

*Maurine Withers*

**The Diary of August Hecker**  
**Bandmaster of HMS *Royal Alfred* from 1870 to 1872**

Foreword

About three years ago I read August Hecker's diary for the first time. I have read it many times since, almost as a lover reads old love letters. But he died over 100 years ago, and I am over 70 now and it has been left to me to "piously gather up every word" of this "great soul" and to give to him some small portion of immortality. I seem to be the only one to carry out this rite. As I have gathered the clues about August Hecker as a person, I have often thought about the countless "great souls", the memories of whom are lost in the dust in which their bodies lie. So few of them have left diaries, or letters that have endured the perils of Time, or had relatives or peers who recorded the "trace of durable light" that shone from them during their lifetime. I am not a descendant, nor have I any blood relationship to his family, so he is not one of my roots. I believe I could be called a friend, a very late friend. More than a century late.

I met him quite by accident. My husband and I were asked to clear out the home of a nonagenarian friend of ours when she went to a nursing home. We had almost finished this dreary task when my husband discovered an old chest in the basement. It was filled with moth-eaten hats and hundreds of yellowed letters. With the trashman's truck outside, we were tempted to call him and ask him to carry away the chest and its contents, but my husband could not do this. He carefully packed the letters into cardboard boxes and put them into our car. It was at the bottom of the chest that he found three diaries and many small water-soiled notebooks. He put them into a plastic bag and tossed them into one of the boxes of letters which soon occupied a large part of our storeroom.

I didn't look at the boxes for more than six months, but when I did, I pulled out the diaries and notebooks first and began to read them. The

three diaries were those of August Hecker, his older brother Joseph (the father of our nonagenarian friend), and a J. Tavennor, who was a bandsman in August's band on the H.M.S. *Royal Alfred*. J. Tavennor's diary began on October 13, 1871, and ended November 9, 1872. Joseph's diary starts July 6, 1874 and ends July 24, 1876. August's begins September 23, 1870 and ends abruptly November 13, 1872.

J. Tavennor was disgusted and homesick throughout his diary. His service seemed one long agony; he does not mention August anywhere, nor does August write of him. Why, when they were not close friends or relatives, did their diaries lie next to the other in that old chest for about a century? I will never know the answer. August is not mentioned in Joseph's diary although, to be sure, August had died more than two years before Joseph's rather dull diary began.

It was August's warm and human diary that interested me most. This young man, who started his journal when he was barely 22 and ended it when he was three months beyond his twenty-fourth birthday, was, I felt, a charming, brilliant, and talented man. Obviously his first love was music. With his talent and exceptional training from childhood he had the utmost confidence as the Bandmaster of the *Royal Alfred*. He took over a "drunken" and undisciplined group of bandsmen and created a band that won acclaim at each port where the ship offered entertainment. He organized a dance band and a popular quintette and he wrote and arranged music for both. As a composer, he wrote at least thirty-two pieces for bands and orchestras (the list of these with their names and the dates are written in one of his notebooks).

The instruments he played, mentioned in the diary, were the violin, piano, viola and clarinette; his favourite, I believe, was the violin. He tuned pianos for colonists in Bermuda and the West Indies. He practiced with and seemed to enjoy playing with a small group of musicians in Halifax, a group organized by a Mr. Cogswell. In this group was a Mr. Creighton, the father of Emma whom August met on June 23, 1871, at a picnic he and three friends had "arranged." There is no indication that this meeting caused love at first sight. He saw Emma many times that summer and he describes their courting as "nice walks" they had together. However, in a water-soiled log he had kept for a brief period, I found his original recording about Emma. It reads: "November 3, 1871, Went to Mr. Creightons in the afternoon, had tea with them and went home late in the night very much in love with Emma." Then, the next day and the next, he spent his days with Emma. They had "nice walks" and on Sunday he went to church with her. He left her that Sunday night at half past eleven with "a heavy heart." In his diary he speaks of her let-

ters, or absence of them. They have a lover's quarrel during which August acted as an immature school boy. He has to explain his behavior to her exacting father. She became his "intended" and he planned to marry her.

The diary tells much about him. August loved life, friends, good times, and adventure. He enjoyed drinking and smoking. He preferred fine cigars, although he did, on occasion, smoke a pipe. He was very pleased with the acclaim and special favors received on shipboard and at the ports of call. He had none of the onerous jobs of a seaman, such as J. Tavnor describes with distaste in his diary. August had his own quarters and had the honored place at the Captain's table when his band or quintette entertained. These programs were usually followed by drinks in the Captain's quarters with other officers and guests.

The diary itself is a notebook that he covered with pictures of an animal and a bird. On the frontispiece he has written "August Hecker H.M.S. Royal Alfred, North America and Westindies". His records are well written, and there are few carry-overs from his native German language. He capitalizes most of the nouns and his spelling of places and names are not always the same. From my research I believe he left Germany when he was about seventeen; although he was without formal language training his English vocabulary and grammar are very good to have been learned in five years. My judgement of him is that he was a meticulous, energetic, intelligent, and disciplined young man, ready and willing to have a successful life.

What happened, then, to this young man, after November 13, 1872? Why did he stop writing in his diary on that date, after writing in it so faithfully for two years?

To find the answers to these questions, I decided to follow the course of the genealogists. I checked the material I had—three diaries, a water-soaked note book, and a half dozen small notebooks—and found that August was "geboren" on August 22, 1848, in Nassau, the former duchy of West Germany. His mother's name was Dorothea Hecker; I could not find his father's name. In his diary he mentions his brother Joseph twice and there are two letters written in German to Joseph.

The letters and the diaries from Joseph's chest were stored for almost seventy years in the basement of his daughter, Berta Hecker Browning. She was ninety-five years old when I visited her in a nursing home and she told me the story of what happened to her Uncle August. She told me that her father (Joseph) was three years older than August. He was the first one of the family to go to England. His reason for leaving Germany was the same as that of August, to avoid service in the Kaiser's ar-

my. August went to England just before the time of his conscription. Both young men were, in today's language, draft evaders. They chose to be musicians and not soldiers. In England, both became a part of the English forces; Joseph became the Bandmaster of the 82nd Regiment of the Prince of Wales Volunteers, August became the Bandmaster on the British Flagship, the H.M.S. *Royal Alfred*.

