

IV.

H.M.S. *Britannia*. Sunday, 15th July 1883.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I start from here by the 7.13 a.m. on Friday next. According to my observations in the Bradshaw, I get to Fordingbridge by the 2.9 p.m., but I am not quite certain, as I am not an over practised hand. Ben has got the mullygrubs again somewhere about him, and has gone to the hospital, so he can't do his exams. It will put him a term back, I am afraid, but I don't expect he will mind much. I can't make out what's the row with him. When I last saw him he had a silk handkerchief tied round his neck. I am getting on finely with my exam., but I don't think I did my physical geography very well, although I am pretty sure that I passed in it. There is only five days more now. I hope you have got some blackberry jam in the store-room, as there are no strawberries, because cream and blackberry jam are spiffing when they are mixed together. How's father getting on? I hope he is keeping that rifle clean, ready for me to use. Won't I shoot a lot of rabbits when I get home, by Jove! This is a jolly long letter, so you must write me a jolly long one back or I won't give you any cream. I will bring all my clothes back if you like, only there won't be room for my hammock, or I could bring that. Are all the girls at home now? Ask Barby and the twins if they are coming out ferreting with me next holidays? Has Tizard ever seen that pike since it has been stuffed? Ask him if he knows where any more big ones are. If he does, tell him I will come and catch 'em for him. Good-bye.—Your loving son,

EDWARD A. BAIRD.