



*An Act of Remembrance*

great, probably because many Norwegian families were away from Bergen on their summer holidays. On the fifth afternoon a children's party was held and this proved a great success. Some 150 children, of all sizes, attended. Some very appreciative comments were heard later, after a party of sailors had made a collection on board and taken a suitcase full of sweets and chocolates to the local hospital, for those children who could not come to the party.

On Thursday, 25th July, the Captain, the British Consul, Miss I. Strong, O.B.E., and, representing the Norwegian Navy, Commodore Sorensen, laid wreaths on the British War Memorial. This was in the Mollerdal cemetery, which provided a very peaceful and beautiful situation for the simple, but impressive ceremony that was held.

A Royal Marines guard was paraded and, after a short service, nine of Gambia's ceremonial buglers sounded the Last Post and Reveille perfectly, and with a most moving effect.

Although our Royal Marines Band had not permanently joined, and had in fact only just formed up, they came with us to Bergen where they performed sterling service. Besides playing on board for entering and leaving harbour, for the official calls, at the Captain's dinner party, and for the Church Service on the quarterdeck,

they had three engagements ashore. They performed two 'Beat Retreat' ceremonies in the middle of Bergen, and gave a light musical concert in the city-centre bandstand. Each of these performances drew large crowds, and were thoroughly enjoyed.

Throughout the visit, the electricians had been working furiously to prepare for floodlighting the ship and, on Friday and Saturday evenings, the port side was bathed in shining light. From the other side of the harbour, it was a lovely sight and made an impressive finale to the visit.

Almost before we had learnt to say 'tak' and 'skol', rather than 'ta' and 'cheers', the ship was again under sailing orders. During the last forenoon (Sunday, 28th July,) Church was held on the quarterdeck, and several local British residents came on board for this, but an hour after the Service, the quarterdeck had become a mass of wires again, as Gambia made a sternboard from her berth. Amid many last minute waves, we steamed slowly out of Bergen harbour. Then came a pleasant four hour trip down the fjord in the summer sunshine, with the colourful Norwegian ensign alongside each bungalow being dipped in salute as we passed, as if to say "Will ye no come back again?". We wish we could.....

R.K.A.

## ★ Exercise "Strikeback" ★

The time has come, their Lordships said,  
To think of other things,  
Like Battleships and Bathys dips.,  
Not Kinemas or Kings.

So we stowed away our civvy suits,  
And kissed our girls goodbye ;  
We sailors moaned and the natives groaned,  
As the Bridge went flashing by.

The shiny " Sheff" was close ahead,  
A smart ship thought to be.  
But we all knew as we passed "The No"  
She was dulled by the "Magic G."

The " Stand To " went as we hit the sea,  
The guns were quickly manned,  
We zagged, we zigged, we turned, we jigged,  
And prayed for the Promised Land.

But Hell was more in line for us,  
As we Kilotonned and Purpled One,  
Jackstays out and oilfuel in,  
Even the Chief Stoker was seen to grin.

Then Hurray! The Ailsa Craig's in sight,  
Our carriers and cruisers shining bright,  
Advanced in column to meet the fray,  
(They mostly lived down Gorbals way)

Our Allies close behind us came.  
Too numerous and vast to name,  
The whole a truly splendid sight,  
The Clyde abrim with NATO's might.

Alas the weekend soon was past,  
We left the girls we'd left the last,  
Off with the old, and on with the new,  
Our debts were paid with the turn of a screw.

We exercised from dawn till dusk,  
They stationed us to stem the thrust  
To keep the raiders from their prey,  
And drive unfriendly ships away.

The look-out, a lusty man was he,  
Espied the ships, not one, but three.  
"Make the challenge" the Captain cried.  
Not three, not two, not one replied.

"Six inch engage " the Gunner said,  
We flashed with lights both white and red,  
Enemy reports went far and wide,  
As we made pursuit in our usual stride.

In we swept for the final. blow,  
By now the bullets were mighty low,  
And just when victory it had to be,  
Up came the boss and said " Hey, IT'S ME "

Oh silly Yankee Battler,  
With lookouts blind or slow.  
How could you even miss us,  
For an hour and a half or so '?

The exercise was warming up,  
The battle going well,  
But the Magic Fred was due to spread,  
Her awnings for a spell.

So we left our friends behind us,  
And set our course for port,  
To join the Haggis Wafflers,  
And find ourselves some sport.

P. R. L.

---

Memo to an M. E.- If oil goes over the the side, report  
to the Starboard Yardarm - for  
hanging.

---

## "We'll say Farewell and . . . ."

AS the last plaintive notes of the bugle died away at sunset on October 17th, 1957, H.M.S. Gambia slipped quietly from her moorings, and proceeded, through the gathering dusk, between the misty mudbanks of the Medway to the Channel.

Although the general atmosphere which pervaded the ship that night was one of sadness, as officers and men thought of families and friends whom they would not see for another year, this was somewhat alleviated by the knowledge that we would be spared the rigours of a winter at home, and were exchanging the grey skies and windswept quays of Rosyth for the azure and gold of the Indian Ocean.

For the next three days we headed down Channel and across the Bay of Biscay, fortunately calm for the time of the year, and passed down the coast of Portugal close enough to see the mouth of the Tagus and the city of Lisbon.

On the morning of the 21st, Trafalgar Day, we actually passed through the very waters where the battle had taken place over 150 years previously.

Later the same day we entered Gibraltar in bright sunshine, very conscious of our white knees in unaccustomed shorts. Although we only stayed a few hours to fuel, most of the ship's company took the opportunity of a quick run ashore; for some their first taste of "going foreign"; for others, an eager seeking out of old haunts.

We left Gibraltar the same night, and headed East across a mirror-like Mediterranean under a star-encrusted sky. The next few days were idyllic - blue seas and brilliant sunshine, under which our pale bodies hardened and browned.

On the 24th we passed close by Malta, unable to call in, to the disappointment of many. The anti-aircraft armament was exercised against a sleeve target, and a helicopter brought off some long-awaited mail.

Late, on the evening of the 26th, we anchored for a short while off Port Said, and a few minutes after midnight we led a convoy of tankers and cargo vessels into the Canal, the first large warship to do so since the incidents of the previous year. Sunday, the following day, was spent on passage through the Canal, observing the desert and its inhabitants, both animal and human, with great interest. At midday, there was a very welcome pause for a swim in the Bitter Lakes; many who

swallowed the accidental mouthful here can vouch for the aptness of this name.

