

THE TRAVELS OF MISS HELEN CADDICK : A JOURNEY EASTWARDS TO JAPAN, 1892. PART 1 : CAPE COLONY

SUSAN HANSEN

Having crossed Canada (THE MEIJO REVIEW Vol. 7, No. 1) to reach Japan (THE MEIJO REVIEW Vol. 7, No. 2), Miss Helen Caddick was frustrated in her desire for extensive touring of that latter country by the news of Frank's illness. She Therefore returned to Great Britain with all haste. But she was a very strong-minded women and was determined to see more of Japan. So in August of 1892 she set out again with that thought in mind, but this time travelling eastwards, around Africa, via India and China. This eastwards journey took her a year but she accomplished her desire. Here is her story of visiting Cape Colony.

Page 103

1892, AUGUST 19th Friday

Got up at 6, had breakfast and started at 7-40 from Queen's Road Station with Ida to Fenchurch Street and on to Blackwall. Walked across to the "Doune Castle" and was on board at 8-50. Ida and I looked over the boat and were horrified at the smallness of the cabins and the Dining Saloon. Mr. Hawksley and Alice arrived just as the bell had rung for visitors to leave. He brought me a "Times" and Ida gave me a deck chair. Started at 10 a.m. At Gravesend we stopped for the Board of Trade Officers to inspect the ship. The 3rd class were inspected for fear of infectious cases. The sailors put on their cork jackets, got into the boats and were lowered to the water. The cannon were fired — the blue lights burned and various other amusing things. Took a fresh pilot on board and went on till three o'clock, then the fog was so dense we anchored till 5-30. Got to Flushing at about 3 a.m. A Mrs. Hervey from Port Elizabeth shares my cabin. We had the port open all night and about 2 a.m. heard yells and imprecations close to us! The engines were reversed and a general hullabaloo and then all was quiet again.

AUGUST 20th Saturday

Heard that in the night we got among a heap of fishing boats, not a light was visible till we were in the midst of them and then when it was almost too

Page 104

late they all lit up. Fortunately not much harm was done. A wet morning — did not go ashore — started again at 3 p.m. Mrs. and Miss Rosenblum and a friend came on. I sit at the Captain's table,

next to him, Mrs. Hervey opposite — the doctor at the end and the Chief Engineer next, the other officers sit at the other table. The pilot left us at 10 at Dover. Saw the lights very prettily along the coast; the green light by the Goodwin Sands and the Double Light by the South Foreland; sea wonderfully calm — no motion.

AUGUST 21st Sunday

Splendid day — no service — they never have any the first Sunday out. Sea as smooth as possible. Saw the French coast, the Channel Islands and the Casquet Rocks. Passed Ushant about 10 p.m. — brilliant flash light. Passed one of the Union boats in the evening and sent up blue rockets — she answered with six green and six red lights.

AUGUST 26th Friday

Reached Las Palmas about 5 a.m. The weather has been splendid and the sea very calm. Dressed and went on deck soon after 6 and waited for the doctor to arrive and inspect us. Went on shore with Mrs. Coyte and some 2nd Class passengers — took carriages and drove to the town — very sandy, dried-up looking place, white houses, flat roofs — very disappointed. Went into the Cathedral which is large and not specially interesting and into the market to buy some fruit. The Catalina Hotel is closed for the summer.

Page 105

Got back just before 12. Ship had finished coaling and soon started. Have a cabin to myself as two of the passengers left at Las Palmas.

AUGUST 27th Saturday

Splendid weather. The Officers all appeared in “Ducks” and we all had print dresses etc. Saw lots of flying fish. Had choir practice and concert in the evening.

AUGUST 28th Sunday

Captain read the service on the Poop Deck — very good service and singing. After lunch the Captain asked me to play our usual game at “Halma” with him and was furiously angry because two of the men were missing! He had left the board in my charge yesterday to have a game with the doctor! Went to the 2nd Class Saloon in the evening and heard some good singing.

AUGUST 30th Tuesday

Mr. Whitehead (Chief Officer) brought me the two Halma men which had been picked up on deck! and told me how exceedingly sorry he and all the officers were for the Captain's rudeness to me. I asked him to return the men to the Captain for me, as I did not wish anything more said about it. Engines had to stop for some time while a pump was repaired. Had a dance and concert on Poop

Deck, very good fun.

AUGUST 31st Wednesday

Hottest day was have had — a crane settled on the mast and seemed quite tired out — men

Page 106

climbed along and tried to catch it but failed and after a good rest it fled away. Had singing in the evening and a most ridiculous game at “Up Jenkins” — Mr. Dyer, Mr. Whitehead, Mr. Beatty, the Doctor, Mrs. Coyte, Miss Chesshire and myself. In the evening we had been watching the Quoit Tournament.

SEPTEMBER 1st Thursday

Crossed the line about 6 a.m. South East Trades began — much cooler. Had a dance in the evening — Captain very cross because he had not been consulted about it. Quoit tournament in the afternoon.

SEPTEMBER 2nd Friday

Watched the final for Quoit Tournament in the morning. In the afternoon at 2 the Sports began — splendidly arranged. High Jump (5 feet) Mr. Turner and the doctor; Long Jump (16 feet) Mr. Turner and Herr Bockriss; Sack Races, Potato Races etc.; Chalking the Pig’s Eye, Egg and Spoon Races etc. for ladies. Mrs. Coyte, Miss Chesshire and myself had tea in the doctor’s cabin.

SEPTEMBER 3rd Saturday

Mr. Dyer and I, then the doctor and I had Potato Races in the morning. At 2 o’clock the Sports recommenced and lasted till 5 p.m. The Tug of War, to end with was splendid — the officers beating a strong picked team of passengers — eight of each. Ladies had some more races and Threading the Needle — Mr. Wilkinson threaded mine. The men had a fearful “Obstacle race” — to turn over a high rope, jump through life belts and barrels. Crawl under heavy rope netting while the hose was being played on them,

Page 107

creep through netting, then crawl through windsails with red ochre and flour inside etc., a horrible ordeal! The ship’s boy won — Mr. Turner was second. “Putting the Weight”, the doctor won. Had tea in Mr. Beatty’s cabin (same party as yesterday) — choir practice and dance in the evening.

SEPTEMBER 4th Sunday

Service in the Saloon. Reached St. Helena at 7 p.m, too dark and wet to go ashore; bought some

photos and hand-work off the Natives. Left at 10-30. Mr. Turner brought me a lovely bouquet of flowers.

SEPTEMBER 5th Monday

Took to warm clothes again — quite chilly — hot weather only lasted a week. Sea quite rough and ship pitching a good deal.

SEPTEMBER 7th Wednesday

Out of the Tropics at noon — weather yesterday and to-day rolling and raining — dined with the officers at their table.