From my nonagenarian friend, who spoke from a wheel chair, I also learned that August must have died between November 13, 1872 and July 6, 1874. The latter date was when Joseph's diary began. I reread it in its entirety and found no mention of August in it. I decided to write to the British Consulate in Chicago for advice as to how I could obtain information about the H.M.S. *Royal Alfred*. They referred me to the Maritime Museum in London and I wrote there. The Museum's prompt reply included the following information:

The brief account of the career of the *Royal Alfred* in Oscar Parkes' *British Battleships* (London: Seeley Service, 1956) states that she was grounded on the Bahama Bank during 1872. This must be the event that brought an end to the two diaries. The ship lost her false keel and some sheathing. She was relieved by the *Bellerophon* and returned home to pay off in January, 1874. There is no reference to any loss of life.

The *Royal Alfred* was laid down in 1859 as a two-decker timber hull, but was converted to iron-clad, which delayed her completion until 1867. She was commissioned in January, 1867, as a flagship for the North American Station and she remained on duty between Nova Scotia and the West Indies for two years, being relieved by the *Defence* while she returned home for docking. A second commission on the same station for four years followed, during which time (in 1872) she was grounded on the Bahama Bank. After her return to England her boilers were found to be badly eroded and she was laid up pending an expensive refit until she became obsolete. She was sold in 1885.

This letter was a great help to me and I followed it up with many vain inquiries to try to discover if the 1872 Bahama Bank grounding had anything to do with August's death.

It was just before Christmas, 1976, that I began to go through the boxes of letters in the storeroom which I needed for extra sleeping space for the Christmas visit of our grandchildren. The letters were dusty and difficult to read. I scanned each one that Joseph Hecker wrote to his wife and she to him from 1874 through 1900. I looked for the word "brother" or "August". There were hundreds of letters to sort in this search, as the Heckers never threw anything away, including empty envelopes. It was not only a boring task, but I found myself becoming irritated with

Joseph's letters. He was, indeed, the prima donna in his family, and his letters were filled with self glorification and complaints. Why didn't he mention August back in the seventies? I should not judge, though, the feelings of another time when Death was a close neighbor, even of the very young. Joseph was, in the seventies, courting and marrying his Jennie, (the daughter of the Astin family with whom he lived in England) and taking her to Canada to live.

I knew that August must have died soon after November 13, 1872. He had written in his diary faithfully for two years. I felt that I knew his habits well enough to know he wouldn't stop writing unless something happened to him.

The last carton waited for me to open and so, one day, when it was sub-zero outside, I did so. I must have opened and scanned a hundred letters when, in reaching in the carton, I felt something hard. I pulled out an oval wooden box with no clasp. Inside were twelve letters, all edged in black. I could feel my heart beating as I took the box to the window for better light. Why, from those letters did I draw out one, *the* one that answered my question, "What happened to August Hecker?" From the date I knew it was the letter (as my nonagenarian friend had told me) that his brother was reading and crying about back in the Astin living room in Chatham, England, over 100 years ago. Other letters from this box included letters from the ship's Captain and from August's bride-to-be, Emma Creighton, of Halifax. He was obviously a beloved and revered young man.

I believe those who read his diary who are interested in naval history, music, and what the cities in Canada, Bermuda, and the West Indies were like more than one hundred years ago will overlook his grammatical imperfections. I believe, also, that those who read his diary will agree that he was a talented young man and should have some portion of immortality. Unless the British Naval Bands are still playing some of his compositions, nothing remains except what lies in his grave in the Naval Cemetery on Ireland Island, Bermuda. It is my intention to visit that grave before I am much older.

### **The Diary of August Hecker**

*September 23. (1870). Friday.* This is a sad day in which to commence my diary, for I have had to part from nearly All I love: brother, friends and acquaintances, and prepare for a long, perhaps dangerous journey across the western Ocean. I left them with a heavy, foreboding heart, at

the Portsmouth Railways station at 3 o'clock P.M. and did not arrive in Liverpool—for which port I was to take my departure—till two in the Morning and then found that all houses of entertainment were closed, so that I had to make the best of it in the waiting room of the Station.

*September 24, Saturday.* I got up at 6 o'clock, had some breakfast, hired a cab and drove to the Mailstreamer "City of Antwerp," where I was to embark for Halifax, North America. Arrived at the Mailstreamer, I've been asked for my ticket, but couldn't find it which put me to a great inconvenience, the waiters wouldn't give me a cabin without the ticket. At last, two hours before we started, a telegraph message came to the Captain, to say, that it was alright about the ticket. I had left it behind in Portsmouth and my brother sent the telegram to the Captain, so I was shown to my cabin at once, and soon after, we left the English shore behind us; we hadn't started two hours before I was seasick.

*September 25 and 26, Sunday and Monday.* During these two days I was seasick, so seasick that I couldn't leave my cabin at all. I could neither eat nor drink.

*September 27, Tuesday.* I felt better and went to the Saloon for the first time to take my breakfast. I had a walk on deack, had a smoke and felt greatly relieved. In the Afternoon I wanted to change my dress, but couldn't get to my chest, it was put in the hold and impossible to get it out before we got to Halifax, that was another disappointment; everything was in my chest and so I had to do without it perhaps for a fortnight.

*September 28, Wednesday.* Mr. Earl formerly a Clergyman in the Service shared the cabin with me, as it was arranged for two, he was very kind to me during my illness and he informed me, after I told him that I was going to HMS Royal Alfred as B Master, that the Admiral, Captain, Secretary and Flag-lieutenant (altogether called the Staff to an English Fleet) were on Board the City of Antwerp, to take also a Passage to the Royal Alfred. So I told Mr. Earl that I should like to speak to the Captain. He introduced me to Captain Nicholson and he made my heart much lighter, he spoke very kindly and said that I would find it rather strange at first in the Service, but that I would get used to it soon, that he had heard there was a good band in the Royal Alfred, that he himself was very fond of music, that I had a cabin for myself and not much to do, that the Band President would tell me all about it; he also explained to me what I couldn't understand before, that the Admiral, Captain, etc., who were on Board the Royal Alfred at present, were going home, and that he and the rest were coming out to relieve them. The Rest of the

journey went over pleasantly enough, I made myself acquainted with several of the other Cabin passengers and we passed the time over with playing cards, talking, smoking, etc.