Towards the evening we left the Canal and entered the Red Sea. Here, although the heat was oppressive, we were lucky enough to enjoy a fairly cool head wind, instead of the seasonal following wind, which mitigated the atmosphere a little.

During the passage through the Red Sea we anchored for a few hours off Kamaran Island, a port of call for many Mecca-bound pilgrims. While the Captain paid a call on the British Resident ashore, all available hands touched up the ship's side.

The following day we entered Aden Harbour after a voyage of about 5,000 miles, and began our preparations to become the flagship of the East Indies Station.

G. A. D.



"They may close Chatham, but we'll never eat Oggies, Nay  
Never."

Signed, Chocker Chatty Chatham Chappie.



## Children's Parties



From children of every race,  
Come squeals of joy about the place,  
With clowns and pirates to keep it gay,  
The Children's Party is under way.

CHILDREN'S parties have been given at all the large ports we have visited and some of the small ones. Numbers ranged from 350 lusty Norwegian children at Bergen, to 25 very decorous youngsters at Umm Said.

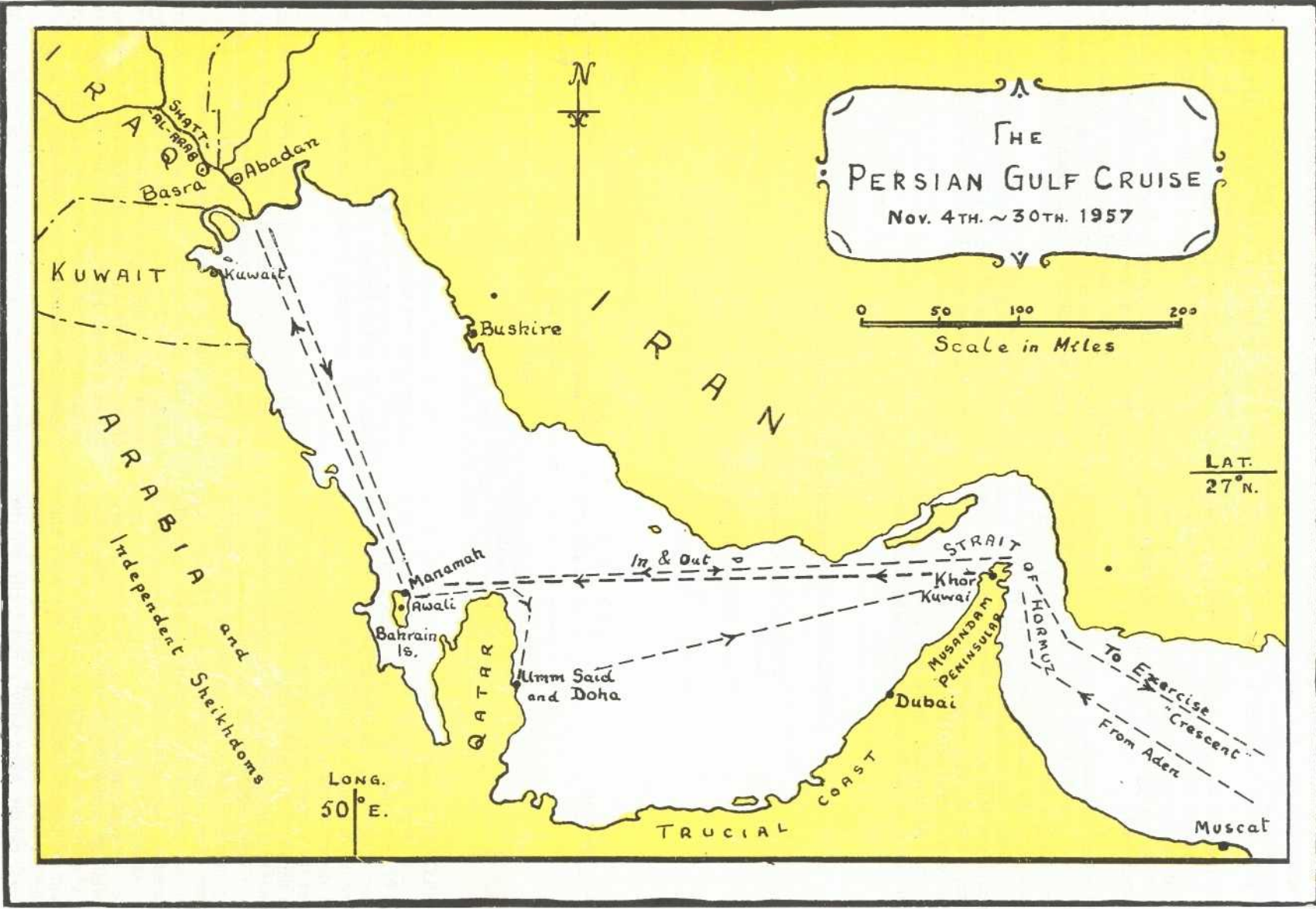
All departments did their share to make the parties the success they undoubtedly were. They were usually followed by appreciative letters and comments from parents and children. Normally parents were not invited, but when one or two young mothers did come on board, a surprising number of the ship's company, who till then had shown no interest in children's parties, suddenly appeared. They still didn't take much interest in the children!

The overhead railway, run by the Petty Officers, was well up in the popularity stakes. There was always a mob of youngsters milling round the coconut shy and the "Aunt Sally". The story that a junior on his knees, looking really fetching in his rompers, caught Aunt Sally a smart clip on the ear with a cricket ball cannot be substantiated.

The pirates' cave, appropriately manned by Sub Lieutenants and Midshipmen, always did a thriving trade. The roller railway was described by one little girl in her "thank you" letter as, "the little car with the wheels on the rode and no wheels on the car".

Slides, swings, capstan roundabout, electrical games, film shows and S.R.E. all combined to make a most entertaining bedlam, and the parties always finished with tea. In many places our guests showed their appreciation of the bakers' cakes by each taking half a dozen home, wrapped in handkerchiefs or anything else they could find, including, in the case of little girls, their skirts. The arrival of the ice-cream was invariably the signal for a riot. When that had been quelled, came the struggle to persuade the children that it was time to go. Cheers and countercheers rent the air as guests departed and hosts bade farewell. Everyone had enjoyed it, but was there a note of relief in the pirates' cheers?

