

Sunday October 1st 1922

A peaceful stay-at-home Sunday today. In the morning to Holy Communion at the pretty little Garrison Church, and after breakfast lazed about generally.

In the Mess everything goes like clockwork and there's no trouble over little things that don't happen. They just happen. Our living is dearer, as the W.O. have just decided that rations are not to be issued free for Mess servants. As we have 5 this means over Rs. 50 more per month for the Mess. Well, with luck I've only another 6 weeks in Mespot so it won't affect me much.

In the evening to Church again, it being the occasion of our Harvest Festival. The Church was decorated with palm fronds, and garnished with bunches of dates, grapes, melons, pomegranates etc. Very nice service.

Monday and Tuesday 2/3 October 1922

My cold has kept me rather confined to the Office and billet and so I've little to record. Rice has ceased work and is packing up and I have taken his place.

On Tuesday morning I went to see the G.H.Q. doctor and he sent me up to the Hospital for examination, as my throat was so swollen. The Hospital Doctor wanted me to go into Hospital, but as it was nothing serious and my throat only wanted painting inside and fomentations outside I wouldn't go. I can get all that done at the G.H.Q. Dispensary and stick to my work.

In the evening we had our farewell dinner to Rice. He is extremely liked by everyone and we all had nice things to say about him. Everybody had to speak, as usual; Mr Toplis told me I surpassed myself. But I can't smoke or sing – Doctor's orders.

Wednesday 4th October 1922

Today was a great day – the advance guard of G.H.Q. (the old G.H.Q.) went down to the Base en route for home. There were about 9 G.H.Q. officers altogether, including Rice who was going to Basra for a few days audit work and then by slow gulf boat to India. The rest of G.H.Q. were on the station to see them off, and very merry and bright. It must make the R.A.F. Think when they see with what joy their predecessors leave the country.

Went to dinner tonight at Hotel Abul Lahad, being the final function of the C.E.M.S. I was invited as Church Warden, in the hope also that I would sing.

But my voice is hors de combat. About 50 to dinner and a very successful evening, and broke up about 11p.m. Mr Toplis won the booby prize at whist – but I didn't play.

Thursday 5th October 1922

There is a epidemic of colds and sore throats in Baghdad among the British – due no doubt to the change of season and the dust which fills the air and is much worse this year than last. I've still got my bad throat and having it painted inside daily and fomented outside I go about with my head tied up in a big bandage and everyone who knows me stops me to enquire what is the matter - most of them think it is a Baghdad boil. But I have escaped that up to now.

I have now taken over the Mess a/cs again as Mess Treasurer and some time this week I must take over the Church a/cs. There's always plenty to do.

Guest night tonight and fourteen sat down to dinner. Somehow not so merry as of old – the jolly fellows of the old mess have nearly all gone. Also I couldn't sing. But we have a new member named Capt. Taylor who has a fine voice and he and Heaton did very well. Colonel Fanshawe joined the Mess tonight and was elected Mess President, being the senior Military Officer.

Friday 6th October 1922

Most of us begin to feel that it's time the work bean to show some signs of dropping but with an influx of clearing-up work coming in and our successors (the R.A.F. Auditors) showing no signs of eagerness in "taking over", there seems, if anything, more to do than ever. I don't believe we shall see a real drop until the end of October. So far as I am concerned it is a blessing in disguise that the "Braemar Castle" is to be a month late, because it gives us the services of three men a month longer – one of them Prater, head of the Cash Section, whose work I should have had to take if he had gone. I am sorry for them, of course, but human enough to find some comfort for myself in their disappointment.

In some of the G.H.Q. branches, R.A.F. Officers have actually taken over and the Army Officers have nothing now to do. They are enjoying a holiday and busy finding means to kill time until their sailing orders are given. All the Army personnel wear a smile, however, at the prospect of leaving, which is more than the R.A.F. do at staying. However, there are worse places than jolly old Mespot.

Saturday 7th October 1922

Yesterday went out again with Toplis, Barkham and the Padre to the Golf Club. Played a four ball game again but Thomas was in good form and beat me. But the afternoon was perfect, sunny, cool, blue sky and a nice breeze. October is a wonderful month in Mespot. The temperature has been higher this week some days – nearly 110 deg. - but lovely and cool at night, only 70 deg. a drop of 40 degrees.

