



PENINSULAR & ORIENTAL STEAM NAVIGATION COY

S.S. Samali

Dec: 2: 1903

Indian Ocean.

Wednesday

White Man clad in a loose white dressing gown with a hood, with bare feet & sandals, which simple article of apparel I borrowed from various people. The talk was rather a fine affair and the jokes were remarkably pretty considering that most of them were made up on the voyage. McKim went on the respectable Scott, & a man truly resulting respectable object I have rarely seen.

Thursday Dec: 3rd

Yesterday afternoon a gun-kana was held for which I was commander. I managed to win three first prizes in the Whistling race, the wheelbarrow race & the obstacle race. The first two were rather good performances, but I am rather proud of the last as all sorts of athletes were in fact

The race was all round the ship. You first ran down the hurricane deck, then crawled under a thick rope netting tied down to the deck, then through a small barrel suspended from the mast, then down to the cargo deck & over a treacherous hanging rope network, then up a greased plank (a diabolical contrivance) to the fore-castle, then over two beams & a running spar, then & swim through a great canvas bath while the canvas played two hoops in your face, then back to the hurricane deck & through a swinging life belt, ending up with a very hot crawl through a 207 and wind sail. I was with same ear, but I think that will be my last obstacle race in the tropics.

There is really very little to write about on board ship unless you keep paying places. So my stock of news has petered out. Several of the nicest people on board are going off at Colombo & I shall be quite sorry to part with them. But Colant Marwick, a Jew no fellow who is resident at Manipal, & many other good men are going on to Calcutta.

This morning there has been a ladies' cricket match between the first & 2nd class clubs, in which the second class were hands down by 70 to 4. I am reading the Raiders again with the greatest pleasure. It is really very good - in

a different hemisphere from Crockett's
later work. It is that I am
still going away at Madras &
the Police code etc.

We have just passed a very picturesque island, one of
the Maldives. It consists of a great ring of coral reef
covered with palm trees & a dense bright green mangrove
which from a distance looks exactly like beautiful
green seaweed. At one end is a wreck, at the other
a lighthouse. The only apparent habitation, the words
are great round lake very shallow, and the light green
of the water looks very picturesque, set in the deep
blue of the Indian Ocean.

Friday Dec: 4th

The weather is pleasantly cool again today.
Yesterday was distinctly disagreeable, a muggy sticky
heat, & I was again sensation going through these
tropics. Last night when I turned in the hour or ahead
you fairly glowed with lightning & we were running
straight for it. I slept on the stern deck as usual,
about 3:0 A.M. was awakened by the most abrupt
storm of rain lashing over my legs. It was my first
experience of a tropical thunderstorm. The sound of rain
was something appalling & every moment great bluish-
green sheets of lightning flashed up. I was driven
for refuge to my Cabin where I slept peacefully
till morning, & now the air is delightfully clean &
cool. When I awoke we had just come into sight of
Cape Canara at the extreme south of India, my first view
of the land of my adoption. The Cape looked rather fine,

high blue-black rocks with a wet mist trailing
away from the summit. We reach Colaba this evening
about 9:0 or 10:0. Tomorrow morning I shall probably call
on Mr. Thomsen's friend, then some people want me
to go on expedition with them.

I am wearing very much for news of
you all but I shan't get any for
another week. I do hope you & Mrs
has been writing regularly to Calcutta
I sincerely hope I shall hear that my old
Mother is keeping well & bright. I suppose you
will be with her at Christmas about the time
this letter arrives. It will be some little time before
we are all together again at that season. But
Oh Oh! said the Dutchess, as I should
say. My love & warmest Christmas
greetings to every one

Ever yours

W. Mearns