SEPTEMBER 11th Sunday Reached Cape Town about 12 noon — pouring with rain — has been rainy, cold and rather rough since the 5th. Had to anchor outside, the Dock was full. Captain Penfold and a doctor came alongside and were most particular about our health as the Cholera is so bad in Hamburgh. Dined with the officers at their table.

SEPTEMBER 12th Monday

Came alongside the dock at 8 a.m. A glorious morning — Table mountain and all the others (the

Page 108

Lion's Head, Signal Hill, the Devil's Peak etc.) were quite clear. Left the boat at 10-30 and drove to the International Hotel. The doctor and the Chief saw me into a carriage and my luggage all right. Captain Brooke Smith came on board just after I left. I called at his office after taking my room at the International, and he went with me to the "Castle" Office and arranged for me to go on the "Venice" to Knyana. Then we went over the Parliament Buildings which are very handsome, the Cathedral (very plain, like a dissenting chapel in old days), the Free Library, Museum, Law Courts, etc. I did some shopping and went again to the Castle Office to report the Captain's rudeness; I could not mention it while Captain Brooke Smith was with me. They did not seem greatly astonished, but expressed great regret etc. (I have since heard the Captain is much disliked in Cape Town). At 6-30 Mr. Whitehead, Mr. Wilkinson, Mr. Beatty, the doctor, Mrs. Coyte and Miss Chesshire dined with me — Mr. Dyer could not come as he had to mind the ship. Had a very merry dinner and wonderful speeches, and afterwards played "Animal Grab", "Up Jenkins" etc. and had some singing.

SEPTEMBER 13th Tuesday

Wrote letters. Took parcel to Mrs. Melville Smith, the Hardings' cousin. Called on Mrs. Hoole, found the doctor there. Then to the "Doune Castle" to afternoon tea at 4 with the officers (special invitation). Stayed till 5-30, had great fun. They gave me a lovely

Page 109

silver napkin ring, as they said it had been the jolliest voyage they had had for a long time and it had "all been my fault"! Very sorry to say goodbye to them all and to the ship for it is the cleanest, most beautifully kept and the steadiest I have ever been on. Had tea with Mrs. Melville Smith, then to the Hospital at 8 to call on Mrs. Parson — she had called on me while I was out. Her husband is doctor at the hospital — both very pleasant — asked me to lunch there on Thursday at 1.

SEPTEMBER 14th Wednesday

Went by train to Muizenberg and spent the day with the Brooke Smiths — scrambled about the mountains and gathered lovely flowers, went to Kalk Bay, got back to hotel at 10 p.m. Mrs. Brooke Smith is charming and the children very nice, especially "Mousey". They have a small house (but very pretty) close to the station, a verandah in front, the door opens straight into the dining room, no hall, a bedroom opens out of the dining room one side and the sitting room the other.

SEPTEMBER 15th Thursday

Walked through pine woods at back of hotel. Went to lunch with Mrs. Parson at 1. Afterwards she took me in a Cape Cart for a splendid drive round the mountain. We went first by train to Wynberg and took the Cart from there. Passed Constantia where the wine is made, by Howt's Bay and home by Sea Point. The views

Page 110

were magnificent — a white cloud just like a table cloth hanging over the mountain. Stayed tea with Mrs. Parson.

SEPTEMBER 16th Friday

Went by 9-35 train to Wynberg. Met Mrs. Brooke Smith and three children. Drove in a Cape Cart to Howt's Bay. Had lunch at the hotel and then a good walk over the hills and by the sea. Got back to the station at 4-30. Lovely day and glorious expedition — the flowers were beautiful — many different kinds of heaths, proteas, geraniums, azaleas, gladioli, freezias, arum lilies (pig lilies) and many brilliant flowers, names unknown.

SEPTEMBER 17th Saturday

Went up Signal Hill — lovely view. Furious South Easter in the afternoon — rain in the morning till 10 o'clock.

SEPTEMBER 18th Sunday

Cathedral in the morning, music very good. Hospital in the afternoon, went round the wards with

Mrs. Parson. The Children's Ward beautifully decorated with paintings done by Lady Loch and other ladies in Cape Town — the prettiest and nicest children's ward I have ever been in. Introduced to Miss Ball (H.W's. fiancée — not much charmed!) Spent a delightful evening with Mrs. Hoole and her two daughters.

SEPTEMBER 19th Monday

Left International Hotel at 11. Have been very comfortable there — Mrs. O'Callagan is very attentive and nice. Drove to the "Venice" with my luggage

Page 111

and put it on board. Have the whole of the ladies' cabin to myself (room for eight berths!) Went to the hospital and wished Dr. Parson good-bye, then to Mrs. Smith's to lunch — Mr. Fuhr (Civil Engineer, friend of the Tyndalls) came in, a very pleasant amusing fellow (Irish) — Going to start a "Switchback" to make his fortune while waiting for some Government work. Mr. Chignell has some work at Salt River so I did not see him. Nina Ball came in and we had a good talk about the "Doune Castle". She is a bright little thing, but not much in her. Mrs. Smith and Mr. Fuhr went with me to the "Venice". Mr. Thwaites (Resident Engineer) and his daughter are the only other passengers. Captain Wallace, Mr. Butterwick (Chief), Mr. Owen, 2nd, (to whom Mr. Whitehead had introduced me on the "Doune") were all very nice and interesting. Started at 5 p.m. Lovely views of the town and the coast going out. Saw the "Twelve Apostles", the Little Lion's Head, Blueberg and Tigerberg mountains with snow on, the other side of the harbour — very white sand all along the coast.

SEPTEMBER 21st Wednesday

Reached Mossel Bay at 1 a.m. Got up at 6, breakfast at 7, then Captain Wallace, Mr. and Miss Thwaites and myself went ashore in a boat. Had a telegram from Bob to say I must go on by the "Venice" as the roads to Knysna are impassible from the rains. Had a lovely

Page 112

walk along Mossel Bay — very clean, nice place. Met Miss Chesshire! and two Miss Halls (cousins of Mr. Whitehead). Left Mossel Bay at 10, reached Knysna at 4-30 and went alongside the Jetty. Had a very calm pleasant passage from Cape Town — was very comfortable on the "Venice" and sorry to leave her. Robert was on the Jetty waiting for me and looked better than I expected — not much altered but of course older and greyer. He was very much overcome at seeing me again. The Officers kindly helped to have my luggage got out of the Hold quickly and had it passed by the Custom House Officer without opening! Robert and I walked off and left the luggage to be put on his waggon which with a "span" of eight donkeys was waiting. Had a grand walk of three miles over the hills (the road is six miles). The flowers were splendid — masses of

them, some (like cinerarias) as tall as I am. At the top of a hill where we could see the house Bob gave a call and children who were on the look-out came to meet us. Beattie, the eldest girl, is very plain, then come two nice bright looking lads and two very fair haired little girls, the youngest boy (a baby) met us at the door with his mother. The house is very superior to what I expected, quite a substantial stone house, one storey high — there are five bedrooms, a sewing room, dining room, sitting room, and kitchen — outside is a sort of back kitchen

