

U.S.S. Chesapeake,

At anchor off Montauk, Pt.

June 23, 1903.

Dear Father:-

Our cruise in the Chesapeake is over half over. We left Annapolis on June 8th, that is, the Standish towed us down the Bay about twenty miles and then turned us loose. We went aboard on the sixth but lay at the dock until the morning of the 8th. The Indiana and the Hartford left early that morning. The following is an extract from my log.

Monday, June 6, 1903.

Today at 8:45 a.m. the midshipmen

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fell in according to assignments to the practice ships; and then marched to the Santee dock where the Hartford and Indiana divisions embarked at once on the Standish. We soon received our billets and lockers and by dinner time we had all of our effects stowed. We have a very good lot of officers this year and they are as follows: Capt. Halsey in command; Lieut. Shoemaker as executive officer; Stines as navigator and Pollock, Hoff, Cotton, and Jones as watch and division officers. After dinner we cast off our moorings and tied up to a buoy in the stream.

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During the afternoon the German warship "Panther," (the one connected with the Venezuelan trouble), entered the harbor and anchored very near us. She is a very small ship. We spent the rest of the day in getting acquainted with the men and in things about the ship. I was perfectly at home however and it seemed just last week that we returned from last year's cruise.

June 7 – Quite a while before everything was still about deck last night, as the new youngsters couldn't get over the excitement of sleeping in hammocks, one or two fell to the deck and made a big racket. It rained in the morning and made things awfully sloppy on deck. The chaplain came aboard and we had prayers, - there were a number of visitors, - ladies and gentlemen present. Spent the afternoon in grumbling because we had to stay at anchor so long. Have just heard that the 1st and 2d classes are to receive details of one week each on the torpedo fleet for one week at a time. 2 1st classmen and 2 2d classmen will be detailed to each of the five torpedo boat

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destroyers, Bainbridge, Dale, Stewart, Chauncey, and the Barry. It will be very pleasant on them – I hope.

June 8. During breakfast, the torpedo flotilla weighed anchor and headed up the Bay. The Indiana, Hartford, and Texas, started down the Bay about noon, and at two o'clock, the Standish took us in tow and turned us loose about twenty miles down the Bay. About this time the torpedo boats passed us on their way to the Capes. They were moving through the water at about twenty knots per hour. We dropped anchor for the night.

June 9. Dead calm all morning, so we had an “abandon ship” drill, and they are certainly a lot of trouble. We hoisted out all the boats and loaded them with provisions, etc. and left the ship for a few minutes. While we were thus engaged, the French battleship “Tage” went by on her way to the Capes. She looked more like a tramp steamer than a battleship. The captain gave us permission to go in swimming over the ship side.

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That was great fun. We had sail drill and light yard drill all afternoon.

June 10, - Had a “fire” drill. Then after that a “collision” drill. We hoisted out all the boats, and made every preparation to leave the ship. At 11am, weighed anchor and sailed until 5pm when we dropped anchor again. The first classmen had the bridge and tacked ship, etc. until we (the two lower classes) were tired of it. Winds so far have been very light.

June 11, - Weighed anchor at 1pm and sailed until 6 pm.

June 12, - first fair wind right down the Bay and we sailed all day, making an average of 8 knots per hour. Anchored as usual about sundown. Encountered our first squall today. The Standish came long side after supper with mail and provisions.

June 13. Sailed for a few hours today and anchored off York River.

June 14. Our first real rough weather today. The ship swung with tide and the wind was on the beam. Consequently she rolled and bucked considerable.

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About forty people were so seasick that the lee rail was lined all day.

June 15. Sailed for a few hours today and anchored twenty miles from Capes.

June 16. At anchor all day.

June 17. Standish arrived in morning with wash, mail and provisions. She also brought those midshipmen who had been sent to Washington ~~for~~ to be re-examined physically. So far we have had but a few recitations in navigation, etc. Spent the afternoon in securing things for sea.

June 18. Left the Capes early in morning with a fair wind. By evening we were well out in the Atlantic. That night we began our (watch and watch) system, that is, one watch on deck for four hours while the other was below. One night a person gets about three hours sleep and the next night about seven. We kept this up for five days, and on the sixth day we

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had to come to anchor off Montauk Point on account of a heavy sea and heavy fog. During these five days we experienced all kinds of weather, rain, fog, clear sunshine, squally, etc. One day it would be so hot that we would take off nearly all our clothes. The next we would have to bundle up in reefers and anything we could get to keep us warm.

Early this morning a heavy gale blew up. We shortened sail and made everything snug but in spite of this, the waves would break over her bow and wet everything and everybody. We weathered Montauk Pt. by the skin of our teeth; in fact, had we been an hour later, the fog would

have shut us out, and we would have had to run out to sea again, perhaps for a few days. At present,

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we are bobbing around like a cork in a heavy sea. A heavy fog is all around us, and our anchors are dragging. A great many were very seasick, but thanks to the good condition in which I had kept my stomach all spring, I was not touched by it.

We expected to reach New London tonight but as it stands now, we will probably be there tomorrow some time. We are hurrying to get there because we have a very sick seaman on board.

So far the cruise has gone fine – no one has grumbled, except those who were so seasick. We have had pretty good fare, and our officers have been fine. I would willingly exchange my part on the Indiana for the Chesapeake. We hope to be in New London in time to see the Harvard – Yale boat races, which come off on

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June 25. We will change to the Indiana on July 3d not at Boston as I wrote you but in Gardiner's Bay or at New London.

Well, I will close until we reach New London. My best love to Mother, the children, Aunt Augusta, and all the rest.

Your son,

[signed]

Chester W Nimitz

Just had a chance to send this ashore at Orient Pt.

We are now anchored in Gardiner's Bay and will be in New London tomorrow. I will write to Grandfather before we leave New London.