

Maurine Withers

The Diary of August Hecker (Part 2)

March 6, (1872) Wed. Steamed into the *Havana* harbour this morning and found Russian and American squadrons here, of three or four vessels each, in addition to a large Spanish squadron. A Spanish wooden frigate lay alongside the dockyard prepared to give a ball this evening. She was most splendidly decorated indeed. All the officers of the different ships were invited.

March 7, Thurs. Mr. Charles Bridle, one of our engineers, left us today to take passage to Bermuda in the *Niobe*, from thence to go home in the Troopship. He had been out here nearly four years; during the time I was with him I found him an excellent good hearted fellow and was very sorry when he left. At 6 o'clock I went on shore to the Opera where they performed a Spanish piece called *Marina*; they had a very fine string-band, 48 in number. The Prima Donna had a fine clear voice and she sang up to D as easy as possible, the Bass singer also sang splendidly. Tenor and Baritone pretty fair. The music of *Marina* is grand, especially some choruses. The Ballad in the second act gave credit to the performers, the whole interested me very much; it was over at 11 o'clock, when I went to the Louvre to have some supper before I went on board.

March 8, Fri. The harbour this afternoon presented a very lively appearance as a sailing and pulling regatta came off in honor of the Grand Duke Alexis and for the boats of all the squadrons. Of course the crews of the ships were rather excited, and some of our men and officers won some handsome prizes. We got under weigh immediately after, cheering and being cheered by all the foreign men-of-war.

March 11, Mon. We left *Metanzas* another Port of Cuba where we arrived last Saturday.

March 15, Fri. Anchored at *Nassau*, about three miles from shore, the ship rolling here a great deal.

March 16, Sat. The Band was ordered to play at the Cricket field where our officers played a match against the Cricket Club of *Nassau*, and in the evening at the Governor's to a dance which lasted till 1 o'clock. Mr.

O'Brien lost his teeth afterwards.

March 18, Mon. A dance was given on board, and after that we went to sea.

March 21, Thurs. I was awaked this morning about 6 o'clock hearing repeated on all sides "The ship's ashore." And sure enough she was. Boats were immediately got out, anchor dropped and others laid out with cables attached to it, steam got up with all the boilers and a cutter provisioned and sent away, with the hope of sighting the Danae which left us in the middle watch last night. Guns were also fired, but no help, there wasn't a ship near and the boat unsuccessful. Meanwhile the ship heaved and set, at intervals, so heavily that the Accident appeared to assume a very serious aspect. Everything was tried but without avail, then people's faces began to lengthen, everyone looked out to sea for another ship to help us off, but no one came. After dinner, the bumping increased—good luck there wasn't a heavy sea or we would have gone to pieces in a very short time. About two o'clock, when the tide was at its highest, we tried again, steaming with full power and very gradually we got off, much to the relief of everybody. The ship was but damaged very little. It was late in the evening when we proceeded on our course under sail.

March 28, Thurs. We have had unpleasant weather this last few days. We took two Pilots on board last night, when we got in the channel, and came to anchor. Started again this morning at six and did not arrive at our anchorage of *Annapolis* till 8 p.m.

March 30, Sat. Some Yankee Officers visited the ship this Afternoon and they got beastly tight through the mistaken kindness of our Sub-Lieutenants.

April 3, Wed. I went on shore this morning as this is perhaps the only chance I'll have for visiting the United States; with Messrs. Bolton, Goodwin and Ramsey. I found Anapolis a small city, irregularly built and scarcely a street worth the name. There are only a few nice buildings, amongst which is the Naval College, St. John's College and the Naval Hospital.

April 4, Thurs. We had lots of visitors on board to lunch and a short dance afterward.

April 5, Fri. We got under weigh this morning at daylight, sailing till noon and then got up steam with four boilers.

April 7, Sun. Blowing very hard, the Ship was rolling heavily, the decks were leaking badly, my bed got wet through and I was obliged to sleep on the floor and so on Monday.

April 11, Thurs. We are in warm weather again, arrived here in *Bermuda* this Evening; we got the Mails, one via Halifax and the other via St. Thomas, and we hear that the *Repulse* is going to be fitted out to relieve the *Royal Alfred*.

April 15, Mon. The *Royal Alfred* steamed into the Camber and went alongside, so it will be very handy going on shore and coming back.