*October 4, Tuesday.* We arrived today at *Halifax*, but a miserable day it was, raining in torrents. *Halifax* seemed to me rather a dirty, miserable place. As soon as I got hold of my chest again, I went to an hotel, where I changed my clothes, had a walk about town and then went to the Dockyard to get to my place of destination at last. Mr. James was at the dockyard and told me that there was no ship boat before six o'clock, but that I could get a shore boat if I liked. Accordingly, I took a shore boat and went alongside the *Royal Alfred*. I thought she was a little bigger than those I had seen before. Well, I went up the ladder, several Officers were on deck who questioned me, what I wanted, and who I was. I told them of course and was shown to the Bandmaster who was asleep in his cabin; we roused him up and he was very glad that his relief had come at last. We had something to drink and went on shore together. He showed me all the hotels and Public places where the best brandy and whiskey is to be had. Mr. Vanderbosche was well acquainted at *Halifax* and I heard him tell his friends how d--d glad he was to get out of that bl--y ships life and then he turned to me and said, Mr. Hecker, you'll see by and by what ship's life is with a drunken set of blackguards in the band. Well, I thought there is some comfort in that. There was to be a ball at night in Commissioner's House and as Mr. Vanderbosche had no viola player, I took the viola and played the part. The band did not strike my fancy much at first, but I soon found out that the principal players were good ones and I hoped that, if they were willing, to make a much better band of it in time. The ball was over about three o'clock then I went to the *Acadian Hotel* and he went on board.

*October 5 and 6, Wednesday and Thursday.* We spent the whole day Wednesday on shore together, only took our meals on board. Made a start with the Band Thursday evening; the programme was rather a miserable one without any practice and two of the best players were made prisoners during the day for smuggling grog on board; however, I got over it right enough and the officers were very pleased. I played the *Forget-me-not Galop* and nearly everyone took a fancy to it.

*October 7, Friday.* Mr. Vanderbosche went home in the "*Valerous*" with Admiral Wellesley and his Staff. I then took possession of my cabin and made myself at home. I played again in the evening and the Captain sent for me and said that he was very pleased with the band and that if anything should go wrong to come to him and he would see about it.

*October 10, Monday.* I commenced practicing today with the band and practiced every day during the week, repeated all the pieces which they had played before, made some alterations in some of them, played the others the same as they did before, so I got on little by little. I saw that I gave satisfaction and that's all I wanted. I soon made myself acquainted on board and felt quite at home again. I went on shore very seldom but worked very hard and ere I was on board a fortnight, I was pleased to see some improvement in the band.

*October 17, Sunday.* I went over to Dartmouth—opposite Halifax—with Mr. B. We walked to Bedford Hotel, an awfully rough road, in an hour and a half. I believe it is about eight miles, from there we drove back by another road to Halifax. When we arrived on board, we told two of our friends in what time we walked the distance, they wouldn't believe it, so B. said he could do it in an hour and a quarter. So it was agreed that B. should travel from Dartmouth to Bedford, the forfeit to be—pay for dinner, etc. and the trap. The day was fixed on Thursday.

*October 21, Thursday.* We left the ship early in the morning, hired a trap and crossed over to Dartmouth. B. then got out with his travelling boots, everyone looked at his watch and so we started; he first and we followed in the trap. I don't know when I laughed so much as I did today, but however B won by two minutes. We returned by the other road as it was a very dark night. I managed to drive up a bank and spill us all on the road. Providentially the horses stood quite still and no one was hurt much.

*October 25, Monday.* The Royal Alfred went alongside the wharf to take in coal and provisions which gives me a good chance for practicing undisturbed in the Sail loft, Dockyard.

*October 29, Friday.* Played with the string band in the Admiral's House to a Dinner party.

*November 7, Sunday.* Had a walk in the country by myself and came on board again at 6 o'clock with a blue nose and cheeks for it is getting very cold in Halifax now.

*November 25, Friday.* Leave Halifax to enjoy its own severe winter. I never saw a ship so crammed and loaded before when going to sea. There was not an inch of room anywhere, but everything was thoroughly secured. Amongst other things were immense anchors and many lengths of the largest cable I ever saw. The comfort of the ship was not improved by the decks leaking badly and the quantity of poultry and sheep, hay and straw made the decks look like a cattle market. As all gratings were required for battening down, there were no means of confining the animals and during the few days of bad weather numbers were killed.



*November 26, Saturday.* Saturday night at sea in a gale of wind. Ship laboured heavily and rolled more than was either safe or pleasant, cable broke adrift, jibboom went by the force of heavy pitching. The seas broke over the top gallant forecastle. It was a very critical time and many remained on deck who might have been in their hammocks. A large portion of the people were seasick. I, of course, was one of them, I being in bed all night during the gale and expected every minute she would go down to the deep.

*November 27, Sunday.* The Sea is very calm again, no doubt welcome to everyone; it is getting much warmer now.

*November 30, Wednesday.* Arrived at *Bermuda*. The ship was in a great mess getting all the cargo out as she was during the time it was shipping and the passage.

*December 1, Thursday.* Had a quiet walk by myself on shore.

*December 6, Tuesday.* Corporal punishment inflicted this morning on a man who struck an officer. He was tried by court martial and sentenced to four dozen lashes, twelve months imprisonment, and turned out of service. Everyone had to be on deck in full uniform. The captain read the sentence of court-martial again and the man received his four dozen. It was a sight which I don't care for seeing anymore.

*December 7, Wednesday.* Orantes coming out of the camber got ashore but the Pylades succeeded in towing her off next morning.