D. W. S.



# On Station . . .

## The Persian Gulf

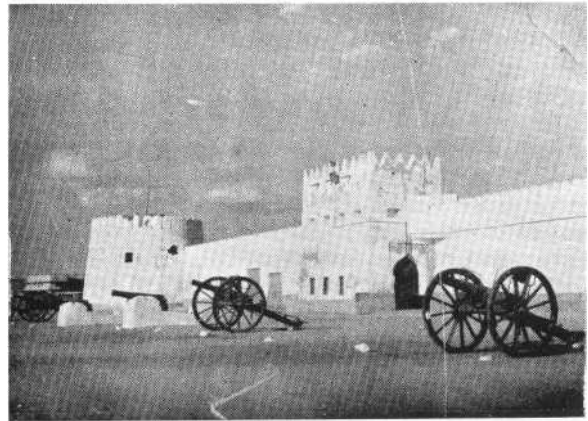
AS a race, the British have got quite a reputation for getting themselves established in places such as Aden; but whatever those who had not been 'out East' before (and many who had) thought of that little outpost of civilisation, our travels in the course of the month after we left Aden on the 2nd November were to take us to some far stranger spots.

Resplendent in a new coat of paint we left Steamer Point behind and shaped a course for the Persian Gulf making steady progress along a coast which looked to us no less than what it is - desolate, baked and grim, the edge of the sandpit of the universe. After a few days of this we sighted land on the starboard bow (which appeared even more barren than the coastline we had been following) which was the coast of Iran, telling us that the Strait of Hormoz, through which one enters the Gulf, was not far ahead.

Our first stop was to be Bahrain, where H.M.S. CEYLON was waiting for us, and where we were due to receive the Flag of the Commander-in-Chief, East Indies from her. At 0800 on the 6th November we steamed into the anchorage off the Bahrain Petroleum Company's long oil-jetty, and anchored a few cables from CEYLON who by that time was festooned with her ship's company who had appeared to witness our arrival and inspect their successor. In the course of that forenoon the story got around that when GAMBIA was sighted a pipe announcing our arrival was made in CEYLON which promptly took on a five-degree list to port .....just another example of shoulder-sloping? At sunset on that first day, we took over the Flag of the Commander-in-Chief, and early the next morning we massed for'd to give CEYLON three mighty cheers to speed her on her way home.

Bahrain is the Navy's only "home from home" in the Gulf. The Sheikh, a loyal old man who is very pro-British, was delighted to give the Navy a small piece of his island when the Persians asked us to vacate our base at Bushire in 1936, and as his successor and entourage are all similarly inclined, it looks as if they, at any rate, will be sorry to see the Navy leave should that ever happen. H.M.S. JUFAIR, our base in Bahrain, was built before the war for the princely sum of £5000, and little has been added since those days. Apart from JUFAIR, we have no clubs or meeting-places at all. From the B.A.P.C.O. jetty, which carries the pipelines from the refinery out into deep water where all but the super-tankers can berth alongside, and which is reputed to be the longest jetty in the world, JUFAIR is about seventeen miles; Manamah, the native town, only one less, while Awali, the B.A.P.

C.O. 'town' is spread in its comparative luxury over a large area of higher ground about four miles from the landing-place. So highly-organised transport was necessary to get anywhere in this otherwise desert island, and in general the open buses which clattered along the oil-surfaced roads at vast speed, the drivers burnoose flying in the breeze, never let us down. We played all the usual sports, and even staged a boxing-match with a small Army unit which is established within the gates of JUFAIR itself. One need hardly say that the inhabitants of Awali looked after us as well as have most other British communities we have met in the course of our travels since those first days of our 'foreign'.



*Bahrain Police Fort*

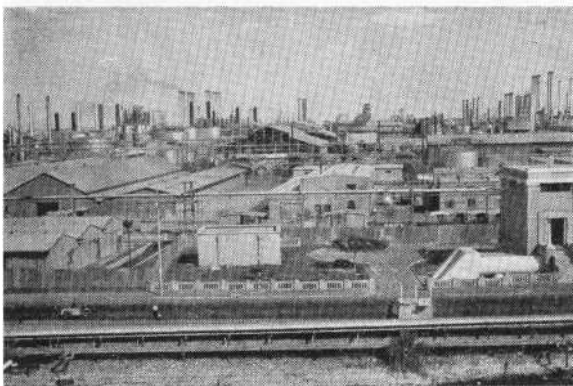
They certainly have the means of doing so. Not a single modern convenience, from swimming-pools to air-conditioning is lacking at Awali; but when you live in a constant smell of rotten eggs, and in the sort of climate which these people have to face - and still work until 1630 (no tropical routing at the refinery) - then you deserve the best.

We sailed for Basra on the 10th, arriving there on the evening of the following day after a daylight passage up the Shatt-al-Arab. The dependence of these desert countries upon irrigation was well shown by the narrow strip of palms paddy either side of the river, beyond which one could see only mile after mile of flat desert, the landline on the Iranian side of the river being formed by mountains while on the western, or Iraq side, the desert stretches away as far as the eye can see.

At Basra we were able to see for ourselves a little of what the Iraqis, who stand out as being several cuts above their neighbours, are doing with the money they receive from oil revenue. Every-

where is building - not merely expensive hospitals and schools, but ordinary houses into which the population is slowly being transferred from their present state. It was of interest to hear of at least one major British firm which is engaged in building these houses and blocks - the Iraqis themselves providing only unskilled workmen. During the usual round of hospitality given and received we found time for a children's party and daily visits, for those who put their names down first, to a test oil-rig a few miles to the north-west of Basra which, although it was not yet in operation, gave us an idea of how deep-drilling is done. But our visit was made famous by the public staging of the world-premiere of "On the Quarterdeck", GAMBIA's special contribution to the world of art and comedy. The show went down well, and has been doing so increasingly with every performance our dedicated concert-party has put on.

On the 16th we moved about thirty miles downstream to Abadan, past the same endless succession of palm-trees, the mud huts and the dhows moored to the bank that we had seen on the way up. At first there was the cloud of smoke; and then over the palms a great forest of chimneys appeared, and soon we were there. Abadan would not exist were it not for the gigantic refinery, and indeed before the oil came it was only a mud village like those we had passed. Our first impressions of the local inhabitants were not particularly favourable; much as has been done to modernise Iran, there is no doubt that these people should not wear European clothes. Even if oriental costume does look scruffy sometimes, it is at least (to our eyes) picturesque; whereas these people, and especially the lower orders, wearing cheap and badly-cut western clothes look like revolutionary rabble



*Abadan Oil-Refinery*

However that may be, it appears that the consortium which runs and manages the refinery may well be supplanted within five years by a national company; the Iranians' capacity for learning management and organisation seems to have taken everyone by surprise. We were fortunate, once again, in having tours laid on for us, and many were able to see how a great refinery works. In addition to the concert-party doing its stuff again, to an audience of over a thousand in the local 'swank' cinema, the Royal Marines Beat Retreat. As usual, at the bigger

places we have visited, the British community really pushed the boat out and very few of the ship's company - fore and aft - did not have an opportunity to go ashore grippo-bound.