April 16, Tues. I was ordered to play in the Sparyard with the Band, but couldn't go on account of it being too rough. I played in the Evening my *Fantasia of Naval and Military Airs* on board, with great success.

April 18, Thurs. Sports at St. Georges. The *Spitfire* took all the Naval and Military Officers, Men and Families, who wanted to see it, on board and left the dockyard at 9:30. We arrived in St. Georges at 11 and the Sports commenced at 12. The bands of the 69th and 53rd Reg. played alternately some good music. There were all kinds of exercises going on, running races, high and long jump, boxing, etc., but of all nothing interested me so much as what they call *Pull Devil, Pull Baker*, which consists of pulling a rope, a certain number of men on one end and as many on the other. So 8 Sailors were against 8 Soldiers. The command was given and they pulled together; it was great fun to see the Sailors walk off with the rope. The soldiers seemed to be not satisfied, so they tried again, but of course the Sailors were the victors. At five o'clock the *Spitfire* left but a great many of our men were left behind. The wind-up was a little fighting on board between the Sailors and Soldiers. We got to the dockyard at 9 o'clock.

April 24, Wed. I went to a Concert at Boaz Island which was given by Military and Naval Officers, the 69th Band played the Overture from *Barbieri* and Mr. Lamont (B. Master) played a solo on the Cornet. I played several Accompaniments to our Officer's songs, the whole went off very nicely. Best of all the Singers was Mrs. Dike.

April 28, Sun. I and S. went on shore at 12 o'clock to Mrs. Waterfall and we had dinner at two and went for a walk, had tea and remained there all day.

May 3, Fri. Another Concert in the Sparyard Naval Theatre. I commenced the first and second Part of the Programme, playing with the Stringband the Overtures *Figaro* and *Calif of Bagdad*. Then Songs, Duets, Trios, etc. as usual, but the best was the *Death of Nelson*, sung by Srg. Rathbone with Band Accompaniment. Everyone seemed to be pleased with the night's performance and it really went off very well indeed.

May 13, Mon. The whole Ship's Company turned over to the *Iresistible* (Guard Ship) as the *Royal Alfred* has to go in Dock tomorrow. I got a

nice cabin in her, larger than in the R. Alfred and I feel quite comfortable.

May 14, Tues. The Royal Alfred went in the dock. I was watching her on the dock coming in. The Admiral, Governor, and lots of People were there and she went in very nicely.

May 15, Wed. I went in the dock this Morning to have a look at the Royal Alfred. The Water is all pumped out and I walked right around; she rather astonished me as I saw her this morning. I had no Idea that she was as big as I saw her this morning. I spoke to some of the workmen who informed me that the false Keel of her is gone entirely which will take some time to repair. In the Evening we had a Theatrical Performance in the Naval Theatre-Sparyard given by Naval Officers. They performed two Pieces, the first entitled: "Heads or Tails", the next: "A Kiss in the Dark." Messrs. Poe and Girdlestone (Officers of the Alfred) performed very nicely indeed. Also a Comic Divertissement on the Violin by Herr von Schwann. Sailor of the Daine was done very well. I had the Stringband there and played several Pieces during the performance. It commenced at 8 p.m.; finished at 10 p.m.

May 19, Sun. I and Mr. Simmons spent a nice afternoon at Mr. Brays. We had a walk altogether as far as the Churchyard, then went back to tea and had some sacred Music on the Harmonium afterwards until it was time to go on board again.

May 20, Mon. Our officers gave a large Dinner Party this Evening on board the Irresistible and invited Mr. Barnaby, the Head Man of the docking Business and some others besides. The dinner was given as a Compliment to them for docking the Royal Alfred so safely. I played with the Stringband; they were delighted with the band—so would I have been if it hadn't been so late, it was nearly eleven o'clock when it was over.

May 22, Wed. I went over to Somerset to tune two Pianos, the people treated me very well, they sent a boat to bring me over and take me back again. In the first house I had dinner and in the other tea and one of the young ladies gave me a nice bunch of flowers when I left.