I'm getting interested in curios again. But I know more of values now and shan't be done quite so much. I have bought a rug – a real Shirwan, 5ft. by 3 ft. beautiful colours, fine stitch, and old, with a camel hair centre, for Rs. 56. I rather fancy 1 more carpet – a good Sarug (Sarouk) or Kashan as a specimen of real good work and then pack them all up for home and buy no more. I have now seven :-

1. Shirwan Runner
2. Shirwan Rug
3. Bejar Rug
4. Kurdistan Rug
5. Herat Rug
6. Saraband Rug
7. Baluchistan Carpet

Also 2 pairs of Baluchi saddlebags

I have got a big new box ready to carry them home in.

One or two Amara works articles, some copper bowls, and an amber necklace perhaps – and I shall be finished buying.

Sunday 8th October 1922

To Holy Communion as usual before breakfast. At about 9 o'clock with Heaton and Byfield to Kadhimain. Went by gharri to Kotah Bridge, which was cut, so crossed the river by bellum. Then through the Baghdad West Bazaars, these are some of the most interesting in Baghdad. There is a big grain market here. Eventually came out on to the Tramway route, and didn't have to wait long for a tram. We climbed on top of this funny old affair by means of the ladder at the back and quite enjoyed the ride to Kazimain (4 miles for 4 annas). We run parallel to the river all the way, only the thin fringe of date palms and cultivated gardens separating us from it.

Suddenly, near the end of the ride, we come into full view of the Golden domes and minarets of the Mosque, gleaming in the sun. One is not allowed

in the mosque, and it is best not to go too near it. But the Bazaars are interesting enough and we bought ebony sticks and sandalwood combs – and also climbed up on top of the roof of a khan or caravanserai to get a good view of the mosque. We met in the Bazaars, seven or eight other officers and also two or three audit fellows who were exploring the place for the first time.

As we were looking at the great main entrance of the Mosque, a group of Persian pilgrims came out and as they left kissed reverently the great chain which hangs across the door. I just missed a snap of this.

It was a warm morning, and as we came to the end of the Bazaar we stopped at an Arab coffee house and each had a cup of Arab coffee - most deliciously made and a most exhilarating potion it is. I wish we could get our cook to make coffee like it but strange to say only Arabs and Turks seem to be able to make it right.

We returned on foot along the dusty road to Muadham Ferry and crossed the Tigris here and walked through Muadham / or Marzam) Bazaar. Here we hired a gharri and returned home to "C" Mess. It was a morning full of interest, and Byfield was enchanted with it. Our total expenses came to Rupees 6 Annas 8 - for the three. Home at 1 p.m.

Slept during the afternoon and in the evening went to Church. Ended my Sunday pleasantly after dinner reading the various magazines until bedtime.

Monday 9th October 1922

Very sad this week as the English Mail of 14th September has not arrived. It apparently reached Bombay just too late for the Mespot ship on 29th September and consequently we shall receive two weeks mails next Friday or Saturday, those of 14th and 21st September.

It is quite a small room that I have now about 14ft. Square, with no additional bathroom, so that it has to serve for bed-sitting and bathroom combined. We have our mess rooms if I want more room of course, but this is quite enough for me if I have only another month to stay. It is on the ground floor and has the advantage of windows both back and front. So I get the air right through it, though even that has its disadvantages for my room gets very dusty with so much dust about.

In the afternoon went with Mr Toplis to the Hospital and saw Waite and other friends – all of them getting on very well. Walked there and back. On the

way there had a look at the work of the Amarah silversmiths, of which there are a large number now. There is nothing doing at Amarah or Kut-el-Amara, now the British have gone – so they all flock to Baghdad.

Tuesday 10th October 1922

Temperature today max: 99.5 deg min: 60 deg. The latter is the night temperature, of course – this is the wonderful thing about Mespot – the drop of 40 deg at night. 100 deg. is a delightful day temperature and one can go out in the afternoon now and not feel done up. At night on the roof, those who sleep up there need 3 blankets!

My throat is feeling much better today. I haven't been to the doctor for the last 3 or 4 days perhaps that's why! Lots of people have had the same thing it seems to be going round Baghdad.