*December 9, Friday.* Orantes, starting again, runs on rock abreast of the Admiral's house, but was luckily got off again next morning without injury.

*December 11, Sunday.* The Orantes got out safely today.

*December 22, Tuesday.* The Admiral came on board and we start for the West Indies, with three other ships, to accompany us.

*December 25, Sunday.* Christmas Day. This is the first time I ever spent Christmas Day at sea, but we made it as merry as it is possible at sea. There was service in the morning, after that I had dinner with Mr. B. and a first rate dinner it was, then we had plenty of wine, sherry, and champagne and so the Christmas Day passed over very pleasantly.

*December 31, Saturday.* New Year's Eve. The Captain sent for me, after playing with the Band on Night, to have some music in his cabin, so we got the Harmonium up, had some Partsongs, duetts, etc.. Then we all had supper together and a glass of grog; when it struck 16 bells, which happens only once a year, we wished each other a happy new year and turned in.

*January 1, 1871, Sunday.* Anchored with the squadron at Barbados early in the forenoon. First Sunday in New Year. I went on shore with

some friends, we had a drive in the country and enjoyed ourself very much. Barbados is one of the most productive Islands of the West Indies. It is well cultivated. Sugar is the chief staple of produce, Indian corn and maize are grown as well as a few sparse crops of cotton and cassava. Bridgetown is the chief town of the Island. The harbour is very small, but well secured by a good breakwater. The few streets are pretty well build. Broad Str. is the principal one and there is a large hotel where you can get ice drinks, which is very refreshing in the West Indies. Not far from the ice house is a monument to Nelson. The inhabitants—the negroes I mean—are inveterate mendicants and the boatmen are more noisy than the washerwomen and so urgent in their officiousness, the big end of the stick is occasionally very useful.

*January 7, Saturday.* I was ordered to play at the Governor's with the Reed-Band. When we landed there were four Carriages—three for the Bandsmen and one for myself—to take us there. I enjoyed the drive—about four miles—very much. There also was the 29th Band and so we played alternately till 6 o'clock. Everyone said that my band—according to the number—played far better than the other. When it was over, I got acquainted with the 29th Bandmaster, who was a german by the name of Stoekel, we drove in town together and he asked me to come on shore and spend the Sunday afternoon with him.

*January 8, Sunday.* Went to Herr Stoekel in the Afternoon, had tea with him and came on board again at 8 o'clock.

*January 9, Monday.* We left Barbados early this morning with five ships in company.

*January 10, Tuesday.* Arrived at *Porto Espano, Trinidad.*

*Janury 11, Wednesday.* I have been on shore nearly all day. Trinidad is a very large, well cultivated island, rich in the products of tropical climes and is the only West Indian Island in which rice is cultivated to any extent. The town, viewed from our far-distant anchorage, appears to be quite small, built at the foot of the high hills, but it is in reality a goodly-sized well built town. The principal street contains an avenue of fine trees, a fountain and a handsomely decorated Cathedral. The scenery all around the Island is very beautiful.

*January 15, Sunday.* The Squadron got under weigh this morning under sail.

*January 17, Tuesday.* Anchored at Kingstown, *St. Vincent.* The island of St. Vincent consists chiefly of very high land, but all that is available is well cultivated, the chief crops being arrow root, sugar and coffee. The town itself—which is long and narrow—has no particularly attractive features. There is a wooden pier, at which to land with the

market abreast, and a large police station and from that centre the town stretches away to the right and left in two unbroken streets, which are planted with trees at intervals.

*January 19, Thursday.* I went on shore in the Evening to play a ball at a gentleman's house. I had four of my men with me. They also had engaged two negroes—a piano and a coronet player, which made it easier for me as we played alternately.

*January 20, Friday.* Left *St. Vincent* in the afternoon.

*January 23, Monday.* Steamed into the anchorage of *St. Johns, Antigua* this evening.

*January 25, Wednesday.* Ball at the Governor's House. String Band.

*January 26, Thursday.* A party of ladies and gentlemen came off in the steam launch this afternoon, apparently for the double purpose of dancing and seeing the ship. As the ship was rolling more than usual, it was a difficult matter to get them up the ladder without partly immersing them in water. After three or four had tried it and had been soused they were obliged to go to starboard side to get up without a ladder. But they appeared to enjoy the dance in proportion as it had been difficult to obtain it.

*January 29, Sunday.* Having left *Antigua* last evening we arrived at *St. Kitts* during the middle watch last night. And this afternoon I went on shore with B and G and enjoyed a good long walk through the sugar canes and paths to the opposite shore. The land on the island consists of a beautiful soil and is entirely devoted to sugar cultivation. The town is quite small and has, at one time, been well built, but in 1867 it was almost destroyed by fire. The name of the town is *Basse-terre*. There must have been some well built houses, as the ruins testify. It is even now a pretty place and around the Square or park—wherein is a fountain—are a few nice houses. The *Royal Alfred* visited this place now for the first time and they say she was the first iron-clad ship ever here. Neither had it occurred before during the time of the oldest inhabitant that a squadron of five man of war had visited the place. It rained very heavily indeed, just as we were about to leave the shore, so we luckily escaped a wetting.

*January 31, Tuesday.* We arrived at *St. Thomas* this morning having made the passage from *St. Kitts* since last evening under sail. The Mailboat came in astern of us, so we had our letters from home and the news from Europe to read the day.

*February 1, Wednesday.* I went on shore this morning, had a walk about town and bought some sigars, as this place is famous for the

manufacture of sigars, and they are much cheaper here than those of like quality are at Havana. *St. Thomas* is a danish settlement and the danish language is chiefly spoken here, but there are also a great many english people here. We left *St. Thomas* in the evening, shortly after I came on board.

*February 7, Tuesday.* Anchored at *Port Royal—Jamaica* about 1 p.m., went on shore in the evening and found *Port Royal* a very miserable place. There is only the Dockyard and Naval Hospital worth looking at.

