

MY DEAR CHILDREN :—Sister writes to tell me you liked my last letter to you very much. As you have been so kind as to say so there is only one thing I can do now and that is to send you another letter.

Before beginning to write I had to thaw out the ink which was frozen solid. For the last few weeks we have had very severe frosts. The sea is covered with solid ice as far as one can see. One afternoon four of us went for a walk on it a distance of 400 yards or more. We might have gone much further but thought it wiser not to do so in case of accidents. A few days ago two officers attempted to walk ashore from their boat which was frozen in at Ching Wang Tso, a place seven miles up the coast. They got on to an ice floe which broke away from the other ice. They spent twenty-five hours on it and were eventually blown to shore by a breeze, which, luckily for them, was landwards.

Now I must try and give you a short description of our International Parade before Field Marshal Count Von Waldersee. Personally I began the day very uncomfortably. It was very cold. My horse had not been out of the stable for a week and was just jumping out of his skin with excitement. My long blue overcoat and cold steel scabbard dangling against his flanks did not tend to soothe him very much, so that I had a fairly lively time of it.

First the troops were massed together for Waldersee's inspection, and when this was over they marched past in companies while he stood at the saluting base and returned all the salutes with his baton. The Germans marched past first, as a compliment to him, and the other nations followed in alphabetical order.

For soldierly appearance and proficiency in drill the Russians and our Sepoys were easily first. The Germans were very funny. They march with a very high step ending in a vigorous stamp, rather a laboured performance altogether. The Japs were even more funny, for they tried to copy the high kick of the Germans, and being small men and moving much more slowly, the effect they produced was ludicrous.

The Italians and Austrians had a few sailors each and were out of it, in a military show. The French Zouaves, usually so picturesque in their pretty uniforms, rather spoilt things by appearing with a huge bundle of kit on their backs, surmounted by tin drinking cups.

The Field Marshal himself is a dear old man with a kind, handsome face.

I must try and tell you, too, of the Funeral Service of our late much beloved Queen.

The salutes were fired with Chinese guns. The Chaplain of the gun-boat could not land so the General read the service. The scene was a most impressive one. Our troops formed three sides of a square and the officers closed up the fourth. The allies each sent a representative contingent. While the service was going on the guns solemnly boomed away in the distance at minute intervals, and we began at last actually to realize that our Sovereign Lady, whom each one of us had sworn to serve by land or by sea, in peace or in war, to whom we were bound even to the death, had fought her good fight and passed away to her rest. After this service the Union Jack was again seen flying full mast, and on Proclamation Day His Majesty issued a royal mandate that we who were in Her service should continue in his.