Page 113

and a capital bath room — then outside the Kraal is a workshop with lathe, bench etc. — inside the Kraal are fowl houses, pig-styes, donkey sheds etc. The walls of the house inside are papered, no carpets but plenty of skins on the floors. The only fireplaces are in the kitchen and dining room. Bob did most of the woodwork in the house with the help of a carpenter. Made the bedsteads, presses, toilet tables and washstands etc. No chests of drawers. Only one iron bedstead in my room, with delightful spring mattress. The beds, bolsters and pillows are stuffed with cocoanut fibre. Bob made the dresser and shelves for kitchen. A very nice Black servant (Hottentot) and a Black man (Fingoe) and boy (Kaffir) who sleep in the kitchen. Robert's house is rated at £400 and it took about that to build it. He has to pay £6 a year for rates, and gets no benefit, not even a road to his house. He has about 50 acres of land — 25 are cultivated now, the rest is all "sour veldt" and bush. It takes five years to get the land good, and requires a good deal of manure which is difficult to get. A man near here has just bought eight acres of "sour veldt" for which he had to give £64 (£8 an acre). This season has been the wettest and worst for the crops since Robert came out. There has been nearly five months of rain, and he has planted his crops twice. The weather is still very cold. There is never snow here, and only once have they had ice and that was last

Page 114

winter and was very thin. In the hot weather, the nights are generally cool. There is not much twilight. The longest day is from 5 a.m. to 7 p.m. and the shortest from 7 a.m. till 5 p.m. The "Berg wind" is very hot and withers everything up. No potatoes to be got anywhere this season, all spoilt with the wet. The coffee here almost the best I ever tasted, they roast it themselves. Tea is about 2/- a pound, meat 6d a pound, potatoes 32/6d a bag (used to be 5/6d), flour 22/6d per hundred pounds. The entrance from the sea to Knysna is very beautiful, through some rocks called "The Heads". The passage is about 200 feet wide and the rocks look as if torn apart. There is rather a difficult bar to cross and through this opening the tide runs into a basin about eight miles long and from one to three broad. All round the harbour are hills and mountains in the distance. Many say the scenery round Knysna is the most beautiful in South Africa. The working people are Hottentots, Fingoes and Kaffirs — no one is allowed to have more than two Kaffirs at a time working on his place without registering them and paying £1 per head. Till two years ago no Kaffir might go

into Knysna without a permit from his master. All kinds of fruit trees grow in the garden — bananas, peach, apricot, pear, quince, pomegranates, guavas, loquats, grandillas and strawberries. There are numbers of wild animals in the Bush,

Page 115

which come and devour the crops terribly — baboons (these are sometimes seen on the donkeys, picking off the bush tics which are a fearful plague and sometimes kill the little donkeys, getting in their woolly coats), porcupines (Robert had to make a deep ditch round his land to stop the porcupines coming in), snakes, puff adders, huge centipedes, scorpions, tiger cats and leopards. Robert has to set a “tiger trap” by his garden — it is a huge affair and takes three men to set it, the spring is so very strong. Locusts are very troublesome; bush bucks and spring boks are plentiful and pretty. There are a great many large birds — hawks and black crows with white necks, yellow creole, blue sugar birds, butcher birds (rather like a bullfinch), small birds with very long tails. Large black beetles like the Egyptian ones — they make large balls of manure and roll along — most curious to watch them making them, three or four at work at the same; when it is finished they roll it off, standing on their heads and pushing it over with their hind legs; when anything stops it rolling they hurry round and remove the impediment. Ants’ nests on the tops of bushes made of mud worked up like stiff brown paper. The wild flowers are lovely — gocom (the Hottentot fig) a misembryanthemum, very fine, three colours, red white yellow, proteas in great variety, heaths, many kinds, michaelmas daisies very fine and tall. Nearest railway at Prince Arthur 250 miles

Page 116

off. Takes more than a week to get an answer to a letter to Cape Town. The women take the clothes down to the stream and wash them on a board rubbing them with soap and a “mealy cob”. Bees do very well here and never have to be fed. They have a large box, the door at the end is locked as the Hottentots are such thieves. When honey is wanted they burn some rag which drives the bees to one end, then open the door and cut out as much comb as is wanted. It does not disturb the bees, they never forsake the hive. The man’s arm was covered with bees while he was doing this but he was not stung, neither were we though they were flying all about us. The honey is very delicious from so many flowers. Some of the fruit is ripe now (1st October) the grandilla-sare delicious, you cut the top off and eat the contents with a spoon, like eating an egg. The grandilla plant and flower are almost exactly like a Passion flower; guavas are also ripe and some blackberries. There is a curious sort of Festival here called “Nacht Mahl”, four times a year the Dutch people come into Knysna for the celebration of the Lord’s Supper on Sunday evening — they come in on the Saturday bringing with them cattle, sheep etc. which are sold for the benefit of the Church & Clergymen. It is invariably wet each time! — The rules in the Colony are very strict about the keeping of rabbits. No one may keep them without giving notice to the magis-

trates, who send Inspectors

Page 117

to see that the pens are secure and the rabbits cannot escape ; notice must be sent of the number of young rabbits and when any die or are killed. Robert has a small cemetery on the place — four of the coloured people have died since he has been here — the clergy refused to bury them as they had not been baptised so Bob gave them the ground, their own people read a service and Bob followed too.

OCTOBER 1st Saturday

The weather has been beautifully fine, but quite cold in the evenings. Percy, Charlie and I walked to see the new bridge they are building over the Knysna, back by Tohills over the Kaffir Pass on to the Goonah Road and home.

OCTOBER 2nd Sunday

Poured with rain all day. Some cattle broke into Robert's garden. They are turned loose on the Veldt when the grass is very poor and are always breaking in. Sent them to the Pound in Knysna. They sometimes get in in the night and spoil all his crops and trees.