*February 12, Sunday.* Went on shore to *Port Royal* with J, from there crossed over to *Kingston* which takes about an hour. *Kingston* is the largest of all our W. Indian towns and the most important. It contains many wide and well built streets, such as those named Harbour, King, Orange, Church and some others. We had a drive out in the country and beautiful country it is, so we enjoyed ourselves till six o'clock, when we wanted to return, but coming down to the beach the regular boat had just gone and we were obliged to take one of those small canoes, just big enough to carry two besides the boatman. Steping in to it, I nearly cap-sized it, it was blowing very hard that night. Well, it took us three hours and during all the time none of us could move or we would have been drowned altogether and the negro run us on shore once with two sharks dancing around us, expecting to have a good feed; I shall never forget it.

*February 13, Monday.* Provisioned the *Racoon* this afternoon, she having orders to proceed to sea at once, as the yellow fever had shown itself on board of her.

*February 14, Tuesday.* Left *Port Royal* with two ships only in company.

*February 22, Wednesday.* Anchored this evening in *Havana* harbour and exchanged salutes. The French and Prussian gunboats which fought outside a short time ago are still here.

*February 23, Thursday.* Had an afternoon on shore, spending most of the time in walking about and seeing all that is to be seen here. *Havana* is a large and well built city, containing many large and handsome buildings, full of business and carrying on considerable commerce. The rattle of innumerable cabs, carriages and omnibuses gives it the air of what it really is, a thriving large business town. No wonder the spaniards are so loth to part with it.

*February 24, Friday.* Steamed out of *Havana* harbour this evening, making sail as the ships were clearing the entrance.

*February 28, Tuesday.* Hove to off *Nassau* all day, as the Admiral did not wish to go in and so sent in his flag-lieutenant to transact business for him. He returned next morning and we started again.

*March 7, Tuesday.* Anchored in *Grassy Bay, Bermuda* about nine this morning after a rather pleasant passage. We hear that peace is proclaimed between France and Prussia and that the latter power has won the Victory.

*March 14, Tuesday.* Played with the Band near the Hospital in the afternoon.

*March 19, Sunday.* Had a long walk with two of our Eng: at Sommerset.

*March 24, Friday.* There was a concert to be given in the Dockyard and I was ordered to play one or two pieces with the Stringband. There was Captain Nicholson singing two songs and a duett with Mrs. Mon: Mr. Toy reading, Mr. Tucker sang a song in character, which was the best of the lot, all the rest was pretty miserable and I was glad when it was over.

*April 12, Wednesday.* I went over to Hamilton where all kinds of sports were going on between the 53rd and 69th, the bands of both reg. were playing alternately which I enjoyed most. Then I went to the Admiral's House where I stayed till next morning and I returned in the dispatch boat with the flag-lieutenant.

*April 11, Thursday.* The Flying Squadron under the command of Rear-Admiral B. Seymour, arrived here this morning and anchored.

*April 20, Saturday.* We left *Bermuda* early this morning.

*April 25, Thursday.* Arrived at *Halifax* and moved alongside of the dockyard to take in coals. I had a very bad cold through the sudden change of climate.

*April 28, Monday.* Mr. Cogswell, Amateur of Music, visited me on board and asked me to take part in a musical entertainment at his house on Wednesday night.

*April 30, Wednesday.* After playing with the band on board in the evening, I went to the Cogswells according to promise. There were three other gentlemen besides him, a Mr. Crighton (Creighton), Hudson and Jemmison. We played some Symphonies of Haydn with two violins, viola, Bass, Flute, and Mr. Cogswell on the piano. I enjoyed it very much and agreed to have a meeting once every week.

*June 11, Sunday.* Had a walk with Mr. Cogswell on the common and went to Lee's Garden, there to have tea with him and went on board about 9 o'clock.

*June 20, Tuesday.* The Flying Squadron sailed out, having been here for nearly three weeks, lots of cheering.

*June 23, Friday.* Myself and three friends, B, G, and E. had arranged to have a picnic today. As B was best acquainted with the females of

Halifax, he managed everything in the way of invitations. The Guests which were bidden were very select, namely a Mr. and Mrs. Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Gordon, two Miss Creighton and Miss Small. The party assembled at 10 o'clock opposite the dockyard, we then proceeded by way of carriages to the Belle Veue Hotel at Bedford, a distance of ten miles; the weather was all that could be desired. We arrived at the Hotel about noon, had some refreshments and then we were shown to a spacious room where we enjoyed ourselves immensely with singing and playing. At two o'clock we had dinner and then a game of bowl, the ladies played against the gentlemen and I am ashamed to say, they beat us awfully. After tea we had another drive to a short distance, on our return to the Hotel, the Piano was moved to a large room, where we had a splendid dance till 10 o'clock, when it was time to break up. We arrived in town about 11 o'clock after a days thorough enjoyment.

*July 3, Monday.* The ship went out for target practice, damp and foggy all the time, returned on Friday, July 7.

*July 31, Monday.* There has been nothing particularly stirring during the month except that I assisted at a Concert at St. Marks S.S. House and that I went to another Picnic, invited by Mr. Smith (comic).

*August 21, Thursday.* During this month all I can remember is a Sailor's picnic at Bedford. I and Mr. Cogswell went up in the Steamer, there were five of my band playing to a dance, plenty of noise and confusion. I also enjoyed a quiet Picnic over at the Dartmouth side with the Creightons, but had to leave it at six o'clock as there was to be a large Dinner Party on board.

*August 29, Tuesday.* Beautiful day for the first day of the Carnival. An immense number of races came off very successfully and without an accident, keeping the shore and harbour alive, but the Tub and Punt Races caused the greatest amount of fun.

*August 31, Thursday.* The day opened this time clear and fine after a heavy gale last night. The Race commenced at two o'clock and proved to be a well-contested one and to the surprise of everyone the Halifax boat came in second, leaving the favourite (Tyne) to make a fourth. During the race the jolly sailors cheered all the oarsmen equally. The excitement during the day was great and many of our Officers have been sadly disappointed.