May 23, Thurs. I, Simmons, Thacker, Mr. and Mrs. Waterfall had a Picnic. We drove right around Bermuda Island and made a halt at the lighthouse. We had to get up 180 steps before we got to the top, but it is a beautiful sight looking over the little Islands. I believe there are as many as days of the year. When we got down again we went to a shadowy place amongst the bushes, one carrying a basket, the other some bottles, another the corkscrew, preparing for dinner, and a splendid dinner we made of it. Bye and Bye we started again and proceeded as far as

Hamilton, where we met the Organist of Trinity Church, who gave us a great treat on the Organ. I also had the pleasure of playing on it. It is not a large Organ, but has a very powerful tone, two Manuales and about 20 stops. At 3:30 p.m. we left Hamilton and drove back again; we arrived near the dockyard at half past seven after a day's thorough enjoyment.

May 28, Tues. A Ball at Captain Aplins took place at night where I played with the small Stringband.

May 29, Wed. We had a grand dinner at the □ [This symbol occurs four times in the Diary. I do not know what it stands for.—M.W.] in honour of our S.W. Barnaby; all members and a great many visitors were present so we had over seventy at the table. The □ was beautifully decorated so that I hardly knew it to be the same. 6 of my Bandsmen played a Programme of music while we were at dinner; then we sent them away and enjoyed ourselves till 12 o'clock. Some fine Speeches were given, plenty of toasts came off, my health was drunk and so the evening passed by very pleasantly. Mr. Barnaby wished everyone goodbye—he is going to England next Saturday—and he and everyone of us was very sorry that he had to leave.

June 6, Thurs. A large Garden Party came off today in the Admiral's House; the Steam Launch took the Band over and back again. We played a very long programme, but all the people were very pleased and some of them told me that, if the 69th and 53rd Bands had been here, it would have taught them a lesson.

June 11, Tues. I went on dock this morning to have a last look at the bottom of the Royal Alfred. They have put on a new false Keel and repaired her very nicely altogether. At 12 o'clock when it was high tide, she went out of the dock, hundreds of people looking on, and went alongside the breakwater again.

June 12, Wed. Another theatrical Performance in the Sparyard by the Officers of the Fleet, but I am very sorry to say it was very poorly indeed, it was the miserablest performance I have ever seen. They were going to have another Performance on Friday, but I hear they have given it up.

June 13, Thurs. The whole Ship's Company turned over to the Royal Alfred again.

June 14, Fri. I went over to Somerset to tune some Pianos. In the meantime the R. Alfred went out of the Camber ready to start next morning.

June 15, Sat. We left *Bermuda* at half past twelve. It has been a very hot day; the Thermometer was up to 115 on the Poop at Noon when I was playing, going out of the Harbour. It was very pleasant this Evening. I had the Band on deck and the Admiral, Captain, and Officers were

listening on the Poop. I played the Naval and Military Airs and there wasn't a soul down below, but everyone, Officers and Men were on deck to listen to it. I had the pleasure of taking a Glass of Wine with the Admiral when it was over. Afterwards we had a quiet Party on the Forebridge till half past eleven and now I am going to turn in. Good-night.

June 20, Thurs. We arrived in Halifax at daylight (4 o'clock a.m.) and the Ship went out again at 9 a.m. for target practice, but the Captain was kind enough to give me leave so I went on shore to see my friends again. The Ship returned at 6 p.m.

June 21, Fri. I and Emma went to a Concert given in the Gardens, the 87th Band and Mrs. Somebody played and sang alternately some fine music. At 11 p.m. I met Mr. Campbell who was going to leave us early next morning. As an old friend he wished me to see him off to the **Station.**

June 22, Sat. Having slept at the Acadian Hotel I got up early in the morning. We had breakfast together and drove to the Railway Station; we proceeded by Rail as far as Bedford where I wished him goodbye and went back again by the next train.

June 24, [sic] Sun. I and E at a Concert. St. Mary's Cathedral.

June 27 [sic], Wed. Practice at Mr. Cogswells in the evening.

June 31 [sic] Sun. I went to Mr. Cogswells after dinner, had tea there and then went to Creightons.

July 2, Tues. I had to play at a Dinner party in the Admiral's house, but unfortunately I was taken ill and had to leave. However, I recovered soon and went to Miss Dudson where we had a very pleasant evening.

July 3, Wed. A Ball on board a ship.

July 4, Thurs. The Cherub—one of the Gunboats—got on shore about 130 miles from Halifax, so the Royal Alfred had to go out to assist in getting her off, but the Captain was kind enough to give me leave to remain behind.

July 6, Sat. The Royal Alfred came back at noon. The Cherub got off before they came down.