OCTOBER 3rd Monday

Charlie and I set off at 7-30 and walked into Knysna to meet Mr. Hjalma Thesen who had promised to take us with him to his Saw Mills by the Big Forest at Bracken Hill. He had a Cage Cart and two horses which went at a good rate. The road was dreadful and we had to hold on, not to be jumped right out of the cart! Passed "Old Place" which used to belong to "George Rex" son of

Page 118

George 3rd or 4th. He was sent out here and most of Knysna given to him. He married a coloured woman and had several sons and daughters. One daughter married Mr. Duthy, she is dead but has left a family. Only one son "George Rex" is living now. He is married and has daughters but no son. When the Duke of Edinburgh was here, he was about with him all the time and the Duke gave him a handsome gold watch and chain. He is living at quite a small place now and has got out of most of his property. There are several members of good old English families living near Knysna but none doing any good, - The Hon: John Barrington — son of the Newdgates. We passed the part of the forest where the Duke shot an elephant. When we reached the forest Mr. Thesen got a woodcutter to go with us as we might easily lose our way — Mr. Hare went too. The forest is about 20 miles across and about 200 miles in length — there are endless slip paths and tracks all looking just alike where they bring the wood down. Elephants, tigers and many wild

animals still live in the forest but we neither saw nor heard any. The ferns were glorious, especially the creeping and climbing ones and the tree ferns and those with the young fronds a bright red. Had lunch at Captain Thesens, then went to the Saw Mills and saw some of the different kinds of wood — yellow wood, iron wood, stink wood etc. On the way home we met several waggons

Page 119

and spans of oxen (18 in a span) going up country. Mr. Thesen and three other fellows went to the diamond fields with just such a waggon — four people can sleep in one and the coloured people sleep underneath.

OCTOBER 7th Friday

Very wet and stormy since our expedition. Charlie and I set out to go to Knysna but the river was so full we could not cross. Often in the rainy season Robert says it is a week or two before he can get into Knysna either on horseback or in a waggon! Only get letters here once a week and for those you have to walk to Knysna! Mr. Aiken from the “Venice” came up and brought me a parcel from Cape Town — our only visitor since he and Mr. Owen came the day after I arrived!

OCTOBER 18th Tuesday

Have been for some good walks in the Bush etc. and been busy photographing. Started this morning at 7-30 with Bob, his wife, Beattie, and the two boys to walk to Goonah (a settlement of Italians) about ten miles off over the hills — glorious day and a grand walk — through magnificent “Kloof”, through bush and forest. Passed a place where a leopard was basking in the sun a short time ago. He had been taking things from the farms, was seen at last and hunted. Flowers and ferns glorious and the birds — mountains a lovely blue colour. Went to some of the Italian’s houses — wonderfully industrious hard-working people, got their ground nicely worked and planted. Men work at the wood-

Page 120

sawing etc. Met several spans of oxen with loads of timber going to Knysna. The road is so narrow and dangerous (high rock one side and deep precipitous gorges the other) that certain days are fixed for waggons going up or down (three days a week they go up, the other three down.) Goonah is close to the big forest. Walked back to a lovely shady spot by the river and sat down to have our lunch. The boys heard baboons and presently on the rocks and up the trees just opposite to us we saw six watching us with the greatest interest. They moved about a little but did not go away, and when we were gone would come to inspect the place where we sat and find out what we had been after! Saw several snakes and masses of “Jills” a sort of locusts, killed as many as we could — they are so fearfully destructive. Watched some beetles for a long time

rolling their ball and making a hole to bury it — a pioneer beetle goes first along the road to remove any obstruction! Heard that an Englishman was nearly murdered by a Kaffir on Saturday night, about a quarter of an hour from here by Concordia. He was found in the road nearly dead and taken down to Knysna. Mr. MacFarlane sent me a stone arrow head and a stone spear head found close to this place in a sand hill where the Bush men used to make their implements.

OCTOBER 27th Thursday

Went to Belvidere across the water in a sort of ferry boat; very pretty the other side;

Page 121

much more cultivated looking. A pretty little Church where some of the Duthies and Berringtons are buried. Went up a lovely avenue of oaks to Mr. Archie Duthie's house, he and his brother John came to meet us and show us the ostriches. They have a great number of birds all wild on the hills and never feed them. They only feed a few near the house that have nests and young ones; had a hatch of sixteen yesterday. The young birds looked like hedgehogs but with pretty brown striped heads. The old birds have tremendously long necks and small heads with large eyes — they look very funny when they are angry with each other and rush with their beaks wide open — have very curious feet, only two toes. A nest was found the other day with forty eggs in! several of the hens had laid in the same nest (which is only a hole scratched in the sand). Both birds take turns in sitting; the hen sits from 9 a.m. till 4 p.m., then the cock bird goes on and Mr. Duthie says you might set your watch by them they keep time so exactly. Mr. Duthie has been Colonel in several of the Native wars and was very interesting to talk to. He was dressed in cord trousers, a belt and coloured shirt, like every one on the farm here. He owns an immense quantity of land and has a very pretty place but is poor. Did not see his wife; she was a Miss Roberts, daughter of Mr. Roberts, a solicitor in Stourbridge. His brother John lives on a place adjoining; we saw him too, but he did not seem so nice.

Page 122

OCTOBER 29th Saturday

Walked to Knysna, and on the way back stopped at the top of the hill and and hunted about among the deep sand where the Bushmen's "Factory" used to be hundreds of years ago, to find "arrow heads" and were rewarded with some good ones. Arranged with Thesen (agent for the Castle Boats) to put my luggage on the "Venice" next Wednesday. I am to go to Mossel Bay in the Post Cart on the 8th to join the "Methven Castle". Killed a big snake in the garden more than 3 feet long. Have seen water snakes, garter snakes, night adders, puff adders, boom slangs (tree snakes) and aspicks.

NOVEMBER 3rd Thursday

Walked to Concordia to see the Government Plantation.

NOVEMBER 6th Sunday

George Rex came up to dinner and stayed till nearly 7. A most interesting man and a capital talker, well educated and very pleasant. Sat in the garden after dinner and he told us grand tales of the old days of Knysna, elephant hunting etc. I photographed him in two positions.

NOVEMBER 7th Monday

Started off soon after 6 p.m. with Bob, his wife and the two boys. Yhurt carried my bag. Went first to the Rex's and gave George Rex two copies of his photo I had printed and mounted with which he was very pleased. His wife was pleasant but not very interesting. Then to Comtons to order my table; made of Knysna Woods to the Post Office for letters; then to Youngs to see the

Page 123

luggage was all right for the Cart; then to Mr. McFarlane's where we stayed till 11-30 then walked to Youngs and waited for the Cart. It came at 1 a.m. Bob and his wife wished me good-bye and off I set. The children had gone home with Yhurt early. It was a glorious moonlight night and the scenery lovely. We had good horses, no particular springs to the cart, a pair of horses and a disselboom (pole) though only a two wheeled cart! The bumping and banging were fearful. Got across the drift all right. The reason we started at 1 was to cross at low water as the spring tides have washed away part of the Causeway and it was not safe. Reached Balmoral about 3-30 a.m. No one up. At last a boy came and showed me to a room. I asked if I could have some coffee (I was so cold) but alas! no — so off I went to bed and was soon fast asleep. I had breakfast and started again at 8-15. Reached George at 4. The scenery was splendid up and down, sometimes through parts of the forest through deep kloofs, across rivers, and over wild veldt. We had splendid horses, changed three times but did not stop at any place except to change and to take and leave letters. I got delicious milk at two Dutch farms — the first fresh milk I have had since I left England! The driver was very amusing, a coloured man — he has driven the Post for twelve years and knows everyone at Knysna and