After five days of near-suffocation from the rotten-eggs smell, which we were beginning to know so well, (our berth was literally within a stone's throw of the refinery, and the prevailing wind had no mercy on us) we cast off and made our way once again down the dark-brown river, twisting and turning past the lines of fishing-stakes and fishermen's huts perched above the water, and towering over dhows wending their leisurely way up - or down-stream.

If the visits to Bahrain, Basra and Abadan had been, comparatively, a pleasure, thanks to the size of the British communities there and a certain amount of scope for shopping-runs and seeing what there was to be seen, the rest of our cruise in the Gulf certainly promised to be a 'duty run'.

Two days from Abadan we arrived at Umm Said (having dropped an appendix case at Bahrain on the way). At the end of the forenoon during which we anchored off the place, it was rumoured that there were still some on board who were wondering what we'd anchored for. Certainly, Umm Said, like so many of the other little Sheikhdoms which we have or have not visited and yet on whose allegiance or co-operation we rely for so much, has little to show for itself. Our visit was, in fact, as much to the town of Doha, fifteen miles up the coast, as Umm Said; the British community and many of those who work at the small refinery live there, and the Sheikh of Umm Said has his palace just outside Doha. Between the two is the 'oil town', where the Arab workers live. At the time of our visit a strike of these people was in progress, their complaint being that they objected to having to live so far from their place of work (Umm Said), thus necessitating two bus-trips every day. Since the local Arab is apt to become worked-up when he feels strongly about such matters, it looked for a while as though even sports parties would not be allowed to land (in the event, leave to sports parties only was given); and indeed, after we had spent a couple of days gazing at the sand-dunes, the ship left on the next leg of our cruise, our departure being requested by an over-nervous Political Agent ashore who felt that our presence, far from intimidating the locals, was causing him embarrassment inasmuch as he couldn't look after us properly and deal with his own troubles at the same time. We were all sure he was quite right.

In spite of the almost total lack of interest afforded by Umm Said and Doha, as far as any rate as the majority of the ship's company was concerned, a word must be said about the ambitious schemes in progress at Doha. Oil money, of course, is responsible for the new hospital, the sanatorium, the excellent new roads, and the school, as well as lesser efforts such as housing. As an indication of the amount of money going into all this the hospital provides a good example. It is a vast



place, with every form of laboratory, and luxurious staff-quarters attached to it. It contains one hundred beds (no wards, only single and double rooms), and is known locally as the 'Hotel' (by those who can afford to smile - or rather, have that much more with which to smile than the rest of the inhabitants). It contains every modern device imaginable - air-conditioning, air-sterilisation, and dehumidifiers - all of which are duplicated in case the 'main' sets fall over. It has, naturally, its own power supply. Such is the wealth that oil can bring, and its application is the more striking when one sees these great schemes rising out of the desert, still surrounded by the poverty which has not changed in a thousand years. It is reputed, moreover, that a worker in Doha is paid more, by direct comparison, than any other worker in the world. On the other hand, any local out of a job has had it, and will spend his days living in a but made of empty oil drums, and tending one or two scraggy goats.

(All of which is a diversion, but we had to say something about the place!).

Having left Umm Said earlier than expected, we were confronted with another minor setback. Dubai, on the Trucial Coast, which was to have been our next port of call, had very recently suffered severely from a tropical hailstorm, and as a result of their misfortunes it had been decided that our visit should be cancelled. Accordingly, we bypassed the small place and made instead for Khasab Bay, and the small, exclusively Arab community of Khor Kuwai, which is tucked away on the western tip of the Musandam Peninsular (what do you think the map is for.....?). Here we arrived on the 26th, to await developments at Umm Said in case we were required to return there to keep the peace.

For those who enjoy globe-trotting for the sake of it, and find interest in seeing how people live and what they do with themselves, a Persian Gulf cruise can be most rewarding. For those who think in terms of bright lights, or nocturnal revelries and alcoholic adventures ashore, the same cannot be said. Thus while some of us were intrigued by the sight of Khor Kuwai as we steamed into the Bay, others resigned themselves at once to another hibernation on board. The village is no more than a small fishing community, probably of fewer than three hundred, which is presided over by a Wali, who rules from a large and (by local standards) most impressive mud fort, from the top of which flies at all times his personal flag - a large, red, tattered piece of bunting.

Khor Kuwai has no access to the outside world except by sea; the rugged and barrenest of mountains which tower over the bay do not even invite investigation. Thus our visit, and a personal call on the Wali by the Commander, were doubtless appreciated. In due course, the Wali paid his return call on the Commander-in-Chief; not only the Wali, but his ten-year-old son-and-heir and two other sons as well. Accompanying them, one need hardly add, was the inevitable fierce-looking

bodyguard who, looking extremely confident, placed himself with rifle at the ready at the top of the ladder leading down to the Admiral's quarters, where high-level parleying and fraternisation was now going on. On leaving, the son-and-heir insisted on shaking hands with not only the Commander-in-Chief and the Captain, but the entire gangway ceremonial 'committee' from the Commander down to the Side Boy, thereby showing complete regard for autocratic dignity and establishing himself as a cert for the Wali-ship in time to come. The lighter side of official visits was yet to come, however. With the Wali and his sons had come on board two unhealthy-looking characters who were reputedly suffering acutely from some malady or other. The Sick Bay was therefore alerted and the patients dealt with. Less than an hour after they had departed, however, there descended upon us another boatload of locals who, having scrambled up the Sacred Ladder, also demanded medical attention. So the pills were brought out again, and these too sent on their way rejoicing. Rumours that the S.M.O. and Lieutenant Boyle are planning to abscond before the ship steams into the Gulf again are, we all hope, completely false.