July 8, Mon. I played with the Band in the Admiral's house in the Afternoon.

July 9, Tues. Went to a party at Creightons.

July 14, Sun. After service I went to Mr. Cogswell. I had dinner and tea there and then went to the Creightons till half past eleven.

July 16, Tues. I, E. and Mrs. Gordon went to a Bazaar; at half past seven I visited the Standard □. In the meantime Emma went to Miss Dudson where I called after the Lodge was closed and we went home together. It was half past twelve before I got on board.

July 21, Sun. I went to Herr Wernthal (Bandmaster 87th Regiment) after division in the morning. I had dinner with him and then we had a long walk together; at 7 o'clock I went to the Creightons, then with E to Mr. Davisons friends of her. And so the Sunday passed by very pleasantly.

July 23, Tues. I played with the small Stringband to a dance at McNab's Island, finished at 12 o'clock, but coming back the Steamer got on shore and we had to pull all the way home. We arrived on board the R. Alfred at 3 in the morning.

July 24, Wed. I had to play at the festival in McNab's Island with the full band. There was another Picnic at the same Island, where I was invited to go, so about 3 p.m. I gave my band in charge of the Sergeant and went to the other Picnic; it would have been very pleasant had it been a fine day, but it was raining. Very much which spoiled everything.

July 27, Sat. I and Emma went up to Bedford in the train, unfortunately we had a miserable day again.

July 28, Sun. I had dinner and tea with Mr. Cogswell; we had a walk on the Common in the Afternoon and I and Emma had another after tea.

July 30, Tues. Mr. Kingscote—Officer in charge of the Band—went home in the Mail as his Mother is dangerously ill. Mr. Hand—1st Lieutenant—takes charge during his absence. I am afraid I will find a great difference in the change. Mr. Kingscote was such a nice Gentleman and everyone is sorry that he left, he will be away perhaps for three months.

August 1, Thurs. I went to a Concert with E. at the Gardens.

August 2, Fri. We had a nice walk together at the Dartmouth side.

August 3, Sat. Went with the Creightons to a quiet Picnic at the other Side, but it was a rainy day which made it rather unpleasant.

August 4, Sun. I spent the afternoon with Wernthal, Cornelius and Clemen and the Evening with E.

August 5, Mon. I played to a dance at Mrs. Scotts with the Quintette and it went off very nicely.

August 7, Wed. We had a dance on board in the Evening, but Mr. Hand was good enough to excuse me from it so we had a practice at Mr. Cogswells as usual.

August 8, Thurs. A large Dinner Party on board, lots of German Officers were there, amongst which was Herr von Rooen the Son of the Minister of War in Germany. They were very merry. The Band played until 11 o'clock.

August 9, Fri. As this was to be the last day in Halifax before going away, I asked leave, which was given to me. Emma and I had a long

walk in the country and in the Evening we went to Miss Dudson. She had invited some friends and we had a very pleasant Evening. It has been a very hot day, the Thermometer indicated 93 in the Shade and 117 in the Sun. I took a good farewell from Emma at night, as the ship was ordered to go to sea at daylight tomorrow morning.

August 10, Sat. I heard this morning that the Ship would not leave before two in the Afternoon so I went on shore once more to take another farewell. At half past two we left *Halifax*, sailing out of the harbour.

August 12, Mon. Arrived at Sydney—Cape Breton—at 2 p.m.

August 13, Tues. I went on Shore this Afternoon with the Band and played on the Cricket Ground. Sydney seemed to be a very dull place; therefore, as soon as the Band was over, I went on board again.

August 14, Wed. We had lots of Ladies on board the Launch, gave them a short dance afterwards and then proceeded on our course to Newfoundland.

August 15, Thurs. Target practice all day.

August 16, Fri. Concert at Sea in the after Battery; commenced at 8:30 p.m. with the first part of Beethoven's 5th Quintette in E flat, then a Part-Song, performed by Captain Nicholson, Mr. Cockraft, and the Rev. Meacham. 3 was a solo sung by Meacham; 4 a duett for Flute and Violin—Mr. Schwabe and I—accompanied by Prince of Battenberg on the Piano; 5, another Part-Song; 6 a solo by Mr. Cockraft; 7 a Duett on the Piano from Figaros Marriage, Prince B. and I which finished the first part of the Programme.