Page 124

along the road. He was very much puzzled I was not married! and said "But you nice lady, why you no marry!" George is a pretty village and there is a nice hotel. I had an hour to wait, so while dinner was preparing I went to the "George and Knysna" Office to get a paper, but was told it would not be published till 9 o'clock. However I told the Proprietor I much wanted to see the piece about "George Rex" that Mr. Young had sent, so he very good-naturedly had a slip printed and brought it to me at the hotel, refusing to be paid, declaring it had been a pleasure! From George

we had a covered Post cart rather like a small baker's! All of them are two-wheeled and have a disselboom, not shafts, for the horses. It is a mystery how they balance, but they seem all right. We left at 5, a young German going with me. We had splendid horses and lovely scenery as long as we could see. Just as it was getting dusk we changed horses. They were young and fresh and before the man had proper hold of the reins they bolted! the jolting and banging was fearful, something to remember, and if we had met oxen we must have had a smash, but fortunately the road was clear and at the next hill the horses were pulled up. The German held on to me and I to the cart all the time! He said with astonishment "you are not nervous!" Crossing the rivers was pretty

Page 125

bad. Twice in the dark we ran into spans of oxen, it was a wonder the horses were not stuck with their horns. Of course there are no lights, the oxen go along so quietly, and the transport riders are careless in the dark and often have no leader and eighteen oxen take time to move out of the way. When it got dark it was very pretty to see the waggons drawn up on the Veldt, the oxen out-spanned, huge camp fires burning, and the men grouped round, cooking and talking — sometimes two or three waggons were there together. Reached Mossel Bay about 9-30 after a glorious drive of very nearly 100 miles. Went to the Standard Hotel — very comfortable. I am the only visitor there except a Dutch gentleman who will talk English to me and I can't understand one word! He takes sugar in his coffee in an original way — puts a lump in his mouth and drinks the coffee through it!

NOVEMBER 9th Wednesday

Called on the Misses Hall. They took me for a lovely walk in the afternoon — scrambling over rocks and down a deep Kloof.

NOVEMBER 10th Thursday

Went for another lovely walk with the Misses Hall and round by St. Blaize's Point and saw the profile of the face in the rock. Had lunch with them and went for a drive in the afternoon to Brak River.

NOVEMBER 11th Friday

The "Methven Castle" arrived at 10 a.m. Wished Mr. and Mrs. Hall good-bye — the two girls

Page 126

came on board with me and Mr. Pearson the Custom House Officer. Did not much like the look of the ship — she is not nearly so nice as the "Doune". Have a very nice cabin — left at 2-30.

NOVEMBER 12th Saturday

Reached Algoa Bay at 8 a.m. Disappointed with the look of it, so very bare and sandy. Had a very rough passage from Mossel Bay — ship rolled terribly. The Captain says he was pitched out of his bunk three times so he spent the rest of the night on the bridge. The 2nd Officer (Mr. Lowcay) spoke to me; he said Mr. Beattie had written to ask him to help me about my journey. The Captain also had a chat and said Mr. McFarlane from the Cape Town Office told him to see after me. I am the only passenger left — the others got off to-day. Lovely day, but windy. The “Dunottar” and “Pembroke Castle” in. No bells or electric light on the ship; candle lamps in the cabins. My cabin a large one leading out of saloon. Nice little upper deck.

NOVEMBER 14th Monday

Went on shore at Port Elizabeth. Very windy, sand blowing most disagreeably. Went to Lennons and got some stamps. To the Post Office and heard that the Postmaster at Knysna was quite wrong in declining to re-direct my letters to India free of charge so wrote to the Postmaster General at Cape Town about it. Went to Jacobs, a stamp collector. Walked up to the Park —

Page 127

every bit of the ground has been carried up there to make the park. Nice place for birds — crowds of nests, hanging from the trees — bright gold birds. Called at British India Office about a boat from Mauritius but they know nothing. Port Elizabeth is built on a sloping hill, rather steep up from the Market Square to the Park. It extends a long way along the shore — some good buildings. Lots of shipping in the bay. Left in the evening at 6 p.m.

NOVEMBER 16th Wednesday

Reached East London at 7 a.m. Got on deck just too late for the Launch so could not go ashore. Much prettier shore than Algoa Bay — Tower each side the Buffalo river. Sand silts up so badly, dredgers have to be constantly at work to keep the mouth of the river open — very nice green banks and woods. Passengers have to be put off in baskets, it is too rough for them to go down the Companion. Fished most of the morning — we caught six small sharks about 3 feet long — lovely day — ten passengers came on for Natal.

NOVEMBER 18th Friday

Reached Durban at 2 a.m. Went on shore with the Captain at 10. The Launch came alongside one of the Lighters. We got into a basket and were let down on to the Lighter, then had to jump from there to the Launch, both boats bobbing up and down fearfully, but coming back was worse, I had to stand on the rail of the little Tug and then at a safe moment jump from there to the

Page 128

Lighter. Went in the tram to the "Berea" the swell part of Durban, and had a good walk. The gardens are lovely, such beautiful shrubs — poinsettias, scarlet Hibiscus, borders of Euphorbia, bonganvilleas etc. Came back with Captain at 4. Had a Zulu war dance in the evening — about thirty Zulus came on. The Chief wore a huge bunch of feathers in his hair said to be a present from the wife he had just taken, others had snuff boxes in their ears, snuff spoons and scrapers in their hair, necklaces, bracelets etc. and a short apron of sacking. They had been working cargo all day but were not at all tired and danced with great vigour, sang, yelled, whistled in a queer way between their teeth and waved their arms about in a wonderful way. One man acted as sort of conductor. They stamped and jumped on the deck with such force there seemed danger of smashing it in! They are a most good-tempered happy set of men.

NOVEMBER 19th Saturday

Went on shore with the Captain and Doctor. Doctor and I went shopping and then to the Botanical Gardens which are very beautiful and interesting — saw splendid butterflies. Saw numbers of Zulu cattle drawing carts, their horns grow straight up, making them look astonished. Have to get off the steamer in a basket, here and at East London, the sea is too rough for it to be safe any other way. It is very comfortable, has seats inside

Page 129

and a door to fasten — you are hauled up by the winch, put over the boat and then lowered. Coming back over the bar it was tremendously rough — the doctor began to look very bad and could not have stood much more. Fished in the evening and caught some mullet.

NOVEMBER 20th Sunday

Rained in the night — glorious day. "Hawarden Castle" came in about 10 a.m. We had been waiting for her as she had a passenger on board for "Mauritius" — Miss Handley, going as governess to Mr. Ireland's (Castle Agent) children. A Miss Dumat came on too but was so sick crossing the Bar she retired at once to her cabin. Left Durban at 4 p.m. on Hawarden Castle for Mauritius. Had a terrific thunderstorm in the evening. We had seen the lightning over Durban before we left and thought we should run out of it. The whole sky was in a blaze and the lightning played beautifully about the masts of the ship. There seemed rivers of forked lightning and the thunder was awful. About 9-30 two fearful crashes came, the wind got very high and the rain came down in torrents. The doctor reminds me of Mr. Evans, West Bromwich.