Wednesday 11th October 1922

Yesterday afternoon played Badminton for an hour and did the same tonight (or rather this afternoon from 4.30 to 5.30. It is quite dark at 6 p.m. It is a splendid exercise and we all enjoyed it – Heaton, Taylor, Toplis and I. Taylor beats me, but I beat Heaton and Toplis. In the evening, we gave our farewell dinner to Elliott. As usual, we all made speeches complimentary to Elliott, and drank his health. Elliott made the longest speech of his life. After dinner we had a special musical evening for Elliott's benefit, and sang all the old songs. He leaves for home tomorrow night.

Thursday 12th October 1922

Cable arrived from War Office (69121) telling Toplis he can return in the Braemar Castle, "leaving Pearman to complete audit" So that's that. My hopes of returning in November gone – but as the W.O. have asked us to aim closing by 15th December, I shall not be later than that.

The work continues very heavy, and I don't expect much drop until the end of the month. We have to complete the audit up to 30th September – and it's quite obvious that that can't be done under two months.

Wrote all the afternoon, and after tea took the stick I bought at Khadimain to the Armarah workers to have a silver band put on and a ferule. They asked 10 Rupees, but eventually haggled down to 5. There are some new workers just come up from Amara and I found one – Ghanim Subby – whose work is very good indeed. After an interesting bit of bargaining got a very nice

mustard, pepper and salt set for Rs. 22. The silversmith asked Rs. 30 at first and said Rs. 28 was his lowest price. I got him to weigh the articles and they weighed Rs. 12 I added Rs10 for the work which he accepted in the end. This is the cheapest Amarah work I've bought.

Friday 13th October 1922

Last night we had a very enjoyable guest night – 15 present and some others looked in after dinner. Major Elliott left last night . I was in good voice and we spent the whole evening singing – Taylor and I. Taylor sang very well indeed. I have a new song "A hundred years ago" (you will remember hearing it when we saw "A Night Out" at the Winter Garden Theatre, dear) to which I have added a verse about the R.A.F. This goes down wonderfully. We had about 6 R.A.F. fellows in and they enjoyed the leg-pull.

This afternoon Toplis, Thomas, Barkham and I went up to Golf and played a 4-ball match. I was in good form and played better than I ever have before, I think. Played 12 holes which I did in 60. I played 5 holes in bogey, 6 in 1 over bogey and 1 in 2 over bogey. The score for my last 9 holes was 5, 5, 3, 5, 5, 4, 5, 5. Those underlined were bogeys. Thomas took 62, Barkham 68, Toplis 74. This Baghdad course is miles easier than the Poona Course – being so hard and flat, the ball travels so much farther, and the bunkers are hardly any handicap.

Rice wrote a poem before he left entitled "Dr Golf" - eulogising its beneficent effect on its devotees. He is quite right – it bucks one up wonderfully.

Saturday 14th October 1922

In the afternoon went with Byfield to the Citadel and photographed the Mosque there – also the old Turkish Cannon. Women who are pregnant rub their tummies against it; this is supposed to ensure that the child is a boy. Back through the Bazaar – and inspected the copper utensils the coppersmiths were making. Then to the Amarah workers. I am having a silver engraved band put to my other ebony stick – and another set of silver salt cellar, mustard and pepper pots made.

After tea with Toplis walked to the Hospital. Found Waite much better and hoping to go home next week. Very nice and calm and cool in the Hospital.

After dinner with Taylor and Heaton to the Warrant Officers and Sergeants Club to their Smoking Concert. Taylor sang 4 songs and so did I and had a wonderful reception. Heaton played for us. I never was so applauded in my

life – but it is easy to sing to a jolly crowd like that. I was at my best. We left at 12 midnight – but those fellows would probably keep it up until daybreak.

Sunday 15th October 1922

To early service as usual. After breakfast intended going for a walk, but friends came and this kept me in the whole morning until 12.30, when I went to the Office and found that the English Mail was in and my two letters. What a wonderful thing is the "English Mail". How eagerly we watch for it, what a cry of dismay when it fails as it did last week. It is the breath of life to the exile from home. The home letters have saved today from being a very dull day.

Monday 16th October 1922

Plenty of work still coming in, which is very annoying. Things clear up, and new problems arise. I hope the air will be clearer by the time Mr Toplis goes – mid November. Today's news is that the "Braemar Castle" is due then and I suppose he will go by it. It is coming to Basra, they say now.

After tea had an hour's Badminton with Mr. Toplis, but he was quite off his game and I won all three sets.