*September 1, Friday.* Another exciting day dawned full of the promise of brightness for the Champion Skull Race, which started about 10 o'clock. Saddler gained the goal first, Brown (the champion of Halifax) came in second. Soon after it was over we left *Halifax*. Sir Harry Doyle Commander-in-Chief and Governor of Nova Scotia accompanying the Admiral.

*September 2, Saturday.* This afternoon we steamed through the Gut of Canso. The continuous rain spoiled the pleasure of viewing pretty scenery.

*September 6, Wednesday.* We have been forced to come to an anchor this evening by the pilot's advice, whom we took on board this morning. We are now in the River St. Lawrence, both shores of the river have been in sight nearly all day.

*September 7, Thursday.* We have just anchored in *Quebec*.

*September 10, Sunday.* I have been on shore this afternoon with S. we had a walk about town and then went to see Wolf's Monument, which is a plain column of limestone-round surmounted by helmet and sword, and supported by a square pedestal of about eight or ten feet and railed in. On one side is superscribed that it was erected at the expense of the army in 1842 in place of one which was defaced; on the opposite side is superscribed: "Here died Wolfe victorious, 1759." The City of *Quebec* consists of Upper and Lower Town, the inhabitants of the former division being nearly all French Canadians and a fair portion in the latter. The whole town and harbour as well as the opposite side of the river—named Point Levis—is commanded by the Citadel, a strong fortification on the heights of Abraham. There are many Public buildings and other objects of interest in and around *Quebec*, among which are two good markethouses, Government House, City Hall, Marine Hospital, French and English Cathedrals. Of course *Quebec* is built on two ascents, some of the streets are approached by ascending or descending steps. St. John's is the principal street of the city and contains many handsome shops. Although Lower Canada has been so long in possession of the English, very few of the French descendants take the trouble to learn the english language.

*September 15, Friday.* The Exhibition—which commenced yesterday—is generously opened today to the ships company and nearly everyone went on shore to see it. They formed at the New Market wharf and preceded by the band, marched to the place. I and S. went together, had a look at the Exhibition first and then walked out to the falls of Montmorency and back again, finding the walk was quite enough to blister our feet. The falls of Monmorency are about nine miles from the city by the road, about half way is the Lunatic Asylum, a handsome building. The fall is 280 feet high, but a portion of the water is abstracted to turn mills built at the foot of the height. About half a mile up the river is a pretty piece of scenery, called the Natural Steps.

*October 2, Monday.* During our stay in *Quebec* we had plenty of bonnet-hops and visiting on board. I got acquainted the last fortnight

with some very nice people on shore, a Mrs. Walter and familie where I spent the most of my time very pleasantly. We left *Quebec* today preceded as far as Snipe Island, when we came to anchor and the Captain and several other Officers went on shore for a shooting excursion.

*October 7, Saturday.* We had to drop anchor last night and again tonight as the passage is very shoaly and the weather thick.

*October 8, Sunday.* Arrived at *Charlotte Town* about 8 a.m. I went on shore in the afternoon and enjoyed a long walk in the country, winding up with an oyster supper. *Charlotte Town* is well built and contains many nice houses and shops and the streets, of which *Queen Str.* is the main one are wide, only requiring continuous lines of buildings to make them handsome. There are two or three green squares in the town, one of which is laid out for promenading. The Island—called *Prince Edward Isle.*—is very flat, but the land consists of a splendid soil and there is no want of woodland, as contrast to the cultivated soil.

*October 9, Monday.* Mr. Hurt, Officer of the first watch at night, when relieved by some mishap, fell through the skylight down to the cockpit. He was much hurt, but providentially not killed.

*October 10, Tuesday.* Played a ball on shore—very cold driving back.

*October 12, Thursday.* Left P.E. Island, dropped anchor tonight as there is promise of bad weather and the water is shoal. The night dark, wet and windy.

*October 13, Friday.* The gale of wind was still blowing, but we got under way this morning in fog and rain, the wind was fair and the ship behaved very well, running before it.

*October 17, Tuesday.* Did not arrive in *Halifax* till about twelve today when we were at once lashed alongside the jetty. Great fears for our safety have been entertained in the City as the late gale was so heavy and we were expected early last Saturday; the wind has done much damage here in addition to having caused several wrecks.

*October 29, Sunday.* Went to Church in the morning, had dinner at Mr. Cogswell's. Miss Creighton arrived, we had tea together and went for a walk, I and E (Emma Creighton), Mr. and Mrs. Cogswell.

*October 30, Monday.* Dinner Party on Board in the Evening, after that Practice with Mr. Cogswell.

*October 31, Tuesday.* Concert at the Masonic Hall in aid of St. Marks S.S. Furnishing Fund, played the Dreams of the Past Waltz, Polonaise, Forget-me-not Galop, Royal Alfred Waltz, La Fille du Regiment, Solo for Violin. Mr. McElleny played a Solo on the Cornet, everything went off well.



*November 1, Wednesday.* Went with Miss Cr., Miss Dudson, etc. to Dartmouth with the intention of giving a concert at the eastern passage, but was put off on account of the bad weather.

*November 2, Thursday.* After playing on board in the evening I went to a party at Mr. Gibson, Mr. Cr., Mr. and Mrs. Cogswell present.

*November 3, Friday.* Went to Mr. Cr. in the afternoon, had tea with them and went home late in the night very much in love with Emma.

*November 4, Saturday.* Spent most of the day at Cr. very pleasantly.

*November 5, Sunday.* Went to Cogswell's in the Morning, to Cr. in the Afternoon, had a nice walk with Emma. Tea after that and then went to St. Paul's Church with E. and left her half past 11 o'clock with a heavy heart.

*November 6, Monday.* The english mail arrived and soon after that we start for Bermuda, played Goodbye, sweet heart, going out of the harbour, fair wind, went at the rate of 7 knots an hour during the day, it was bitter cold.

*November 9, Thursday.* Wind still holding, plenty of tumbling about, everything is so close and unpleasant below with ports barred in and the scuttles in, raining frequent and heavy. The ship looks gloomy and miserable as the sea and sky.

