OLD FRIENDS RETURN.

H. M. S. "Amphion" Goes Into Commission to Replace the "Satellite" on This Station.

The Second Move in the Improvement Plan—The "Hope" is Stranded.

The second move in the well considered plan for increasing the efficiency of Her Majesty's North Pacific squadron, as outlined in the COLONIST several weeks ago, is the commissioning of the well remembered Amphion to replace the Satellite in Admiral Pallisser's fleet. The returning favorite is no longer in command of Captain E. Grey Hulton, but his successor is by no means a stranger to the station, being no other than Captain Frank Finnes, who was last here in H. M. S. Royal Arthur. His officers also include a number of old friends—Lieutenants Leake, Browell, Hawke, Wintour, Hamilton and Jones; Sub-Lieutenant Crawford; Paymaster Braddon; Assistant Paymaster Lyas, and Dr. Scerecker, the latter of whom was also on the Royal Arthur recently. The ship herself is especially well remembered, for the joviality of her former commander and company, her light desertion list and the exceptional neatness of her every appointment; as well as for her adventure in the fog while proceeding to Vancouver with Lord Stanley, the governor-general of Canada, and the members of the vice-regal party. There is a souvenir of this adventure in the provincial museum to-day—a piece of bent and twisted bilge-keel, compressed in folds like those of a great concertina—while the story of how the injured warship, having received what seemed a mortal blow, turned and ran for Esquimalt dock, and made it safely, is a tale that is told wherever the pluck and nerve of the typical Briton afloat is known and admired. The task of repairing the Amphion after this memorable accident was the largest undertaking of the kind ever attempted on the Coast, and in testimony to the good work of the Albion Iron Works people she is to-day one of the best ships of her class in the navy. As showing how much superior she is in every way to the vessel she replaces, the following summarized comparison is interesting:

Amphion.	*Satellite.*
Twin screw cruiser of the second class; 4,300 tons and 5,900 I. H. P.	Screw cruiser of the third class; 1,420 tons and 950 I. H. P.

The new comer is to complete her commissioning at Portsmouth next Thursdays and sail before the end of the month for Esquimalt. There is considerable movement at the naval suburb just now, and departures and preparations for departure are the order of the day. The Pheasant sails on Saturday for Acapulco, intending to be absent for three months or more in southern waters; the flagship leaves the same day on a cruise to Comox and other points on the East coast; and the Icarus is taking on stores preparatory for a move to sea, with what objective point no one as yet seems acquainted.

TO SEARCH FOR BUSINESS.

The Puget Sound Tugboat Company is having installed on the tug Tyee an electric light plant with sufficient capacity for 50 lights on the basis of 16-candle power each. The company is also having built a special searchlight of 3,000 candle power. The machine is of the design and make of the Northwest Fixture Company, and is so mounted that when placed in position it will cover about two-thirds of the compass, thus casting its ray almost around the tug, with the exception of the stern quarter, which is estimated taking in about a third of the circle. This machine is capable of throwing its rays forward, port or starboard, a distance of three miles, that objects may be distinguished and the rig of vessels, whether bark, ship or schooner, can be plainly discerned at a distance of one and a half miles. If the search light on this tug works satisfactorily it is believed that all the tugs of the company will be provided with similar lights.

THE "HOPE" ASHORE.

The tug Hope, while towing a barge on which was the lumber for the new bridge at Sooke, went ashore yesterday about one o'clock on a sandbar at the mouth of Sooke river. She will no doubt float off safely with this morning's tide, which will be the highest of the year. It was when the tide was at the half ebb that the steamer and her tow grounded, and no misapprehension for the safety of either is expressed in consequence.

MARINE NOTES.

It was 4 o'clock yesterday morning when the Islander got in from Vancouver. She had waited near Plumper's Pass until Tuesday's gale had spent itself, and by the time Victoria was reached comparatively good weather was encountered. Two hours later she sailed for Vancouver and was back again at 8:30 in the evening. She brought the new propeller for the Charmer, which that vessel is now waiting in idleness for.

The majority of E. B. Marvin & Company's sealing fleet cleared yesterday for the spring hunting, intending to sail with the first favorable wind. The Triumph is again commanded by Captain Clarence Cox, and the Sapphire by his brother Captain Will. Captain Harris goes out in the E. B. Marvin, and Captain Nelson commands the Borealis.

The following passengers for this city are on board the steamer City of Puebla, due to arrive from San Francisco to-day: F. W. Burpee, Miss Rose Elwood, Miss Welcke, Miss H. Welcke, A. G. Addison and wife, Miss E. E. Corlett, Mrs. H. MacDonald, J. G. Reinhard, E. B. Brown and E. Frank.

After a thorough overhauling on the Esquimalt marine railway, the tug Lorne re-entered service yesterday, her first duty being to take the ship Province up to the Terminal City to-day and afterwards tow the coal-laden Samaria to sea.