It has been cloudy all day and the experts prophecy rain. The clouds are low and there is little wind, so it has been close and uncomfortable. We need some rain to lay this beastly dust.

Tuesday 17th October 1922

Very cloudy today and the newcomers prophesied rain. But October 17th is much too early for rain and moreover the humidity is only 30%. If rain fell from the clouds it would all be dried up before it reached the ground. No rain came, of course.

After tea went up to the Amarah silversmiths shops and inspected the work they are doing for me. All pretty good. Silver engraved band round my stick done – paid Rs 5. Gertie's cigarette case finished, but insisted on better polish on it.

Wednesday 18th October 1922

In the afternoon with Thomas, Barkham and Toplis to Golf. Played very badly

– quite the worst of the four, and felt very downhearted over it. I started fairly well, but I was not driving well, and I lost a ball at the 7th hole – I went to pieces after that.

On my way back picked up Gertie's cig. Case. Only paid Rs.20 for it, as I considered Faly had not given his best work. In the evening played bridge and lost both rubbers. So ended a rotten day.

Thursday 19th October 1922

A new disease has made its appearance in G.H.Q. (or Air Head Quarters as it now is styled)- people are dating their letters November and December instead of October – I have it, for I commenced to write November above. I suppose everyone is now so eager to get away and put down the month they wish they were in instead of the actual month!

After tea had an hour's most strenuous Badminton with Heaton. Three sets, which I won, but it matters very little whether one wins or not so long as one gets the exercise. We are getting fairly good at the game and can take almost anything now, and some rallies are very good. We played right through without a break, so we can't be very unfit – but I was like a wet sponge when I finished, and one sweats alarmingly.

We had a fine guest night – 16 sat down to dinner. My guest was Major Crawford, the Judge Advocate General. It was a jolly evening Taylor and I sang nearly all the time until 12. I sang "A hundred years ago" with my new verse, "I know I'm beautiful", "Beauty of the Guards", "Italiano" and "Signora". The last three are great favourites and nearly always insisted on. We're like a lot of kids out here, and easily pleased.

Friday 20th October 1922

Very busy all the morning at the Office – I wish the work would show some signs of dropping. If it doesn't I shall feel a draught when Mr. Toplis, Prater, Barkham and Walden go in a fortnights time.

After tea, Mr Toplis and I had a strenuous bit of Badminton. This is the stuff for the liver.

Today is the Hindu festival of Diwali, and those of our servants who are Hindus have illuminated their huts with candles and are going to have a special feast in the compound tonight.

Saturday 21st October 1922

Today heard that McGror's Bank had suspended payment. Very bad news, as many of my friends out here have all their money in it. Barkham has over £500 in it.

In the afternoon went down to the Bazaar and got my walking stick, to which Gharim Subby has put a rather nice band. Gharim means "John" and Subby is I think merely the phonetic or a corrupted rendering of the sect the man belongs to – the Sabae/ans, or the Subby-ans. This would explain why so many of the Amarah workers call themselves Subby.

After tea walked to the Hospital with Mr Toplis and back.

Sunday 22 October 1922

Last night Heaton, Taylor and I went to the Sergeants Mess to their Smoking Concert, which was to bid good-bye to some of their members who are sailing on the "Braemar Castle", which positively sails on the 5th November. I sang 3 songs and had a great reception.

Before breakfast to Holy Communion and after around the outskirts of Baghdad. I chose Baghdad West to start with. This is the site of the wonderful Baghdad of Caliph Haroun Al Raschid but today not a vestige of that gorgeous city (if it ever was gorgeous , which I doubt) exists. There is an interesting Bazaar there, but very few houses of any importance. The dwellings are mostly mud or sun-dried brick – but desert claims the greater part of the old city. There was a dust storm blowing, so after visiting the Tomb of Zubeide and the Mosque of Maruf-al-Karkli, around which a large Mahomedan cemetery has sprung up, we decided to come back to the city. Maruf was a very holy man, and the Mahomedan idea in being buried near him is that, on the Last Day, when the dead arise, they will be near the holy man, who will sure know what to do, or the way to go. Another precaution they take is always to leave enough room in the grave for the corpse to sit up when he is questioned by the Recording Angel. Every grave looks in the same direction, so that when the deceased sits up he may face towards Mecca.

From here we made our way through the Bazaar of Baghdad West, over Maude Bridge to the Serai Bazaar, where we had a rest in the shop of the old Jewish Amber merchant. I bought a very nice necklace for Rs.15.

