like so comfortable as on a sea-going boat, but we are a merry, happy-go-lucky crowd, nevertheless. Most of the 1st. class men have been in the country some time, and are practically unanimous in saying that it is a fine country, and better than most places in India. The winter they all like, and some prefer the heat of the summer even to the winter. It's all right for a man, but they agree it is no place for women, or children. They have all had good health and the chance of ill-health to the moderate man is no greater than in England. The disadvantage is that one has to rough it to such an extent, "home" comforts are usually absent, sanitary arrangements are very crude, it is either muddy or dusty and so on (and when it is muddy or dusty it is 10 times as muddy, and 20 times as dusty as in England)

We passed the famous site of Ezra's Tomb in the night, and also KURNA, a town at the head of the Shatt-el-Arab, where the two rivers Tigris and Euphrates combine to form one stream. It was over-clouded and raining slightly when we got up but it cleared off during the morning. Our passage during the day takes us through the part of the river called the "Narrows", where navigation is difficult owing to the narrowness and swiftness of the stream and the winding course. As a consequence we first bump on one side and then on the other. Once our port barge ran aground and the hawser snapped. It took 15 minutes to get her off and under way again. At intervals there are Arab villages of huts made of reeds and rush matting something like this and the native women run out and offer all sorts of eatables for sale as we go by - eggs, ducks, chickens mostly. They give about 16 eggs for a rupee (1d. each) or one duck or one chicken for the same price. They run along the bank until the barge bumps and then effect their sales. Some of these women (the younger ones) are quite good looking and as fair in colour as English people. As a rule they are poorly clad and wear silver anklets on their bare legs, but no shoes. It was cold and windy and wet and we didn't see them at their best. The boys and little children run along with them calling out for "buckshish" (gifts)

We make about 4 miles per hour in this part, or less when the river is very winding and sand-banks hinder us, which is not bad considering the load we are

carrying. We arrived at the Arab town of Qalat-Salih at about 3.30 in the afternoon. It is a place of some size and consists of a good number of square brick houses and many more of mud. This Mesopotamian mud is very binding and makes good houses and has the advantage of being cheap! There is a Mosque in the centre with a good looking minaret. An officer of the 3rd. Tigris Levies got off here. These are Arab troops recently raised and the nucleus of the new Arab army.

After Qalat-Salih the surrounding country became flat and uninteresting. Wide greeny-brown plains stretched on either side with marshy parts here and there and as it got cold and cheerless we retreated to our cabin and wrote and read and smoked. We had a quite good dinner and I watched the bridge party until 10 o'clock when we reached the place for disembarking the Baluchis (Indian troops from Baluchistan) They were disembarked by search-light and we went on.

During the night we have searchlights on the boat which illuminate both banks of the River and so enable us to see where we are going. They are pretty powerful and can light up the surrounding country for some distance either side (on the same principle as motor-car headlights) and give it a most weird appearance.

Monday 31 January 1921

We awoke in the morning to find it raining hard and it rained hard all day. We were moored at Amarah, which we reached at about 2.00 in the morning, but unfortunately we were just around the bend of the River, so that we couldn't see the town of Amarah (which is said to be well worth visiting, especially its bazaar) As it was raining we couldn't make the trip ashore - mud makes any walking impossible. All the rest of the day we wandered between the Upper Deck and our cabin and the Saloon for meals) but it was bitterly cold and wet and the cabin saw most of us. In fact we had to get into bed to keep warm. The country on both sides is absolutely flat - mud, mud, mud, mud. Parts are cultivated, of course, but very, very little, and there are many flocks of brown-fleeced sheep and groups of matting huts. Once we passed a more considerable town, mostly mud houses, but it is on the whole monotonous and uninteresting. The River has now become much wider, perhaps 500 yards wide, and in consequence the current is slower and the River deeper. The water the whole time is a light brown colour owing to the quantity of mud brought down with the winter rains. After dinner we all sat in the Saloon and had a yarn, but it soon got too cold and one by one we said "good-night" and went to bed.