Chilian ship Hindoostan is ready to sail for Iquiqui, Chili, with a $11,935 cargo from the Hastings mill. It contains 100,000 laths, 120,216 feet of flooring and 1,098,740 feet of rough lumber.

The C.P.R. steamship Empress of China reached Hongkong at 9 o'clock yesterday morning.

[From THE DAILY COLONIST, Jan. 1.]

THE CITY.

ST. BARNABAS Sunday school enjoyed their Christmas entertainment at Fernwood hall last evening.

THE amateur minstrel contingent gave a good show to a well-pleased audience at Saanichton last evening.

THE next examinations of the British Columbia Medical Council are to be held in this city on the 12th instant.

NEXT Tuesday evening the annual Morris tube competitions in No. 1 Company will be inaugurated and all members are requested to be present in order that the various classes may be made as complete as possible.

THE children of St. Paul's Presbyterian Sunday school enjoyed their annual reunion last evening, a well-laden Christmas tree, with an incidental musical and literary programme, being provided in Semple's hall.

THE calling and remanding of the charges preferred by J. A. Lawrence against Capt. A. E. McCallum is now a weekly formality in the city police court. Clerk Page went through the ceremony yesterday for the 22nd time.

THE Thompson River Hydraulic Mining Co. will present a consolidation bill during the session of the local house opening on the 8th proximo. The Lillooet, Fraser River and Cariboo Gold Fields, Ltd., will also seek amendments to their act of last year.

PROGRESSIVE whist parties were numerous and well contested last Wednesday evening, that in the J. B. A. A. series being won by Mr. E. Brown of the post office staff, with 8 out of 11 games to his credit. Mr. E. M. Haynes reversed the score, winning 2 and losing 9.

A SPECIAL meeting of the executive committee of the Victoria Liberal-Conservative Association is called for Monday evening at 8 o'clock. The meeting will be held at the Conservative Club, corner of Fort and Broad streets, and business of considerable importance is to be dealt with.

THE Behring Sea Claims Commission sitting yesterday was taken up in the hearing of evidence as to the values of various vessels for which claims are made. Among the witnesses were S. M. Smith, who valued the Grace at $10,000, without machinery; and Andrew Gray, who gave the cost of putting the machinery into the Anna Beck, Grace and Dolphin. The commission will hold an all day session to-morrow.

A PETITION is being circulated for signature by Mr. Alexander Begg, asking the provincial government to make an exploratory survey of the country between the Stickeen river and Teslin lake—through which piece of country he and his sons have announced their intention of building and operating a line of railway. This projected road is designed to give direct communication with the Yukon goldfields, diverting the trade of that section in the direction of Victoria.

MR. J. WILL LYSONS and a number of associates from Port Townsend are visiting Victoria at present for the purpose of securing the right to try their success with a newly invented machine for saving gold from black beach sand. Former inventions of this order have for the most part been failures, but Mr. Lysons is satisfied that his apparatus will recover even flour gold. It is expected that the southwest coast of this island will be the scene of the experimental operations.

MR. JUSTICE WALKEM yesterday gave judgment in the case of Koksilah Quarry Co. v. Queen, awarding to the plaintiff's $12,412.90. The action arose out of a contract made for the supply by the plaintiffs of stone for the new government buildings. The government, however, claiming that the stone was defective, refused to accept delivery and to carry out the contract. The courts estimated the damages suffered by the plaintiffs at the above mentioned sum.

DONATIONS during December are thankfully acknowledged by the Superintendent of the Old Men's Home, as follows: Mrs. L. J. Quagliotti, papers; Mrs. G. Winter, papers; Mr. Shotbolt, papers; Mr. Trounce, reading matters; Mrs. John Partridge, cake and clothing; Lt.-Gov. and Mrs. Dewdney, two turkeys and one goose; D. K. Chungranies, one turkey; Mr. Templeman, one turkey; Mr. Parker, side of lamb; Mrs. Harrington and Ald. Tiarks, tobacco and whiskey; Mrs. Ewen, whiskey; Mrs. Wey, beef; Mrs. Patton, apples; Mrs. Thos. Henderson, box oranges, and Mrs. H. D. Helmcken, apples.

"1089" was the number of coupons turned in in Jamieson's contest, which closed last evening. The winners are: Geo. Jaques, Fort street, who wins the first prize, of $50 cash with an estimate of 1,087; W. Treacys, of H.M.S. Imperieuse, second with 1,086, wins twenty dollars worth of goods; Mrs. Walter Burton, third, with 1,093 wins fifteen dollars worth of goods; and Miss F. Scott, of 51½ Government street and Mrs. J. Allen of Victoria West divide the fourth and fifth prizes, aggregating fifteen dollars worth of goods with estimatds of 1,078 and 1,100 respectively.