We came home through the Shorja Bazaar and Baghdad East, till we reached Sheikh Abdul Qadir Gilani's Tomb and Mosque. From here it was

only 10 minutes walk home, which we reached at 12.30 – after a most interesting morning.

After tea I went up to the Amarah workers Bazaar and got my set of salt, mustard and pepper pots (Rs 22) and also bargained with Gharim Subby for a snake bangle, which cost me Rs.7 Mr Toplis and Heaton are having sets of silver mustard, pepper and salts and Col. Fanshawe wants 6 bangles like the one I bought!

To church at 6 p.m. And for the first time no choir – they were nearly all leaving tonight for Basrah and the Braemar Castle, and those who weren't going were seeing the others off. However quite an enjoyable service.

Monday 23rd October 1922

In the afternoon went to Kashi's Carpet shop, to look over his carpets, as I am desirous of taking home one really good specimen carpet. I rather like a very nice Gulhenna he has but he wants Rs.150 for it (£10) He says it would fetch £20 in London. My friend Pickard wrote to me that the carpets he had taken were valued at about double what he gave for them.

After dinner played Bridge. First rubber was a long one and there was only 100 in it at the finish but the second beat it easily. We had only won one game each at 12 midnight when we chucked it. But my partner and I were already 500 up.

Tuesday 24th October 1922

Took two of my carpets to Kashi to be cleaned and repaired. One I gave Rs. 100 for he says is now only worth Rs. 60; but the other, which I gave Rs.75 for he says is now worth Rs. 110 or 120. Had another look at the Gulhenna, and then went round to Sayid Talib's and looked at his carpets. He has a Kashan (Rs.180) and a Saruq (Rs.170) that I like. Both of these carpet dealers complain that the trade is very bad and that often they go the whole day and no-one buys a carpet. I have heard rumours that some of the banks here are not in any too sound a position. There is no real business in Baghdad.

Wednesday 25th October 1922

The chief of the diseases in Baghdad is eye disease. I have heard it estimated that among the Mahomedan population almost 75% are afflicted with it (or have had it) in a greater or less degree. Babies get it and the

mother takes it to a native doctor, and in the end the poor little thing loses one and sometimes both eyes. It is a great pity that some sort of law is not made like that which applies to the prostitutes. Every female prostitute is obliged to pay Rs. 10 monthly, for which she is examined by an Arab doctor, and so venereal disease is kept down. They are all kept in one part of the town called the Brothel Area. One of the Health Department Officials told me the other day that some new girls had arrived from Persia – one is only 11 years old. Plenty of variety – safe and easy.

In the afternoon after tea played Toplis at Badminton and had a good strenuous game. Finished my mail letter, and after dinner played Bridge. Nothing exciting which is all to the good – I want nothing now but the excitement of boarding the boat at Basrah for home.

Thursday 27th October 1922

This afternoon went to Ali Kashi's, the carpet dealer for my two carpets which I had been washed and repaired. The heavy one, which Kashi says is a Luristan, or Degwant, looked very nice, but I felt no better disposed towards the Hamadan, and in the end I swapped it for the Gulhenna I mentioned on Monday and paid the difference. The Gulhenna is a real specimen rug and worth the money I think. Neither Kashi nor Serjia Talib bargain. They have one fixed price from which they will not budge.

It is extraordinary what fascination these Persian carpets have for the ordinary man. He cannot resist them. He inspects closely all which come his way, learns their names (that is, the district they come from), becomes an expert on the colours, whether fast or not, on the stitch, whether single or double, small or big, on the design, on the pile, on the quality of the wool and what not. He learns to judge their worth pretty nearly, and dares to pit his wits in bargaining against the wiliest salesmen in the world, the Arabs. It gives a wonderful interest to life out here – and as a hobby is not expensive, because one gets something out of it – viz. the carpets. My carpets are still worth what I gave for them.

Friday 28th October 1922

We had a very nice guest night last night. I had Colonel Ingram for my guest, Colonel Fanshawe had Taylor, the Persian Bank Manager and Alexander, the Judge and Heaton had two guests. After dinner Taylor, Heaton and I sang, and broke up very merry, just before 12.