Apart from the opportunity, to those inclined; to have a closer look at the village, or simply swim from the beach, Khor Kuwai had nothing to offer. I hope, therefore, I may be excused for describing what was purely a two-man (the writer and the Padre) expedition ashore. Our main object was to buy two hubble-bubble pipes, which a member of the Wali's retinue had assured me could be obtained ashore very cheap. To reach the village, we landed on one side of the Bay from a whaler, and set off to see what there was to see, and find our hubble-bubbles. Having waded across a wide stream we soon arrived at the fort, in front of which stood the 'council tree' and a cannon made somewhere in India in 1878. Although less impressive viewed close-to, it was nevertheless a home fit for a Wali, and a fine example of mud-craft. From one of the openings in the wall, one of the Wives (who other?) was quizzing GAMBIA, half a mile off-shore, through a telescope which, apart from the mass of mother-of-pearl inlay, gold trimmings, and obvious age, might have come straight from our Quarter-deck; while from another leaned one of the Body-guard, who proved most sociable and more than pleased to have his picture taken. After another fifteen minutes or so we arrived in Main Street - or the High Street, at any rate, for simple as these people may be, their village seemed planned on much the same lines as ours are. For so few inhabitants there was an abundance of shops, which sold everything from Indian cloth, Sunlight soap and Heinz baked beans! By this time we had acquired - or rather, been adopted by-a'guide', who understood our need and promised to find us the hubble-bubble. Arrived at a shop, in front of which squatted half-a-dozen Arabs sucking at the communal hubble, one was produced. Disappointing, and expensive. And a second one? Slight consternation, and much gesticulation between our guide and the smokers, who started taking to



*Smoking the "hubble-bubbles" at Khor Kuwait*

pieces the very one they had been enjoying.... After an artificial show of haggling we retreated, complaining that we could find hubble-bubbles in Muscat at half the price. Looking round the village, there followed the usual fratting and picture-taking, and finally a presentation to our guide of a GAMBIA medal (N.A.A.F.1., 4/6d.) ; after which we returned, sad about our lack of success, but having greatly enjoyed our afternoon ashore.

In the meantime word had come that all at Umm Said was still not well, so at the end of our only day in Khasab Bay we weighed and made off for Bahrain at high speed, with the intention of picking up a number of Cameronians and taking them down to Umm Said, where they would look after the situation ashore. In case the position there got out of hand before we could reach Bahrain, we took the precaution of mustering our Landing Party, issuing gear and cleaning arms and so on, and generally adopting a professional soldier's view about the business. While most of us slept, we steamed on towards Bahrain, with no cry for immediate assistance coming from Umm Said; and by the morning, when we arrived off the refinery jetty once again,

the situation had so improved as to make unnecessary the Army we had come to fetch.

The Landing Party stood on the decks  
 With yards of webbing around their necks ;  
 First they're laughing, now they're not,  
 "How do we get out of this bl--lot  
 "Swallow this pill, fill that pack,"  
 "Don't forget your nutty Jack."

Comes the dawn and all is clear,  
 Then comes the news that brings a cheer.  
 They listen, and hear someone say,  
 "There'll be no landing ... not today."  
 But we were ready, as you've seen,  
 And at least we got the webbing clean !!

And so, after fuelling, we were on our way again, this time to join up with Exercise "Crescent" in the Arabian Sea. In a little over three weeks, we had visited the greater part of what has always been one of the Navy's most unpopular parishes ; and what is more important, we like to think, the people in those places had seen us. In such an area, where the raw material for not only much of the world's wealth, but also its troubles may be found, it will be for a long time to come essential that we keep the peace and our alliances not by missile-rattling from afar, but by direct contact and preferred - rather than professed - friendship, In this, we hope GAMBIA did her part.

J. M. C. G,



## *The Wali of Khasab*

AS the roaring of the anchor broke the stillness of Khasab Bay and re-echoed around the barren cliffs, I was contemplating ruefully that I still lacked three days to complete my fortnight's stoppage. However these thoughts were quickly dispelled when I was summoned to the bridge and told to ensure that the pinnacle was ready in all respects to proceed inshore so that a small deputation could visit the local Wali, or Ruler. The main purpose was to see if we could convey any message from the Wali to his overlord, the Sultan of Oman, with whom he has no communications by land.

The fact that this area is quite cut off from the remainder of Oman, coupled with the lack of any track into that country, has made it difficult for the Sultan to administer this 'Outpost of his Empire.' Indeed, in 1929, the Sheik of Khasab, as he was in those days, refused to obey the Sultan who obtained permission through the Viceroy of India to use two British frigates to enforce order. These two, *Lupin* and *Cyclamen*, respectively oil-burning and coal-burning, and each armed with a single 4" gun, arrived at Khasab and invited the Sheik to accompany them to Muscat. When he refused, they bombarded the surrounding mountains and the fort for three days before he surrendered and was taken to prison in Muscat. However he escaped and returned to Khasab, and then on to Ras Al Khima, a little further along the coast, where he was eventually recaptured. The Sultan then liquidated the Sheikdom and made the present ruler's father the Governor, or Wali of the area. It is interesting to note that the Chief Tindal served as a Somali stoker in the *Lupin* at this time and I am indebted to him for this information.

First let us look at the geographic location (makes me feel like James H. Mitchiner): Khasab is to the west of the base of the Musandam Peninsula and in fact it is the principal village on the Ruus Al Jibal (Hilltops) promontory. This is a very apt name since the area has been partially 'drowned' by the sea, leaving only the ridges and peaks showing and giving rise to large tracts of open water. The mountains themselves are formed of dissected limestone, rugged, steep, and barren; stretching far into the interior.

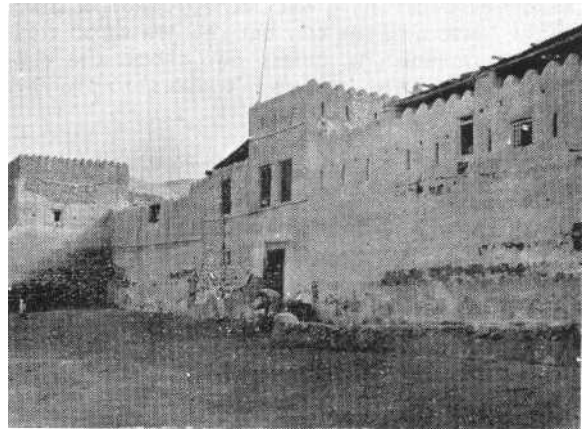
The Commander and several hastily picked officers repaired inshore with that invaluable man, the Chief Tindal himself, who was to act as our interpreter.

Unfortunately we had to anchor some way out owing to the slowly shelving beach. We transferred to a small fishing boat, and for the first time I saw the crew using the technique of sitting on the gunwhale and pulling the oars towards them: a curious yet speedy method with the advantage that it left the amidships section clear for passengers, stores, etc. Eventually we had to off shoes and

stockings and wade alternately through water and mud for some considerable distance to reach terra firma.

Presently a bandoliered and be-musketed henchman appeared from behind a rock, sporting a beautiful dagger. As there were no other signs of J. Arthur Rank on location we presumed that he was one of the Wali's bodyguard, and duly burdoning him with our shoes and stockings, we advanced together to the fort.