*November 11, Saturday.* Arrived at Bermuda, weather nice and warm. I and S went on shore together to Summerset, coming back I fell down, lost my hat and hurt myself very much (it was very dark that night). When we came to the dockyard the boat had just left and there was no chance of getting a shoreboat, so we had to sleep in the guard-house, which wasn't pleasant. This was the first day in Bermuda and I was disgusted more than ever with Bermuda.

*November 12, Sunday.* Had the Band up on the Poop at Division in the morning and played "The Heavens are Telling"—went on shore in the afternoon, saw dear Misses Tucker again in Summerset, went back again at 7 o'clock.

*November 13, Monday.* Came on board with a very bad headache, but King's Relief cured it immediately. My washerwoman came on board in the Afternoon and she looked as black as ever.

*November 14, Tuesday.* Everything went on as usual on Board, plenty of noise, swearing amongst the men, skylarking amongst the Officers and singing and playing in the Bandmaster's Cabin.

*November 15, Wednesday.* Fast asleep midnight—I was suddenly startled from my rest by the clarion sound of the bugle for general Quarters as for action. Instantly the ship was alive with busy motion, everybody on the move, lashing and carrying their hammocks on deck,

casting guns adrift, providing stores, passing the powder along, and all the requirements of preparing for a fight. It was very dark and the low growlings of the Seamen were intermingled with the hoarse shouts of command, the clatter of arms and the heavy shock of monster guns, when hurriedly run out. When everything was reported ready, the Captain, accompanied by his Staff, inspected it and then the bugle sounded in succession, return stores disperse. After which the men got their hammocks and turned in, I retired to my bed about 1:30 a. m.

*November 16, Thursday.* The Royal Alfred went alongside the Camber.

*November 17, Friday.* As there was nothing to do for me on board, I went on shore in the Afternoon and came back again in the evening, tired of walking.

*November 18, Saturday.* The Ship is in a mess again, as usual, scrubbing and whitewashing all over.

*November 19, Sunday.* Stayed on Board all day. Past the time over with reading and writing a letter to dear Miss E.L.C.

*November 23, Thursday.* This is the day appointed for the landing of the small arm men. So about 8 o'clock the Signal was made to the fleet. "Prepare to land small arm men," which was accordingly done about 9. Blue jackets first, then the red coats fell on the breakwater in companies, four deep and preceded by the band stepped out in quick time. They were armed with rifle and cutlass to fix them on. The Admiral was present to watch the maneuvers, which were finished in time for the men to return for dinner.

*November 24, Friday.* Man and Arm Boats was the order of the day, which means to prepare and provision them for active Service, and expedition that may last some days, and this is expected to be accomplished in about twenty minutes. The boats then stand off, forming in different orders of battle, according to the signals made from the senior boat. The largest boats are armed with 24 pdr guns and the cutters with rocket tubes, but the lighter boats, which are often used as messenger boats carry only armed men. All boats take, of course, a small magazine, provision, water, compass, etc. and in addition to their crews, some marines and a carpenter. The surgeons usually attend in the gigs. Sometimes the tactics are performed under sail, at other times under oars.

*November 25, Saturday.* The Syrius arrived from Halifax with the Mail, for which I was waiting anxiously, but was very disappointed in not receiving any letters from Halifax.

*December 1, Friday.* The Orantes (Troop Ship) arrived from Halifax with the 78th Highlanders, who came on board of the R. Alfred in the evening and dined in the Ward Room. I played with the string-band most of the scotch musik and finished off with a scotch real. The officers of both Highlanders and R. Alfred took me afterwards in the wardroom, gave me three cheers, had plenty to eat and drink and went to bed late in the night with rather a ----

*December 2, Saturday.* Woke up with a very bad Head, but of course found Relief in the bottle. The Highlanders came on board again in the evening and were as merry as the night before.

*December 4, Monday.* The Orantes left for England at two in the afternoon.

*December 9, Saturday.* The long-expected mail from Halifax arrives at last, at two in the Afternoon, but the Letters are not to be delivered before half-past one in the Night; received a Letter from E. Cr., which made me feel very happy indeed, also one from my brother at Altershot with some musik and Clothing went to bed at 3 o'clock as happy as a King.

*December 11, Monday.* After playing on Board in the Evening went to Mr. Tucker in the Post Office, had a nice game of cards, Supper, and enjoyed myself very much altogether.

*December 12, Tuesday.* Played with the Band in the Afternoon at Mr. Crokers, the Chaplain of the Dockyard, in his garden.

*December 13, Wednesday.* Went to Dct. Gordon and taught Miss Gordon on the Piano.

*December 14, Thursday.* A naval brigade was formed today and marched out to attack Boaz - Island and Barraks. The men—consisting of about 1000 were thoroughly well handled and the scene was very exciting. The way in which the seamen handled the five field guns astonished the soldiers, dragging them rapidly up rocky hills, through brushwood over walls, etc. The firing was very rapid. Our men alone used 11,000 round of ammunition. I had a good position on a hill and was astonished at the quick advance of the artillery; but no doubt the men curse the *prickly pears*. However they sang songs on the return home and stuck branches of cedar in the muzzles of their rifles and entered the dockyard as fresh as when they quitted it.

*December 19, Tuesday.* I played with the band this afternoon at the hospital, there was Capt. Nicholson, Capt. D'Aplin, the Admirals and Governors Familie and all the Swells.

*December 20, Wednesday.* Blowing very hard, went to Boaz Island in the Evening to see a theatrical performance which turned out pretty miserable. I met the before mentioned ladies there and saw them home.

*December 23, Saturday.* As the Ship was in a Mess again as usual I went out to take a Walk till 12 o'clock, but at coming out of the Dockyard I met Captain Nicholson, who wanted me to go with him to the Captain of the Eclipse and tune his Piano, so I went there and tuned it in about half an hour, then I had lunch there and went over to Summerset and came on board instead of 12 in the Morning, at 12 at Night.

*December 24, Sunday.* Went to Miss L.D. in the Afternoon stopped there till Evening, then to T, then crossed the Ferry and went on Board.