I opened the second Part with my Quintette playing the Andante from Beethoven's 5th Quintette; 2 was the Duett called the Larboard Watch, sung by Capt. Nicholson and Mr. Meacham; 3 was a Part-Song; 4 another solo for Mr. Cockraft; 5, a Solo for me on the Violin, accompanied by Prince B.; 6 Part-Song; 7 another Piano Duett, *Los Pajaritos Di Oro*, and then *God Save the Queen*. It was a great success and everyone was very pleased. I had Supper with the Captain, afterwards went to bed at half past one.

August 18, Sun. Arrived at St. John's—Newfoundland—at 2 p.m. I had the afternoon on shore with L; we got acquainted with some people living about a mile in the country who made us very welcome.

August 19, Mon. Those people came on board in the afternoon and we showed them around on board the ship. At night I played a ball at Judge Robinsons with my Quintette.

August 21, Wed. I played with the Band in the Governor's Ground and afterwards visited the St. John's Lodge.

August 22, Thurs. My Birthday—I had to play with the Band from 2 till 8 for a large Bonnet-Hop on board.

August 23, Fri. The Gentlemen of St. John's gave a Public Ball in honour of Admiral Fanshane and the Officers of the Fleet, my band was in attendance.

August 24, Sat. Played with the Band in the Governor's Grounds again, then went to Tea at Mrs. Warringtons and afterwards to Mrs. Jocelyns where I had a very pleasant Evening.

August 25, Sun. I had an Invitation to dine with Mrs. Warrington and spent the day with her, also Mr. Simmons. We went there and had a drive after dinner to some friends of the same Simmons and I got acquainted with the day of our arrival. We had tea up there and stayed until 11 o'clock.

August 26, Mon. Left St. John's at 11 p.m.

August 28, Wed. We had another Concert tonight, similar to the former. The Admiral honoured us with his presence and seemed to enjoy it very much. The Ship was rolling heavily which made it rather awkward for the Players and the Singers. I think it is a good idea of Capt. Nicholson to arrange something of this kind now and then at sea, it cheers one up a little.

August 29, Fri. Arrived at *Halifax* at 8 p.m. and went along side at once. I went on shore after dinner to see Miss E. of course, but found nobody at home but a Servant girl who informed me that the whole family had gone to a Picnic; was a note left for me or a message? No. I walked off but was very much put out, that she should go to a Picnic, she knowing that the Ship had arrived. I went away and made up my mind not to be in a hurry as to calling again. I saw Mr. and Mrs. Cogswell both well, the latter and I went to Temperance Hall where an Italian Opera Company performed Lucia di Lammermoor. Going down, whom should I meet but Miss E. coming from the Picnic. She asked me to come up to see her after the play was over, but I refused, so she went with us to the Hall. Coming home she asked me what was the matter because I seemed to be very dull. I told her the reason why, to which she said that she had been obliged to go, that it was the St. Paul's Sunday School Picnic and she had to take charge of her class, but she had told her mother to wait for me and bring me down, that she waited till two o'clock, an hour before I went up. However, I was disappointed and told her so.

August 31, Saturday. I have not been up to see E. today.

September 1, Sun. Had dinner and tea with the Cogswells, E. arrived in the Afternoon, while C and I were out for a walk, so after tea I went up.

I believe I made her very miserable by not coming up before, however we made it alright again.

September 2, Mon. Playing in the Admiral's House in the afternoon, had a walk with E. afterwards on the common.

September 3, Tues. I met E. in Mrs. Gordons after dinner and then went for a walk, spent the Evening together at Mr. Cogswells.

September 4, Wed. Mr. Littlejohns—one of our officers—got married today. I spent the Afternoon in Creightons.

September 5, Thurs. There was a rumour on board and about town that I was to be married today, but the beauty of it was that I did not know anything at all about it. Mr. Cogswell was taken ill today, so I spent the whole afternoon in the sick chamber.

September 7, Sat. I wrote a note to Mr. Creighton today explaining matters and received a favourable answer.

September 9, Mon. Miss E. and I spent the Evening with Miss Dodson.

September 12, Thurs. I played a Ball at Colonel Clarkes with the Quintette, went off very nicely.

September 15, Sun. It has been raining all day; Mr. Simmons and I went on shore after division, to Lehys Garden first. As it was too wet to walk about in the Garden, we went into the house, the two Miss Lehys made us very welcome, we heard some nice music and enjoyed ourselves until 1 o'clock. We had dinner at the Exeter Hotel and then parted, he went to his friends and I to mine.