The fort was a fine building and although the exterior was finished in mud, it was quite well found, with stone walls up to the second floor level. The most striking part was a large round tower at one end which was built entirely of stone. Originally Portuguese, but the modern version only some thirty years old, it was pierced with slits for defence and through these peered a handful of relatives and retainers. The household cavalry were leaning on their rifles at the main gate, a most unimpressive affair - the gate that is.



*Khasab Bay Fort*

We were escorted inside by assorted Ali Babas, and up some stone steps onto a platform outside an upper room. The wall of the fort seemed to embrace a central courtyard and most of the accommodation was built into the walls themselves. Our feet were washed with due ceremony and dried; one of the henchmen was most emphatic about a piece of mud remaining on my big toe and jabbed at it with the muzzle of his rifle to indicate it to the foot-washer. His weapon certainly wasn't from Czechoslovakia unless it was brought from there by Marlborough after his German Campaign. This done, we moved inside.

The room was of stone construction coated with mud and whitewash. The floor was covered with palm matting over which were spread rather poor quality Persian carpets; the roof was of palm leaves, held up by a few interlaced poles. There were two

doors but no windows; on either side of the interior door squatted two of the Wali's young sons, each with a small cane. Furnishings were sparse: there were two wooden chests of drawers and a large suitcase, several photographs of his brothers hung on one wall, on another a camera hung as an ornament, whilst on the third, a Japanese grandmother clock ticked away happily. I glanced hastily at my watch for although it was then 10 a.m., the clock showed 4-40!

The ruler appeared, reasonably dressed wearing his cloak of office and the inevitable beautiful curved jambia, or dagger. He was thin with fine features and suffering from a nasty cough. After the initial salaams and polite enquiries, all done through the Chief Tindal, we explained that we were going to Muscat (we were) and did he have any message to pass to the Sultan. He replied that we could only send his salaams. They speak a local tongue among themselves, though for the purpose of trading they speak a variety of Arabic.

Presently our right hands were washed by a henchman whose rifle kept getting in the way, then we were served with revolting weak coffee and goats milk. In addition we had rather doubtful tinned pineapple and stale Marie biscuits. Afterwards strong black Arabic coffee was served in handleless cups; there was only a fraction of coffee in the bottom of the cup but the henchman went around replenishing unless one shook the cup; one should have at least two 'toppers' to preserve etiquette.

Again we went through the rigmarole of washing hands and prepared to leave; we invited the Wali and his children to come back with us and he readily assented,

The trip back to the pinnacle was completed in a tiny 15 ft. boat in which there were crowded fourteen people; not only was it on the point of sinking but we succeeded in grounding at least twice.


The Wali's visit to the ship is dealt with in another article, but I should like to mention briefly the economics of the people. The main industry, besides arms smuggling, is fishing; most of the fish are dried and shipped in passing dhows to Muscat where they are consumed or used as fertilizer. There are a great many date palms, and wheat and barley are grown under irrigation from the wells. Sheep and goats are the main stock animals whilst camels are used for transport along the only track which connects Khasab to the outside world. This track runs along the coast to the westward where it joins other similar tracks on the Trucial Coast. Teak is imported from Malabar (near Cochin) and is used to build and repair dhows which are run up on the beach.

The number of people in Khasab is increased by a floating population during the summer months. These people come by sea from neighbouring fishing villages to the gardens of Khasab when the heat in their own villages is unbearable.

One staple industry I have neglected to mention, is being bribed by the Sultan for information on gun runners, or alternatively, bribed by the gun-runners to keep quiet.

Formerly there was a radio station in the nearby Elphinstone Inlet which, because it is completely sheltered from any wind by high flanking cliffs, is reputed to be the hottest place in the world. However, all those who have volunteered for shore establishments in the Persian Gulf will be sorry to hear that it closed some years ago.

G. J. B.



## *Exercise "Crescent"*

N. A.T.O. exercises. The phrase conjures up a picture of grey, North Atlantic ships ploughing through grey, North Atlantic seas in grey, North Atlantic weather; of ships coming and going barely understandably; of great aircraft-carriers; of the grim shadow of the atomic bomb. But this was something different, this exercise "Crescent." Grey ships, yes; but no North Atlantic weather now. Instead, the calm blue of the Arabian Gulf. And no complex comings and goings either, and no aircraft-carriers. As for atomic bombs - well, actually there was supposed to be a bomb in a Persian minesweeper, but it would have fitted equally well in H. M. S. Pinafore.

It was that sort of exercise. Which isn't to decry it at all. 'Just that it was pleasant, warm and simple, instead of unpleasant, cold and complex.

This was the first big exercise run by the Pakistan Navy and very well they did it too. It was also the first important exercise for the navies of the Baghdad Pact Powers. Besides Gambia and two British frigates, there were a cruiser, destroyers and frigates of the Pakistan Navy, destroyers and submarines of the U.S. Navy, Turkish submarines and a small Persian contingent. The Pakistan Air Force also played an important part.

The exercise started with a week's weapon training off Karachi, but Gambia wasn't in that. The general idea of the main part of the exercise which followed was that Gambia, accompanied by the Pakistan destroyer Khaibur and the U.S. destroyer Ross, would make a series of attacks on a convoy which would be protected by most of the rest of the ships in the exercise. The submarines and the aircraft from ashore would also be attacking the convoy and its defending forces.

For Gambia the exercise started on Monday, 1st December, when we met our two destroyers and then fuelled at sea from a tanker. Then, for the next four days the exercise was well and truly on. Twice a day we steamed in at high speed and engaged the enemy ships, weaving in through the

protecting smoke screens and imagining the enemy shells bursting all around us. Sometimes we attacked at night too, and then there would be star shells to illuminate the battle and make it seem even more realistic. The tactical side of the battles was full of interest; that practice for the guns' crews and for the Control and Operations Room crews was invaluable though sometimes a little tedious; but it was the men in the boiler rooms and engine rooms who really sweated and the communicators who never stopped.

By the fourth day everyone was pretty well exhausted and glad to make for harbour. That meant Karachi and on Friday, 6th December, we arrived there for a five day visit.