This afternoon Barkham, Thomas, Toplis and I went to golf. I played very

well for the first nine holes which I did in 45, an average of 5, but the next four I went off. However, the light was failing and anyway the first nine pleased me. It was as usual a struggle between Thomas and me, and the Padre won. It was a most delightful afternoon and I feel all the better for it. The sun was just perfect, warm yet not scorching, and the evening cool. The temperatures are beginning to drop lately, the maximum is 90 deg or thereabouts (one day only 85 deg.) and the minimum 60 deg (one night only 58 deg.) November is a delightful month provided we get little rain – for rain stops everything, one cannot walk far because of the mud, golf becomes almost impossible, tennis stops because the courts are made of mud and can only be played on when dry.

Saturday 28th October 1922

Still very busy at the Office, though work shows signs now of a distinct falling off. I find plenty to do as I'm dealing with the outstanding work and trying to get it cleared off. We've nearly got to the end of it, I hope.

After tea went with Toplis to the Hospital and back – and after dinner with Taylor and Heaton to the final concert of the Warrant Officers Club. Several Officers there. Sang several songs and had a great reception.

Sunday 29th October 1922

To Holy Communion this morning and was the only Communicant, a congregation of one. The Army fellows are leaving G.H.Q. and the R.A.F. men who are taking their place do not seem to be a very religious lot.

After breakfast went out with Byfield for a walk. To Baghdad North Station and looked over the pottery works near there and watched the potters at work, and took a photograph of one of them who was working in a hut where there was a little more light than usual.

Then past the public slaughtering ground to Bab-al-Wastani, now in ruins, but once a very important gate in the city wall. Stood on the site of the old wall, which is now a bund or high built road stretching from North Gate to South Gate. From there to Sheikh Omar's Tomb built in 1234 AD. The conical tower is now leaning over like the famous Tower at Pisa, and cracked and obviously the foundations have given way. The beautiful Minaret has already been pulled down. Came home through the narrow streets of Baghdad East.

At four Colonel Bilderbeck called for me and we went down to the Hospital and had tea with the sisters. After tea to the National Cinema and saw

"Peppina" with Mary Pickford in it (rather a pretty play), Spanish Bullfight (a revolting, beastly spectacle) and an ancient Charlie Chaplin picture (absolute tosh) Then to dinner at the Maude and took Matron and Sister Croft, who were Bilderbeck's guests, back to the Hospital at 10 o'clock.

Monday 30th October 1922

Really very little to record regarding today. I wanted to get on with the Mess a/cs but Heaton has been down with an attack of fever, and unable to give me the necessary figures to work on.

After tea Mr Toplis and I went out for a walk and after dinner played bridge. I don't feel quite the same interest in Baghdad now that I've only another month to do, and I keep at home more, in consequence.

Tuesday 31st October 1922

This afternoon with Mr Toplis and Capt. Taylor to the Bilkerts to tea. Found Dawes there. They are very pleasant people indeed and their house at Baghdad West is very nice. It is open and airy and commands from the wide river verandah a fine view of East Baghdad river bank of about a mile. The late afternoon sun shines on that bank, and leaves the Bilkerts side of the river in shade. In the river underneath men are washing themselves, washing horses, women are washing clothes and pots and pans and collecting their daily water all in the same place. Good old Tigris, many are the uses!

We got back at about 6.30 and after a quick bath and change set off soon after 7p.m. by car with Heaton and Capt. Taylor to the 2nd Norfolk Regiment at Hinaidi, where we dined. Jolly company but poor dinner.

After dinner we all adjourned to the theatre where a concert was in progress. Both Taylor and I had promised to sing. It was the first time I had ever sung on a stage, but I didn't feel in the least nervous. Next to the stage were the band (about 30) then a space, then the Officers. Behind them a narrow space and then the men. There were between 600 – 1000 there, but they were in darkness and I couldn't see them from the stage. Just as well, probably. I sang "A hundred years from now" and as an encore "Beauty of the Guards". The men sang the chorus of the first song with great glee and I shan't forget how they yelled "But the R.A.F. will be well in the cart!" How the Army hates the R.A.F.!

In the second half I sang "I know I'm beautiful" and as an encore "Signora"

by request. Of course, they knew "Signora" and they roared the chorus for all they were worth. I could hardly hear myself for the noise, 700–800 men can make some noise, I tell you. Taylor sang well, too, and we were a great success: this was the best thing I've done, singing to those men out in the blue.