THE concert held last night under the auspices of the Sir William Wallace Society was a success, not only from a numerical point of view, but from the musical standpoint as well. Mr. Rowlands fully maintaining his reputation for providing entertainment. All the numbers on the programme were rendered in excellent style and effect. Mrs. McGraw sang those two entensely pathetic Scottish songs, "The Flowers of the Forest," and "Auld Robin Gray," with feeling that went to the hearts of the Scottish audience. Mrs. Rowlands fully sustained her character as an exponent of Scottish song; Miss Blackie's rendering of the Scottish selection on the violin was much appreciated, and certainly well executed; Miss May Wolff sang nicely "Coming Thro' the Rye"; and the quartette, "Annie Laurie," was a great success. Mr. Keith also sang excellently "Mary of Argyle." Nor must omission be made of Mr. Wm. Anderson's Highland fling dancing, and "The Reel o' Tulloch" by Messrs. Munro, Anderson, Jameson and Russell, both of which were much enjoyed. Mr. Peter McDonald, our excellent piper, entertained the company with several selections of great merit, and the company sang Auld Lang Syne, thus bringing to a close one of the best concerts the society has held this season.

THE police paid a New Year's call at On Hing's place of business, No. 11 Store street, last evening. A game of fan tan was in progress at the time, and was being closely watched by a gathering of nearly a dozen white youths. Desirous of renewing acquaintances, the police will extend a number of formal invitations to the participants of the game to attend an early sitting of the police court.

THE busy but unidentified burglar appears to enjoy life very comfortably over in James Bay ward. Wednesday night he visited the home of Mr. Walker, on Oswego street—about 150 yards from the scene of the Allan robbery on Rendall street. In the last reported case the family were enjoying the Drill hall concert, and returning at 10:30 found the house brilliantly lighted and thoroughly overhauled, the persuasion of an axe having been exerted upon several articles of furniture. Small booty was secured.

SIX hundred and twenty-five sacks, or 40 tons, of ore from the Van Anda mine, Texada island, arrived here on the steamer Maude yesterday afternoon. The shipment, which is probably the largest that has yet come this way, is in transit to Everett, and will be reloaded by the steamer Rosalie this morning. Mr. Blewitt, the superintendent at the mine, left on the City of Kingston last evening with the intention of seeing the ore put through the smelter. A second shipment from the Van Anda is expected to arrive in about a fortnight, and in this lot there will be 100 tons.

THE last incorporated companies of 1896, additional to those included in the long list published elsewhere in this issue, represent a capitalization of $11,500,000, being, for the week, ending yesterday, as follows:

British Gold M. Co., of Vancouver, $1,000,000.
Bald Mtn. M. & D. Co., Golden; $2,500,000.
Black Prince M. & M. Co., Rossland; $1,000,000.
Copper Mountain, Mines, Vancouver; $500,000.
Lucky George M. Co., Sandon; $1,000,000.
Observation Mtn. G. M. Co., Grand Forks; $1,000,000.
Rossland-Eastern G. M. Co., Rossland; $1,000,000.
Red Mtn. Ida May G. M. Co., Rossland; $1,000,000.
Trail Ck. Hidden Treasure G. M. Co., Rossland; $1,000,000.
Vancouver Gold Fields, Vancouver; $500,000.
Washington Mining Co., Spokane; $1,000,000.

IT was with a spirit of complete resignation that the young ladies of Hope lodge, Degree of Honor, relinquished all claim on Leap Year at the farewell ball in A.O.U.W. hall last evening. The farewell took place as the hour of midnight was being emphatically announced throughout the city, and while the ladies sought sweet seclusion the young men assumed charge of the floor and dancing continued with renewed vigor to the music of the Fifth Regiment orchestra, the new year being thus pleasantly inaugurated.

The general committee in charge of the dance was composed of Miss Drant, Mrs. and Miss Whitelaw, Miss Hamph, Mrs. Winn, Mrs. Abel, Mrs. and Miss Smith, Mrs. Cavin and Mrs. Davis. A magnificent supper was provided for the occasion, and some very strict regulations governed the event, three of them being as follows:

Any gentleman seen crossing the floor unattended by a lady will be fined 10 cents.

Any gentleman asking a lady for a programme will be fined 5 cents.

Ladies will please not leave their partners standing on the floor alone.