September 16, Mon. I practiced the Sweethearts and Wives Waltzes this morning. The Officers seemed to like them very much.

September 17, Tues. Played a Ball at Maplewood, had five of my men with me. Got on board at 3:30 in the morning.

September 18, Wed. I went with the Band to the Asylum. Mr. C. played the Cello, the stearn launch took Officers, Ladies and all across and the poor Patients enjoyed themselves very much in dancing until 10:00 p.m. when they all had to retire, the Officers then had a few dances and we all went back in the Launch.

September 19, Thurs. The English Mail arrived this evening, Mr. Kingscote got back. E and I spent a few hours in Mr. Hobsons after the band was over.

September 20, Fri. Had a long walk in the Afternoon with E, went to a R.A. Meeting in the evening, saw E. home afterwards from Mr. Barnabys.

September 22, Sun. Spent the day with Mr. Cogswell.

September 23, Mon. Two years ago I commenced writing my diary; it

was the day I left England, many strange things have happened during that time and many will happen I dare say two years hence. Miss C (Emma), Miss Harvey, Mr. Cogswell and I went on board the Falmouth and had a look around and we all liked her very much. After playing on board at night I went to the Virgin afterwards went home with E. from Miss Dudsons.

September 25, Wed. Mr. Hicks—one of our lieutenants—got married today to a Miss Cogswell. I had a Picnic today; the Staff Commander was kind enough to lend me one of the Harbour Boats for the occasion. There were present: the whole familie of Creightons, Mr. and Mrs. and Willie Cogswell, Mr. Kaye, Mr. Simmons, Miss Martha Dodson and her brother, Miss Harvey, Miss Wilson, and Mr. Hall. The latter was only able to come in the Afternoon. We started from the dockyard at 10 a.m. and sailed up to Navy Island. We had a little target practice and then went to the opposite side. Mr. Kaye lit the fire and some of the Ladys provided some dinner. In the meantime I went with the other Ladys, picking berrys, etc. We had dinner at about 2 p.m., some music and singing afterwards, tea at 5 and started for home at 6:30. Got to the dockyard at 9, where the party broke up after a days thorough enjoyment.

September 27, Fri. Miss E. and I had tea with Mr. Barnaby in Holles Street; when we got home E was surprised to find that she was locked out, however I got in through the window and opened the door for her.

September 29, Sun. Spent the day with Mr. Cogswell.

September 30, Mon. I played a Ball at Dr. Gordons, Piano Cornet and Violin.

October 1, Tues. We had a grand quintette Concert today, two of my men were there to assis:.

October 4, Fri. Miss Harvey, Emma, Ida, and I went up to Bedford in the Afternoon, it was a beautiful day and we enjoyed ourselves very much; we got back about 7 and went to a dance at Mrs. Gordons afterwards, which lasted till 3 in the morning.

October 5, Sat. Took the Mark and Past M. Degree in Freemasons.

October 6, Sun. Miss Harvey, E and I spent the Afternoon with Cogswell, we had tea together and went to the Garrison Chapel afterwards.

October 7, Mon. Miss Harvey went home to Falmouth; E and I saw her off at the Station and had a nice walk afterwards. Dinner Party in the Gun Room in the Evening.

October 8, Sun. Mr. Kerr—a Sublieutenant on board the R. Alfred received his Promotion as a Lieutenant by last Mail—went home today

in the Mail. The dinner in the Gun room last night was given as a farewell to him. He was a very good officer and much liked by everybody. Captain Nicholson had some friends on board to dine with him at night and he asked me if I would stay and let him have some music after dinner, so we had quite a concert, Mr. Schwabe, Prince Battemberg, and I performed some nice pieces, it lasted till twelve o'clock, then I went to bed with rather a

October 10, Thurs. The Band of the 60th Rifles played on the Common this Afternoon. Miss Dudson, E., and I went up but I did not like the band much.

October 11, Fri. E and I spent the evening at Miss Dudsons.

October 13, Sun. I had tea at Mr. Cogswells, spent the evening at Creightons, found it very cold going off on board.

October 16, Wed. Another Practice at the Cogswells with the Quintette. I had three of my men there to make up the number.