D. J. B.

#### FOR EXERCISE

*Starshell, starshell, burning bright,  
Gave us all a nasty fright,  
Swinging, shining, overhead,  
Showing up the good ship Fred.*



*Had you burst some other place,  
You might have saved our bright red face,  
For we all thought before you came,  
That WE were teaching YOU the game !!*

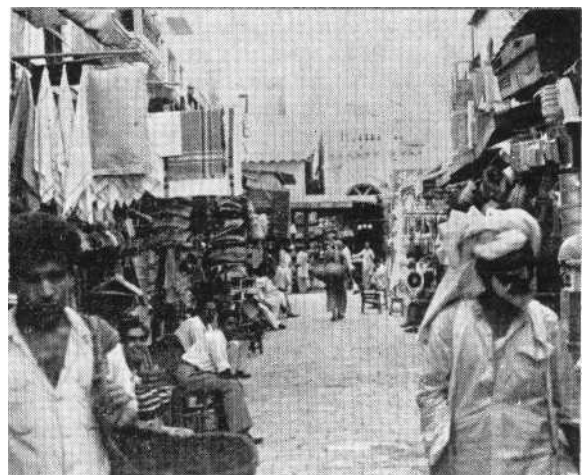


*" Ras. "*

## KARACHI

KARACHI was our first glimpse of life in Pakistan, and it was soon obvious to everyone that here was the important gateway to this young country. Long wharves were well-filled with merchant ships, and cranes busily emptied and filled their holds. All ports are important pieces in the game of commerce, and Karachi was certainly no exception. Before stepping ashore it was already easily seen that expansion was the keynote, new jetties were under construction together with the banks of cranes needed to deal with an added flow of goods.

To get ashore is the aim of anyone visiting a foreign port, even if it is not the first visit. Once ashore, there is no common factor, each man has his own idea on just how a visit should be made. On this occasion, the scope of entertainment, whilst not unlimited, was definitely restricted by the high cost of living. There was one common problem to be solved, in the form of a four-mile journey to be made into the main part of the city. Transport appeared to be unlimited, not only in quantity but in method also. As the visitor's foot first touches the soil of Pakistan he is likely to be met by three



*In the Bazaar*

local gentlemen, each anxious to help him in his quest to see Karachi. Their ideas vary as to the best method of making the journey, which was understandable when one owned a taxi, another

owned a horse-drawn gharri, and the third was the proud owner of a mechanised rickshaw. Confused, the visitor decides to walk at least as far as the gate. Very few make it. It appears, that having refused their assistance, the three gents now indulge in a "no holds barred" struggle for your custom, with you as the principal victim ! Anyone surviving this duel of wits and high finance, is met at the gate by a veritable army of conveyances, and surrender is then inevitable. Having given your person into the hands of a scootershaw, which is by far the most economical and thrilling form of transport, there remains nothing to do but to sit tight and see Karachi.

There is no artificial, splendrous gateway to Pakistan. No tree-lined avenue leading into the city. The visitor is put under no illusion that "Everything in the garden is lovely." Within a very few minutes of leaving the ship he rides past squalid squatters' shacks, a few boxes and some sacking by the roadside being their price for a divided country. I must mention in passing however, that a person arriving in Karachi by air is also brought into contact with such sights, as the main road from the airport passes large refugee settlements. At the time of the partition the population of Karachi was increased, overnight, out of all proportion. The overcrowding problem was made even more difficult by the fact that most of the refugees were literally penniless, having been unable to bring any Indian currency with them. This was the problem of ten years ago and it is still a problem today. Although much has already been done, there is still a large rehabilitation programme to be completed.

The approach to the first major built-up area is a well-made road, and across an equally well-made bridge, which brings into view a large block of flats still under construction. This, and other house construction, being a constant reminder of the expansion programme that the local government has undertaken.

Once across the bridge, the driver of the "scootershaw" has the choice of two routes into the city centre. The choice is generally made in favour of the road containing the most traffic. The only reason I can find for this is the local love of excitement. Unable to pay for commercial entertainment the driver satisfies himself by engaging in a continuous war of nerves with every other user of the road. The battle is made even more frightening by the fact that vehicles are not allowed to use horns within the municipal area. A dagger-filled look, coupled with a stream of invective are the main weapons used in gaining a favourable position in the fast flowing traffic stream. A hardy traveller may have nerve enough to look away from the converging masses of vehicles and see the pedestrian world beyond. For the most part it is no different to any shopping district of the eastern world. In the struggle to attract more custom, most of the shops seem to bring everything from inside the shop and put it on the pavement. This enables the housewife

to do her shopping without ever having to leave the pavement. The small problem caused by shoppers crowding around an attractive display and completely disrupting all foot traffic, is apparently overlooked. Another aspect of a native shopping area is detected initially by the nose, but a quick glance around will generally reveal a roadside fire over which are pans of beans being subjected to heat treatment, similar to the roast chestnuts at home. It is unfortunate that the smell is not quite so appetising to the visitor's nose.

Not all of the city's shops follow the pattern that is first seen, and it is most likely that the breathless passenger will obtain release from the "scootershaw" in a very western-looking street. Here again the stranger is met by a sight with which it is difficult to become accustomed - the large modern stores with windows well stocked, having as neighbours perhaps a shack selling soft drinks and cigarettes. This contrast of prosperity and poverty is to be seen almost anywhere in the city, and could be taken as a constant reminder of the job that is yet to be done.

A store certain to attract attention is a large building fronted by a showroom full of products from behind the Iron Curtain. They are mainly mechanical products, but their wide range seems to invite the heading of "Anything you can do we can do better". After strolling around the main streets, the visitor will probably still be looking for a memento that is within his budget. With this in mind, a trip into the backwaters may prove worthwhile. A couple of smart turns, and the brightly lit shops are replaced by small open-fronted wooden huts illuminated by an oil lamp, or in some cases by a naked electric light bulb. These are not only shops but workrooms as well, and in each can be seen a craftsman at work. Endowed with infinite patience, and working with simple tools that look inadequate, these men carve and inlay wood to the most intricate designs. With the large variety of wooden articles to be seen, it is easy to find one that will suit the smallest pocket.

After walking the dusty streets, a need for refreshment is the next urgent call and this may be answered at one of the many restaurants and hotels. In the world of liquid refreshment, the astronomical prices of beer and spirits encourage teetotalism !

Thus refreshed, the traveller can continue his wanderings or perhaps take the opportunity to see a film in comfort at one of Karachi's modern air-conditioned cinemas, before making the journey back to the ship.

To many, Karachi just did not merit the long journey from the ship while others found it to be the birthplace of new friendships. One thing is certain, as an important part of a young nation, Karachi is facing a hard job and she is doing it well.



# Christmas at Aden



**G**AMBIA arrived in Aden on 16th December, there to spend three weeks and to enjoy such pleasures as that rocky stronghold had to offer, which compared with those of other places we had visited previously this commission, Rosyth included, were not inconsiderable. At least, we had ample opportunity to buy presents for families and friends at home, and at most, we were able to accept the ample hospitality of the other Services and the civil residents of the Colony.