THERE were fifty-seven—for one had sprained an ankle and was crying with disappointment in bed—happy and expectant little ones on the platform in the large dining hall at the Orphans' Home yesterday when venerable Bishop Cridge briefly introduced the Christmas entertainment. The girls all wore new dark dresses and daintily made white aprons, the gift and handiwork of the pupils and teacher of the first division of the Girls' Central school. Two mammoth Christmas trees laden with children's delights, flanked either side of the platform, while close to it was an array of presents to the Matron, the teachers of the Sunday school, and the assistants in the home. Lieut.-Col. Gregory made a most efficient and humorous Santa Claus, and there were a large number of other visitors, including Right Rev. Bishop Perrin, Rev. W. L. Clay, Rev. Dr. Wilson, Rev. Dr. Reid, President Hayward, Dr. Milne, James Hutcheson and others, and many ladies. The entire affair was under the charge of the lady president and ladies' committee of the home, who made everybody welcome, and at the conclusion of the programme invited the assembled guests to inspect the entire building and afterward entertained them with tea and cake. The cordial thanks of the ladies are extended to the kind friends who so generously contributed to make the little ones happy.

ARRANGEMENTS are being made by the Imperial Institute, London, for the delivery during the ensuing winter season of courses of public, free, popular lectures on the Colonies, adapted more particularly to the working classes. These lectures are distinct from the ordinary series provided for Fellows and their friends, and will be descriptive of the colonies, and especially of those to which emigration seems desirable. They will be delivered by lecturers who have intimate personal knowledge of particular colonies, and will afford information as to the climate, conditions of life, cost of living, rates of wages, natural resources and requirements of each colony, indicating where openings exist for extended colonization and immigration. These lectures will, it is hoped, also serve to make the general public acquainted with the prominent features of the chief colonies of the British Empire. The agents-general for the principal colonies are giving active assistance in the arrangements for these lectures, and the first course will comprise four illustrated lectures on the Dominion of Canada. "Canada, and Its Agricultural Importance to the Empire," is treated of by Mr. Ernest J. Wood, Canadian government agent for the Midland counties, late member of the Manitoba legislature; "The Province of Ontario," a sketch of its history, agriculture and varied resources, will be given by Mr. Peter Byrne, Ontario government agent for the United Kingdom; "Farming and Ranching in the Great Northwest" is the topic of an address by Sydney G. P. Coryn, of the Canadian Pacific railway; "British Columbia, Its Natural Resources, Progress and Enterprises," will be discussed by Mr. Edward Odlum, M.A., B.Sc.

A FATAL PHANTOM.

While Suffering From Mental Malady, John W. Griffith Ends His Own Life.

A Letter Left Behind Shows That His Mind Had Become Temporarily Unhinged.

Hardly had the news of the shooting of Constable Smith begun to circulate in the city yesterday morning than people were shocked to have the additional news that John W. Griffith had been found dead in bed with a bullet hole through his head. It was a clear case of suicide, a letter beside the body showing plainly that the unfortunate man had deliberately taken his own life. John W. Griffith, who was well known in Victoria where he had formerly resided, came down from the West Coast on the last trip of the Tees, and on Sunday registered at the Occidental hotel. He had given some evidence before the sealing commission on Wednesday forenoon and did not at all look like a man who contemplated suicide. In fact that same afternoon he made a business engagement for yesterday, and at 5 o'clock met a friend at the corner of Store and Cormorant streets, and spoke of going back to the West Coast on Saturday. He had been, it may be mentioned, engaged in prospecting for some time past.

At a few minutes before 10 o'clock yesterday morning the Chinaman went up stairs to clean up Mr. Griffith's room and soon came running downstairs, saying there was something wrong. Mr. Porter, the proprietor, investigated and discovered Griffiths, fully dressed, lying dead on the bed, a 38 calibre six-shooter on the floor near him and a bullet hole in his head. The unfortunate man had placed the weapon just behind his right ear, the bullet ranging upwards and causing instant death.

A letter addressed to his wife at Port Townsend was found on the table, the disjointed sentences of which, written on some pages torn from a small memorandum book, seemed to indicate that the poor fellow's mind was in a very unhealthy condition. It was dated 3:30 p.m., December 30, and in it Griffith stated that he had been insane for some time and did not know it. He had had it shown to him, he said, that he was about to die and by what means, and further in the midst of a rambling lot of sentences he stated that he intended to commit suicide. The police took charge of the body and had it removed to the morgue, the inquest being set for 10 o'clock this morning.

Mr. Griffith was born in Manchester, England, but when a child his people removed to Indiana, and at the age of 17 he came to British Columbia.

He lived in Victoria for many years, being at one time bookkeeper for Mr. L. Goodacre, and also engaged at the Albion Iron Works. A few years ago he went to Port Townsend, but was unfortunate in business, and lately was engaged in prospecting for several Victoria business men at Alberni and other districts on the West Coast. He leaves a large family, his wife living with the children at Port Townsend.

Mr. Griffith's room being somewhat removed from the other bedrooms in the hotel, no one seems to have heard the fatal shot fired, though one lady had an indefinite idea that she heard a noise like that of a shot about eight o'clock on Wednesday evening.

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