NOVEMBER 25th Friday

Weather has been lovely. Passed Cape St. Mary at 1 a.m., kept along the coast all day, shore line very low, then thickly wooded and mountains at the back; sometimes three sets, one behind the

other, some very high with round tops — very few houses. Rained in the night and

Page 130

again in the evening — very warm and muggy.

Madagascar

NOVEMBER 26th Saturday

Reached Tamatave at 8-30 a.m. — lovely morning, very hot. Looks a pretty place from the steamer — low shore, houses with red roofs, native town all grey mud huts, tall cocoanut palms. Narrow entrance between two large coral reefs — remains of two wrecks on them. Went on shore at 9-30 with Miss Handley — the road was all thick sand, over your boots — heat intense and the sand seemed to scorch your feet. Beautiful trees and shrubs in flower — pines, mangoes, lychee nuts (delicious) and quantities of cocoanuts on the palms. Did some shopping; bought lace and silk things; went to the Post Office and Bank for French money and to Castle Office. The Agent was very kind, made us stay in a delightful airy cool room till the places re-opened (they close from 11 to 1) and regaled us with fruit, lemonade etc. At 1 we had two Filanganas (the native carriage, sort of Hansom with four natives to carry it) and went round the native town. Houses, tiny grey places, made of bamboo and mud with roofs of palm leaves shredded and thatched. Went through the market and bazaars, very narrow and smelly. Natives intelligent looking — copper colour, very scanty clothing, sometimes a garment with holes from neck and arms and a sheet twisted quite gracefully round, called a “Lamba”. Left at 3-30 and reached the steamer just as a furious thunderstorm began, lasted till so late they could not finish

Page 131

unloading the steamer. I enquired on shore about going up to the Capital (Antananarivo) but it is too late in the season now. The rains have commenced and it makes the roads so slippery, the travelling is dangerous as well as disagreeable. Everyone is up at Antananarivo now as it is the grand yearly Feast. The queen takes a bath once a year and everyone goes to see her! The best time to go up is in October — you have to take sixteen men, to sets of four to carry you and two sets to carry luggage. Each man has fourteen shillings for the journey (it costs about £10 up and £10 down). The journey takes six or seven days. Have to take bed, bath and provisions. Stop at native huts in the villages on the way — carried in Filanganas, a very lovely and interesting journey. Antananarivo is quite civilised, there are granite houses, the Palace is built of granite. The Hovas are a very nice people. The oxen have a large hump on the shoulder.

NOVEMBER 27th Sunday

Started at 9-30 a.m. — two more passengers — glorious day.

NOVEMBER 29th Tuesday

Reached Mauritius at 5 a.m. Doctor came alongside at 8 but as we had some cargo on board from Hamburg they would not give us Pratique till they had consulted the Governor. At 1 they returned we were all mustered on deck and passed, then the steamer was allowed to go into harbour. The anchor was lifted but the engines

Page 132

refused to move and the ship swung slowly round! only just escaping the B.I. boat "Vadala". The engines soon got right and we went in. The other passengers went ashore but I stayed on board. The ship was not made fast till 6 p.m. Very pretty harbour — high rugged mountains all round at the back of the town. Remains of boats that went ashore in the cyclone last April.

NOVEMBER 30th Wednesday

Lovely day — very hot. Captain took me ashore at 10-30. Went to British India Office. "Vadala" leaves on 17th, but only goes to Colombo. A smaller boat, the "Megna", goes on the 10th to Bombay but there is no accommodation for passengers. Went to Castle Office, saw Mr. Ireland, a very pleasant man — then to Post Office. Town hot, dusty, smelly and uninteresting. Captain and I returned to the steamer, packed-up and left at 3. Captain came with me, got my things through the Customs without opening, and went to the station to see me off by train to Curepipe, the most healthy part of the island and the only decent hotel. Captain Rendall has been extremely kind the whole time — a very gentlemanly and pleasant man to travel with. Mr. Hayward (the 3rd Officer) was very nice and Mr. Lowcay (the 2nd). Lovely railway journey of one and a half hours to Curepipe, up a steep gradient the whole way. Very extortionate boys at

Page 133

the station, - a gentleman kindly came to my rescue, told me only to give them ten cents each and for the carriage fifty cents. Drove to Wilkinsons' hotel, quite a large place — the only lady at dinner, about ten gentlemen.

DECEMBER 1st Thursday

Funny bath room, no fastening inside, woman locked me in and I had to thump to get out. Beds very high, no vallances, all the bedroom doors are open, reminds me fearfully of German pictures. A Mr. Anderson (professor at the College) rather pleasant, told me of a nice walk. Called on Madam Humbert and left the letter and money her brother had asked me to bring her. Did not much care for her. Went for a good walk and had a fine view of the sea and mountains the other side of island; mountains all very jagged tops; good roads, nice houses and gardens, beautiful bamboo hedges, fan palms (travellers' palms). In the evening walked to see the Crater "Tron aux Cerfs" — walked all round it and had a good view down, pool of water at the bottom, looks

swampy and unhealthy, not safe to go down as you get Mauritius fever. A man built a house down there, cultivated the land, but his wife and children soon got ill and died ; he brought them to the top, buried them and stayed up himself. The graves were just like those at Roberts — a pile of stones, no names, splendid white tall lilies growing by them. Beautiful views from the top all round. A Mr. Potts (an Engineer) shewed me interesting

Page 134

views of Mauritius after the cyclone, Java and Singapore. Curepipe 1840 feet above sea.

DECEMBER 2nd Friday

Went by train to Port Louis and boat to Methven Castle. Mr. Lowcay, Mr. Hayward and Doctor took me in one of their boats for a sail at 11. Just about 12 we were thinking of returning when something belonging to the sail gave way and down it fell. They tried to patch it up and then tried rowing but it was too large a boat. Then they tried to reach the Bell Buoy to make fast while they repaired the damage, but it was hopeless. At last, after many struggles we reached a small schooner and she held us while Mr. Lowcay and Mr. Hayward in turns swarmed to the top of the mast to get down the broken part and replace it. At last we got off and by dint of much "tacking" reached the "Methven" at 3-15. The Captain and Chief were getting anxious and had been watching us through their glasses. The Captain then went with me to the "Vadala" — she looks a nice boat, good cool saloon and capital cabins and decks. Captain Johnstone promised to see after me — looks "rough but kind". Captain Rendall took me to the station.