*December 25, Monday.* Christmas Day—The Danae arrived from Halifax with the Mail. I received a Letter from Mr. Cogswell and one from Emma. At twelve o'clock the Admiral, accompanied by some ladies went around the decks, preceded by the Band which played "Roast Beef Old England" and all the officers followed. The lower deck was fitted up with decorations beautiful, the dinner at the tables and one man of every mess was standing at the head of the table to present cakes and sweets to the Ladies and Officers, then the men had their dinner and went out on the break-water and enjoyed all kinds of sports, boatraces, swimming and running races, etc. till 6 o'clock. I then went over to Summerset to say goodbye to my old friends.

*December 27, Tuesday.* Left Bermuda early in the morning for the West Indies.

*December 30, Saturday.* After playing with the Band at Night, the Captain sent for me in his Cabin, where the Flag-lieutenant, Commander, Doctor Gordon, Meachom, Cockraft, etc. were present to have some music, so the Capt. sang several Songs with his lovely voice, Mr. Cockraft, Meachom, and also me had some Partsongs, Duets, etc. then Mr. Schwabe was sent for to play a few Pieces on the flute with Harmonium Accompaniments, all this together, lasted till about 11 o'clock when we had a glass of wine together and went away. I then joined Mr. Campbell (sub-lieutenant), went in the Gun Room, where we stopped, drinking and singing, until we had to clear out and then we went into my Cabin and made such a noise that the Sentry came and stopped it, so we were obliged to turn in.

*December 31, Sunday.* Had a bad headache, but luckily for me it was raining and so there was no duty for me, otherwise I wouldn't have felt much inclined to play. Church at 10 o'clock and in the middle of the Service, the Water came rushing in through the Ports on Main Deck and wetted them all over (the Ship was rolling very much that day). I wasn't at Church that morning so I was perfectly dry down below. No more this year.

*January 1, 1872, Monday.* New Year's Day—I was seasick in the morning and felt bad all day.

*January 12, Friday.* We arrived at *Antigue* last Monday, the 8th, I played a ball on shore last night at Mr. Martin's and had four of my men with me. The drive, which was about the distance of five miles, was very pleasant, the weather being nice and cool. The ball lasted until 3 o'clock and we arrived on board at half past four.

*January 12, Friday.* We left *Antigue* this morning before I got up.

*January 17, Wednesday.* Arrived at *Barbados*, had a large dinner party on Board in the Evening in the Admiral's Cabin.

*January 18, Thursday.* Went on shore in the Afternoon with Mr. Kamp and Mr. Simons to the Ice house first, then to the *Victoria Hotel*, from there I don't know where. Somebody told me that we came aboard at half past five in the morning.

*January 19, Friday.* Went on shore again—the same party—to a dignity ball where I lost my pipe and tobacco, my stick and my Hat-cover and nearly lost myself too. We came on board at Midnight.

*January 25, Thursday.* We arrived at *Grenada* from *Barbados* which we left yesterday. I went on shore this Afternoon with Mr. Goodman (Eng.) and we had a long walk in the Country. There is the finest Country in this place I ever saw before, any amount of fruit and flowers. I saw for the first time a sugar mill worked by four pairs of oxen.

*January 29, Monday.* Arrived at *St. Lucia* having made the passage from *Grenada* since Friday the 26th. I did not go on shore in *St. Lucia* so I can't say much about it. We left on Tuesday, the 30th.

*February 1, Thursday.* Went on shore in *Martinique* with Mr. G. We wandered first through the town, which is called *St. Pierre*. The town itself is not large and the streets narrow, but built in a regular manner. The water, of which there is an abundance, flows continuously along the gutters. There are nice green squares and pleasant promenades, and in fact, every path is sure to excite admiration. To wander through the public garden is to imagine oneself in fairyland, there are flowers and trees of the most splendid kind and the beauty of the place is enhanced by a miniature waterfall and a few fountains. I really do admire this place more than any other I ever saw before.

*February 4, Sunday.* Arrived at *St. Kitts* yesterday. I went on shore this Afternoon with Mr. Goodwin, Bolton and Simmons. We had a walk first through the sugar fields and afterwards went to a friend of Mr. Bolton where we rested ourselves and after plenty of talking and chatting went on board at 6 o'clock. We left *St. Kitts* on Monday, the 5th.

*February 6, Tuesday.* Arrived at *St. Thomas*. I didn't go on shore this time. There was a Prussian Man of Warship and a great many of their officers visited our ship in the Evening.

*February 7, Wednesday.* The mail came in from Bermuda during the night with the Admiral's wife and daughter on board. We proceeded to sea about 2 p.m. (Had a nice letter from E.L.C.)

*February 12, Monday.* After a most pleasant passage we moved in Port Royal Harbour this Evening.

*February 14, Wednesday.* We moved alongside the chetty to take in coals and provisions. I went out and had a stroll on the beach. After everything was taken in, we moved out in the stream again, the ship looks very dirty and miserable.

*February 16, Friday.* We steamed from Port Royal up to Kingston which took us about an hour. At four o'clock I went on shore with Mr. Bolton and we enjoyed ourselves very much.

*February 17, Saturday.* I, Mr. Kamp, and Mr. McBride were singing and playing the Guittarre in the Engine room at 11 o'clock in the night and there was a row about it the next morning. The Officer of the Guard had reported it to the Commander.

*February 21, Wednesday.* Played a ball on shore in the gentleman's house, I played the Piano and three of my men assisted me. We drove out (about five miles) and the whole went off very nicely, the Commander and several of our Officers were present. We came on board at five o'clock in the morning.

*February 23, Friday.* A hard days work for me—we had lots of visitors on board and I had to play from 1 to 6 o'clock. There was also a Regatta with the Boats of the whole fleet.

*February 26, Monday.* A Bonnet Hop on board which commenced at 8 o'clock in the evening and lasted till midnight. There were some nice looking girls amongst the Party.

*February 28, Wednesday.* We came down from Kingston yesterday and left Port Royal this morning at daylight. There have been slight syptoms of the fever in the ship and so everyone seems glad to clear of Jamaica.

(The remainder of August Hecker's Diary will appear in the next issue).