October 17, Thurs. I went to the Common this morning to have a look at the Review of our men. My band had to play going up and down; spent the evening at Cogswells and partly at Creightons.

October 20, Sun. I had dinner and tea at Mr. Cogswells. The English mail got in today, but brought no news for me.

October 22, Tues. The Eclipse, having been 4 years and a half on the station, left for England today to be paid off. Mr. Ransey, an Engineer of ours, went home in her.

October 25, Fri. Mr. Wernthal and I had a walk about town this afternoon. I went to a R.A. meeting this Evening, at eleven o'clock to Dudsons to take E. home.

October 23, Wed. We had a practice at Mr. Kayes tonight, but I had such a dreadful pain in my right hand, which made it unpleasant for me.

October 24, Thurs. Mr. Cogswell came on board this afternoon. Simmons and I showed him round, we had tea together, the Band played afterwards and we went on shore at half past nine to his house where we stayed till one o'clock.

October 26, Sat. E. and I had tea with Mr. C.

October 27, Sun. Mr. Cogswell invited me to dine with him today, also Mr. Simmons, Miss Wilson and E; we stayed there all afternoon and enjoyed ourselves very much.

October 29, Tues. I met Mr. D. this morning. He is Bandmaster of HMS Ariadne, she arrived yesterday from Bermuda. I went on board his ship this Evening. Mr. Cogswell also. We heard the band play and afterwards went to Mr. Cogswells House together where we had some Clarinet solos and enough talking from d sharp.

October 30, Wed. I asked Mr. D. Sharp to come on board this evening so he came and I played with the Reed and Stringband to let him hear all the best I could do. We spent a few hours on shore together afterwards.

October 31, Thurs. The order of the day is: we are going to sea tomorrow if the English mail arrives, so I asked leave for today which was given to me. E and I had a long walk in the afternoon. I had tea with her and we spent the evening with Mr. Cogswell. It was two o'clock when I came back on board.

November 1, Fri. The English mail hasn't arrived yet so we won't go today, had another day on shore.

November 2, Sat. The English mail came in at 2:30 p.m., however it was too late to get ready for going so we went before Monday. I had the pleasure of another day with E. and hope to have one more before going down to Bermuda.

November 3, Sun. I had dinner with Mr. Gotts of the Exeter Hotel, after dinner went to Mr. Cogswell. Miss E. arrived at half past four so we had tea together, went to Miss Dudsons afterwards and wished her Good bye, also to Mr. C. and I came on board at 2 o'clock in the morning.

November 4, Mon. We left Halifax at 2 p.m., the wind being favourable, we sailed out of the harbour, the band of the Ariadne playing "Goodbye Sweetheart Goodbye" and "Auld lang syne", I feel rather miserable today, not being accustomed to stay on board all day; the ship is rolling very heavily, it is 9 o'clock now and the best thing for me to do is go to bed.

November 5, Tues. While I was playing with the Band tonight one of our Chief Petty Officers died very suddenly; the poor man was on leave in Halifax only three days ago. He is a married man with a family, I hear, and only had another year to serve for his pension. He was one of the finest men on board.

November 6, Wed. This has been a sad day on board, the funeral of the poor man who died last night took place at 11:30 a.m. All Officers and Men gathered on the Quarter deck to pay the last sad token of respect to their departed Shipmate. The band on the poop played the Dead March in Saul, the messmates of the dead carried the corpse along the Main deck where it was lain. As the procession reached the Quarter deck, it was met by the Chaplain who led the way, reading the Burial Service, to the gangway. As the words were heard, "We therefore commit his body to the deep," every nerve seemed strained. To hear the splash and plunge that covered forever from our sight the companion of many happy and sorrowful days. Slowly and sadly—as the bugle sounded "Disperse" everyone turned from

The spot in the lone, lone sea,
 The spot, unmarked but holy,
 Where now the gallant and the free,
 In his ocean bed lies lonely.

It makes me feel so sad to lose a shipmate, especially at sea, although I only knew the man by sight.

November 8, Fri. We had the wildest weather during the night I ever experienced. It blew a perfect hurricane. We had very heavy weather going down to Bermuda in 1870, but it cannot be compared to that of last night. I went on deck about ten o'clock; it was indeed a wild scene, the night very dark, the roar of wind and sea quite deafening, the rolling dreadful. Tons of water found its way below every minute, even to the cockpit. My cabin was in a frightful mess, all the music came down from the shelves and about a foot deep of water rushed over it now and then. It will take me weeks to get it all square again. However, the Royal Alfred behaved well and got through it. It is quite calm today which, no doubt, is welcome to every one.