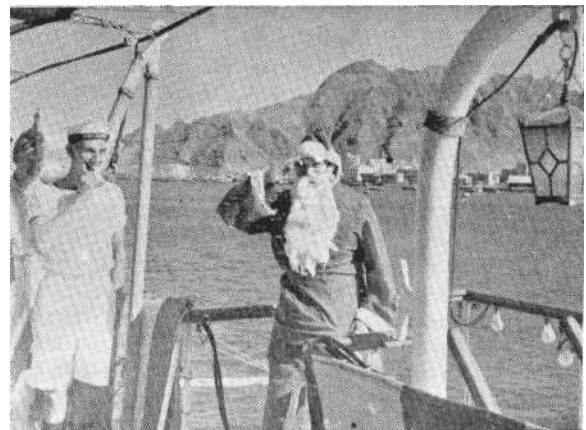
The spirit of Christmas settled upon us during the evening of 24th when a party of carollers, including some of our own carol choir, came aboard to charm us with their singing. They were enthusiastically received on the boat deck by a great number of our ship's company. Later a large launch cruised round the harbour carrying another choir of carollers, making a beautiful sight and sound on that warm starlit night.



*In the "Fifths" Mess*

A well-attended midnight service of carols and Holy Communion, held on the quarterdeck by Kenneth Evans, our Padre, ushered in Christmas Day, for many of us our first spent at sea. Come the morning, while our thoughts were mainly with our families at home, we indulged ourselves

in all possible ways. Messes were decorated, goodwill visits exchanged between departments to the accompaniment of many and varied toasts, and a traditional dinner was enjoyed by all, despite the 95 degrees temperature throughout the ship. The C-in-C and Mrs. Biggs, with the Captain, toured the ship, adjudged the Petty Officers' Mess the best decorated, and duly presented to the President, Petty Officer Tansley, a large Christmas cake. As a token of the spirit of Christmas, this cake was later to be found in the Juniors' Mess, the gift of the Petty Officers.



*Santa (Lt. Cooper) comes aboard*

Later, Vice Admiral and Mrs. Biggs and the Captain dined in the Wardroom amidst general hilarity, and the C-in-C himself greeted Father Christmas, as he arrived by boat, with a monumental one-thunderflash salute.

Dinner over it was time to relax, and what better place to do so than on one of Aden's sandy beaches. There many of us resumed normal routine by spending the afternoon sleeping in the sun; dreaming perhaps of a White Christmas.

A. I. R. S.



# Sightseeing on the Yemen Border

TEN officers were invited by the Commanding Officer, R.A.F. Station, Khormaksar, to pay flying visits to Lodar and Mukeiras, two "towns" in the Aden Protectorate very close to the Yemen border.

The party arrived at the airfield at 0830 to be briefed on the flight, and to have explained the problems of maintaining the Aden Protectorate Levies in the field. Valleta aircraft are used for this purpose. They are twin-engined "maids-of-all-work", and carry everything from Government Officials, Levies on draft, Medical cases, food, stores of all kinds, animals of the smaller breeds (e.g. sheep and goats but not (R) not camels), to Naval Officers in Tropical Rig! The terrain inland is so difficult that supply by land is very slow and laborious, and always subject to attack from venturesome tribesmen when the route lies near the border and "attractive" stores are being carried.

It was a sunny day, with some clouds at about 10,000 ft., and for experience the pilot took the "bad weather" route up the Wadi Hassan to Lodar. This winding wadi lies to the East of Aden, and is a fertile valley, over a mile wide in parts. It runs inland between jagged ridges of volcanic rock, with many smaller valleys entering from both sides. It was a thrilling experience to be flying at 120 knots, below the level of the ridges, and to bank round the bends with the inner wingtip apparently only a few feet from the sharp rocks. Even at this time of year, the river still had water running, and many large pools were in evidence. The line of green vegetation spread outwards from the river-bed, and could be seen extending much further where wells and irrigation channels had been constructed.

We arrived at the Lodar airstrip an hour after taking-off. This airstrip is a level part of the desert that has been swept clear of large stones and rocks, and lies about a mile from the town itself. We were met by Lt. Anderson, of the former R.A.F. Regiment, who took us to the A.P.L. Camp before showing us round the area. The Officers' Mess was in a square tent, which had been made reasonably comfortable, and while we were drinking tea, we could hear workmen chanting as they built a dry-stone dyke round the camp. As they chanted at two different rates, enquiry was made, and a rough translation was given. When a heavy stone is being lifted to the top of the wall, a slow chant, complete with suitable grunts and gasps of effort, is made, to the effect that "Allah will help us! Allah will help us!" As soon as the stone is raised and the strain removed from the workmen the chant changes to a faster one, to the effect " We did it without him... ! We did it without him!" Such is human nature!!

As the Political Adviser was on a tour with his escort of Levies, Lt. Anderson took us to meet the

Assistant P.A. who answered all our questions. He was an educated Arab who impressed us with his quiet air of efficiency. He introduced us to the Police Superintendent, who showed us over the local Fort....any small boy would have felt at home in it at once! From the top of the tower one could get a very good view of the surrounding countryside.

The more modern "town" of Lodar lay about a mile to the West, and is built of mud-bricks, stone and mortar, with some buildings, of concrete. These buildings lay at the foot of a small rocky hill, on top of which were four large, square, castellated, four-storied stone buildings. The top one was occupied by the Sultan, and the lower ones by his relatives. The small town is built around, and extends from, the central Square, at one corner of which is the fort-like gaol. We saw a prisoner sitting outside the



*Houses of the Sultan and his entourage....*

gate with iron fetters on his ankles, and we were told that he was a hostage from one of the neighbouring tribes. In the middle of the Square was a Ferguson tractor with plough attachment. This contrasted strongly with the primitive methods of cultivation we had seen outside the town, and is part of the agricultural policy to improve the output of crops. Already the words "cabbage", "caulif", "tomat" and "teem" ('sweet' for orange, 'sour' for lemon) have been incorporated into the local language, as they did not have any equivalents before. There are no roads or pavements in or around Lodar, and transport is by foot, donkey or camel. The crowd that gathered round us, men and boys, were poorly dressed but very cheerful, and very willing to have their photographs taken. One tall, fierce-looking warrior, said to be "on holiday" from the Yemen, cheerfully demonstrated in the middle of the closely-packed crowd, just how he would destroy his enemy with downward slashes of his jambia, or curved knife, that every