DECEMBER 3rd Saturday

Went by train to Souillac — got there about 10. The station master sent a boy with me to "Gris-gris" a pretty bay, with some splendid black

Page 135

rocks full of caves, the water dashes up among them and makes a wonderful noise. The water was beautifully clear and we saw numbers of blue fish, like soles, and pink ones swimming about. Picked lots of shells. Walked to the next bay and had a good scramble down the rocks. Suddenly it began to pour (a little before 1 o'clock), we rushed to some caves, but I was nearly wet through. Stayed till 2 when it cleared a bit and I walked back to Souillac — there it poured again. The station master kindly took me to his house, his wife got me some hot tea and I stayed till the train left at 3-20 — poured the whole way back. Station master is a Scotchman, has been seventeen years in Mauritius ; gave me a very interesting account of the cyclone. Saw some men spearing fish while we were in the caves. Lovely journey — enormous fields of sugar cane, sugar factories, the palm ferns etc. are beautiful — eighty-four in the shade, 151° in sun.

DECEMBER 4th Sunday

Poured all day.

DECEMBER 5th Monday

Went to Port Louis — met Captain Rendall and went on board the “Methven”. Captain and Doctor took me for a lovely sail — stayed the night on board.

DECEMBER 6th Tuesday

Captain took me ashore and I went by train to Pamplemonsses Gardens. They were the second best gardens in the world till the cyclone which has terribly

Page 136

damaged the tall palms — others are rapidly growing up and it will soon be very lovely again. The varieties of palm are most interesting — the “traveller palm” that collects water in the bark, the palm they tap to get “toddy”, Palmiste, used for salad, a whole tree is destroyed as you only eat the top! coconut palms etc. — cinnamon, allspice, India rubber trees etc. Two enormous tortoises, said to be a hundred years old, given by General Gordon and several smaller ones — one tortoise at the Fort was taken over with the island. The place where Paul and Virginie were not buried (the real place is close to the station and is all overgrown.) The gardens are of enormous extent — Mr. Scott (the manager) was unfortunately out, he is said to be very interesting to go round with. Beautiful views of the mountains along the railway — pass through huge cemeteries.

DECEMBER 7th Wednesday

Routed up at 7 with a telegram from Mr. Ireland to know if I expected Miss Handley to-day and would meet the 8-30 train. Wired back “Yes” and made fearful haste to dress, have my breakfast and get to station. Met Miss Dumat, Miss Handley arrived, came back to hotel, were calmly enjoying some pine when I found Miss Handley would prefer spending the day on the “Methven” to anything else. We had only just time to fly for the train! it was in but they saw us coming and kept it, so we jumped in without tickets. At Port Louis I was preparing to pay the usual

Page 137

fare, but they said we must pay double and be fined for riding without tickets! This I declined to do without seeing the Inspector and after I had explained the case he let us pass on by paying our fare! Met the Captain and went off to the ship; he and the doctor took us for a sail after lunch. We stayed for afternoon tea — Miss Handley had a good time with the officers and we left at 4-15. Mr. Du Boisse was at lunch too.

DECEMBER 8th Thursday

Went again to the “Methven” to get my luggage taken on board the “Vadala”. Had lunch and wished everyone good-bye. The Captain took me and my luggage to the “Vadala”, then on shore and through the market where he got me some lovely Harp shells, and then to the Office where I wished him good-bye, which I was very sorry to do, he has been so very kind. Went for a good walk round the devastated part of the town — the “Champs de Mars” is very pretty, large open grass place, the mountains quite close, but the houses still in terrible ruin all round. Showery day.

DECEMBER 9th Friday

Went by early train to Bean Bassin to spend the day at Mrs. Irelands — a very pretty place and Mrs. Ireland a charming woman. Rained all afternoon and stopped our going for a drive. Miss Handley a nice girl and Mrs. Ireland seems to like her.

Page 138

DECEMBER 10th Saturday

In the afternoon the Lieutenant-governor (Mr. Jerningham), two ladies and Mr. Hutson (his secretary) came to Curepipe to go to a concert — stayed the night at the hotel.

DECEMBER 11th Sunday

Went to Church — queer sermon about ladies swearing!

DECEMBER 13th Tuesday

Called on Mrs. Harington, the clergyman's wife, after hearing to-day she has called on me three times and each time been told I was gone! Found her pleasant and interesting. They were for some time at Seychelle and say they are very pretty islands but most uncivilised ; no conveyances at all, have to walk everywhere ; very rocky and hilly. The “Coco-de-Mer” grows there, the only place in the world ; it is an enormous fruit, takes a good polish, is very heavy at first but quite light with keeping.

DECEMBER 14th Wednesday

Mis[sic] Dumat came for me at 7 and took me to a Tea plantation (Mr. Corson's). The tea has a much larger leaf than the Japanese. The young shoots are gathered and spread in the sun to wither, then crushed in a sort of press, then sifted and the coarser part crushed and sifted again ; then put in baskets and covered over to ferment ; then dried over charcoal and afterwards put into large chests ; then sifted again, the small leaves and little bits of yellow (the fibre of the leaf) being worth much more

Page 139

and called "Orange Pekoe". It is all sorted out into various qualities. In making the tea "Tea tasters" are used — a small white china teapot and cup without handle. The tea is weighed — 3 grains! — put in the pot, filled with boiling water and a sand glass is turned immediately which runs for five minutes; then the teapot is turned, spout downwards into the cup, so that all the tea runs out. It is a Government plantation and is an experiment. Mr. Corson was a tea grower in Ceylon.

DECEMBER 15th Thursday

Went to Bean Bassin to wish Mrs. Ireland good-bye. She was ill in bed with fever. Miss Handley came in with her face covered with spots! They all feared she had something catching but the doctor said it was getting over-heated and then a chill. Called on Mrs. Wilson (wife of the Port Captain) who is in trouble just now, they are accusing him of demanding large sums for getting off ships that ran ashore in the Cyclone! She is ill too with fever! Went on to Port Louis to B.I. Office and to Castle Office to wish Mr. Ireland good-bye. Then back to Curepipe to dine at the Haringtons, and stay the night. Two of the Artillery soldiers came in to talk to Mr. and Mrs. Harington. They let any who like, come on Thursday evening to have a chat and some singing.