November 10, Sun. The rest of our voyage was very slowly, but pleasant enough. We arrived at *Bermuda* at 4 in the afternoon.

November 12, Tues. The doctor put me in the Sicklist this morning as I have the Rheumatism in my right leg.

November 13, Wed. Target practice all the forenoon.

So ends August Hecker's record of the last two years of his short life. He died 21 days later, on December 4, 1872. The following letters to his brother Joseph touch upon the circumstances of his death; one is from August's good friend Simmons, the other two from Captain Nicholson of the *Royal Alfred*:

HMShip "Royal Alfred"
 Bermuda Dec. 17, 1872

Mr. J. Hecker

Dear Sir

Being a very great friend of your brother I think it my duty to write this letter to you informing you that Mr. Hecker was taken ill on or about the 8th of Nov. last while the Ship was at Sea during our passage from Halifax to the West Indies. We arrived at Bermuda on the 9th and as he appeared to get worse was taken up in to the sick bay or hospital on board the Ship. Not improving anything he was conveyed to the Hospital on shore on the 22nd. I went to see

him on the 24th and sat with him for about one hour. While I was there Capt. Nicholson came in and stood talking to him for sometime. I had not another opportunity again of seeing him for a week when he was quite delirious, at last he got so bad that no one was allowed to see him but myself, Doctor, and nurse. On Sunday the 1st of Dec. he became delirious and from that time until he died did not know me at all. On the 3rd I was up at the Hospital with him and on the 4th and as I found he was fast sinking, and not having leave to go out of the Dockyard at the time, I returned on board and asked permission to go and sit with him until he died. I hurried off as soon as I got leave, but when I arrived the Dr. told me he had died just before. I had some of His hair cut off, some of which I send to you thinking perhaps you might wish to have some yourself, also to send to His dear relations.

The Paymaster is looking after all accounts, music, etc. pertaining to your dear late Brother. Prince Louis Battenberg told me he was going to write also. I have written to his friends in Halifax, also to Miss Emma Creighton's uncle.

You will please excuse me writing anything more as I cannot bear to think of it. It now appears to me like a dream. I will conclude dear Sir

With kind but

Mournful regards

Your late Bros. Friend

R.A. Simmons

Gunner R.N.

HMMS "Royal Alfred"

West Indies

HMS Royal Alfred

February

December, '73

My dear Sir.

In reply to your letter of Dec. 28th—beg to inform you that the effects of your late brothers have been disposed of with the custom of the Service—all his music and such of his property as we considered would be suitable mementos for members of his family or which would be more remuneratively disposed of at home have been retained in safe custody—and notice given to his father who is the inheritor of his sons property—for all details I must refer you to your father.

The immediate cause of your brothers death was a deep seated abcess in the right thigh. I saw him frequently during his illness, and I don't think that he suffered very much, he appeared to sink very gradually for the last day or two of his illness. His loss we shall not in any way be able to replace on board the "Royal Alfred." His duties were always performed with zeal and success and I feel that I speak within the mark when I say that he was mourned for as a very dear friend by very many of his shipmates. He is buried in the Naval Cemetery at Bermuda where by this time a suitable monument I believe has been erected to his memory.

I must ask you to receive the expression of my warm sympathy
and to believe me
very faithfully yours

Bermuda

H. Nicholson
Captain Royal Alfred

HMS Royal Alfred

July 25th '73

My dear Sir

Your Father having written to Prince Louis of Battenberg to desire that the music and instruments of your late brother should be given to you, I have to inform you that there is a chest on board the ship containing music, a violin, and a clarionette at your disposal.

As the Royal Alfred will return to England in October I think your best plan will be to let it remain on board until then and write to me when (by the papers) you see that the Ship has arrived.

The funeral march* that you were good enough to send me was safely received, but without a band master and with a very weak band I'm afraid we shall not be able to perform it.

Yours very faithfully
H. Nicholson
Captain

Sent to Mr. J. Hecker Bandmaster 82nd Regt.

*This funeral march, written by August's brother Joseph, was played by members of Joseph's Watch Factory Military Band at Joseph's funeral in Elgin, Illinois, in 1916.