DECEMBER 16th Friday

Got up at 6. Had the usual tea and toast, then walked about the garden and talked to

Page 140

Mr. Harington who was busy gardening — then prayers and breakfast at 9. I left at 11-30 having very much enjoyed my visit. Mrs. Harington is sister of the Bishop Parker who died in Uganda — very interesting about their life in India and Seychelles. Gave me introductions to Colombo. Mauritius is a very pretty island and there are delightful walks and excursions. The trains are awkward, you have to stay so many hours at a place before you can return and often there is not much to do. There is no place where you can stay the night; if you miss your train you must walk on to a Sugar Factory, state your case, and ask them to take you in! The excursion up the "Ponce Mountain" is said to be very delightful and easy and lovely views over the island. The Tamarind Falls are very pretty, the water falling in seven leaps. The colour of the ground varies very much in different parts; in some places it is a deep bright red, in others yellow and almost white. In one place (a cutting) there were seven distinct streaks of colour — red, yellow, grey, black, white and between shades. The butterflies are lovely and some of the birds, one called the "Cardinal" is very bright red with a little black. The foliage everywhere is splendid, so luxuriant — caladiums are very plentiful and good, growing wild. Azalea and Camellia hedges and all sorts of stove plants and orchids out of doors. Instead

Page 141

of glass houses like ours, you find cool shady places to keep choice plants in! The nice houses have pillars for entrance gates but no gates! the drive and garden are quite open to the road — even the Botanical Gardens are the same. Birds called “Miners”, sort of starling, are very plentiful, they are protected by law because they destroy insects — have white on their wings. The sea at Mahebourg is very lovely, so clear and a deep blue — see the coral beautifully at the bottom and all sorts of coloured fish swimming amongst it. The seaweed is very pretty and many different colours. A coral island near Port Louis came up suddenly after a cyclone — went over there to pick bits of coral of which it is, of course, a mass. Mauritius was overrun with rats when the Dutch took it — they are still very plentiful. The highest peaks are Peterboth, 2,685 feet, the Ponce, 2,650, Signal Mount, 1,061, Piton de la Riviere Norri (Parasol Mountain) 2,711 feet high. There are no volcanoes now — the Tron aux Cerfs is an extinct one, very deep, diameter 1000 feet at top and only about 200 at the bottom — extinct hundreds of years. As we neared Mauritius birds called “M. Pilots” came to meet us; they have a long white feather in their tails — at one of the islands near, the feather is always red. Pines were very plentiful, $1\frac{1}{2}$ d each. Regiment of North Staffordshire stationed

Page 142

here. The soldiers all have the Staffordshire knot on their collars. It is also Mr. Jerningham's crest and means something about hanging two protestants with one cord. Trains have another set of carriages on the top like trams. A splendid tale was told me by Mr. Hutson (private Secretary to Mr. Jerningham). About two months ago there appeared one day at Curepipe Hotel a Dutch Admiral named Wilson: he had a grand uniform, sword etc. The Dutch Consul hearing of his arrival came to call on him. The Admiral expressed great astonishment “did not know there was a Dutch Consul at Mauritius”, asked his name, must see his papers etc. The Consul humbly went and fetched his papers which were graciously found correct. Then the Admiral wished an introduction to the Governor. The Consul wrote to Mr. Jerningham, who replied saying he should be glad to see the Admiral at Reduit and asking him to spend Sunday and stay the night as Monday was a holiday. The Admiral arrived, proved to be a very clever well educated man, talked French perfectly and was very entertaining. Some gentlemen were asked to meet him and he was taken about on Monday and the Governor was most kind and attentive. On Tuesday the Governor said he would drive him to Port Louis to see the Government buildings etc. there. The Admiral had explained to the Governor that he had been lately appointed, mentioned the name of his

Page 143

ship, which he said would arrive about the middle of December. That he was sent by the Dutch Government to see about starting a line of steamers to work between the Dutch settlement and

Mauritius. He had already been to Bourbon and Madagascar and been well received at both places. When the carriage was ready the Admiral appeared wearing huge blue goggles, explaining that in the town the light affected his eyes. As they drove through the town a Frenchman bowed to the Governor, stared hard at the Admiral, looked again at the Governor and made a face! Soon after they reached Government House, the Frenchman came to Mr. Hutson's room and asked him if the Governor knew who he was taking about! explaining that the Admiral was a man named Jansen who had been to Mauritius some years before swindling people and getting money off them. Mr. Hutson at once sent for the Governor to whom the man made the same statement. The Governor drove back with the Admiral to Reduit, told him what he had heard, adding that unless he could prove it was a fabrication, he must leave at once. The Admiral tried to brave it out, talked of the anger of the Dutch Government at the insult etc. etc. but could bring no proofs of his identity, so the Governor rang the bell, ordered the carriage, told the Admiral to pack at once and depart. When he reached Port Louis he was seized by order of a man he had swindled and put in prison. He was tried and released on payment of the money.

Page 144

(At Bourbon he had made love to a rich widow, got money off her and promised to return and marry her.) He then had the cheek to write to the Governor for money to pay for his passage from the Island but was referred to the Consul who gave him enough to pay what remained of his debt and for his deck passage to Colombo. His uniform was sold — Mr. Hutson bought the sword and epaulettes! There is of course no telegraph cable to Mauritius.

DECEMBER 17th Saturday

Left Curepipe at 8-38 — very thankful to leave the hotel — it had been very uncomfortable — Mrs. Wilkinson, the landlady, is not nice and things are very badly managed. Took my luggage straight on board the "Vadala" — unpacked and settled up my cabin before Tiffin. Ship left punctually at 4 p.m. Mr. Hutson and Captain Wilkinson R. A., a Mr. Edwards and two other passengers — no lady on board and no stewardess! Passed close to Flat Island, the Quarantine Station and some curious rocks. Sat next Captain Johnstone. "Vadala" goes about 10 knots an hour and burns about 26 tons of coal a day.

DECEMBER 22nd Thursday

Sea has been calm and weather not too hot. Have seen large shoals of flying fish — In the Doldrums today.

DECEMBER 23rd Friday

Rained heavily in the night — stormy and cooler all day — often rains a good deal here,

Page 145

crossing the Line.

DECEMBER 24th Saturday

Crossed the Line at 2 p.m. — sea as calm as if covered with oil — sky beautifully clear and dry looking — lovely sunsets, such heavy clouds and deep colour — thermometer 85 in the shade — flying fish and jelly fish. Mr. Boyd (Chief Engineer) took me to see the engines, good and beautifully kept — Quadruple Expansion. The ship is clean and airy but the cooking is not as good as the Castle Boats and the Baker not to compare to the one on the “Methven”. Captain Johnstone a wonderful man for inventions and experiments, very clever seaman but rough and any amount of “side”! Mr. Hoare (Chief) very pleasant. Tasted the betel nut the Arabs are so fond of chewing. They take a betel nut leaf, smear it over with some white grease, place on it some betel nut cut very fine, some aromatic seeds and some bark, fold it up into a neat parcel, put it in their mouths and chew. It was very nasty and stains your teeth and tongue deep red.

DECEMBER 25th Sunday (Christmas Day)

Glorious day — horizon perfectly clear all round and the sea so smooth it looked like a huge disc we were floating on and that when we came to the edge we should fall off. Saw the Pole star again for the first time, Orion getting more upright. Officers sang carols, told tales and asked riddles after dinner.

Page 146

Vadala swarms with tiny red ants — get into everything in your cabin.