

*the freshness it bringeth to the heart . .
the scented isle*

There was the heat; there was the perfume of the oranges. 'I could recognise Corsica with my eyes closed, just from its perfume,' maintained Napoleon in exile on St. Helena. And certainly to-day the mantle of vegetation, the maquis ' which covers the mountain slopes of the island is still fragrant with holm-oak, myrtle and juniper, entwined in ferns, honeysuckle, rosemary and other sweet-smelling shrubs.

My happiest memory of oranges comes to me from a large garden near Ajaccio where I was used to taking my siesta during the hours of great heat. The orange trees, tall and widely spread, stretched down to the road from which the garden was separated only by a quickset hedge and a ditch. Immediately beyond was the sea, the immense blue sea. The orange trees filled the air around with the fragrance of their fruit and blossom. From time to time a ripe orange, as if overcome by the heat, became detached from the tree and fell to earth with an unechoing thud. They were superb oranges, reddish-purple inside and quite exquisite. Then there was the view of the horizon, so lovely that in the spaces between the leaves, the sea painted blue patterns which scintillated like pieces of broken glass and danced in the shimmering air. There was the distant sound of the sea, a cadenced murmur that cradled me like some invisible ship.'

So the French poet Alphonse Daudet sets the atmosphere of Ajaccio which is truly Corsican; one in which also simplicity and austerity are inextricably mingled with grandeur and legend. Rising from the sea a mere sixty miles from the south eastern coast of France, Corsica is the third largest island in the Mediterranean and its six hundred miles of spectacular coastline are becoming the more readily accessible to European tourists. Much of its three thousand square miles is covered with wild and rugged mountain at an altitude of over six thousand feet, and along the west coast especially great cliffs descend almost to the sea. Quite delightful on tour, this picturesque island offers a variety of scenic spots of true mountain grandeur, and many of the roads are daringly engineered as they turn back upon themselves in endless climbing loops.

Ajaccio is the capital of the island and spreads itself along the foot of the northern hills of the deep gulf of the same name. It houses the ancestral home of the Bonapartes and is the birthplace of the Emperor Napoleon, abounding naturally enough in imperial relics. A town of white houses, its charm is contained in palm-shaded squares and broad avenues, giving on to the sea fringed by truly continental beaches where the swimming and sunbathing are unsurpassed. But the fresh air and sunshine are also enjoyed on the long terraces with their typically continental cafes noted for the local blackbird pates, candied lime fruits and myrtle liqueur. Life's pleasures here are simple and austere, and reminded us that the good things in life are free - well, almost !

vibrates in the memory

And so might we say does the Mediteranean, because of it our memories are legion. Perhaps it was not Corsica with its Genoese watch towers and mountain girt bays, its promise of the precious satisfaction to be found in the pleasure of shooting, fishing, climbing and camping, which remains foremost in your reminiscences. You may find your substitute in thoughts of Sicily lying triangular across the Middle Sea, a surface remnant of a pre-existing bridge between Italy and the

vastnesses of Africa. Few islands indeed have been better favoured by nature. Climatically mild and scenically beautiful, Sicily possesses rugged mountain, smiling valley and bountiful plain; for even the frequency of earthquakes and the ever-present menace of Mount Etna, though they have borne constant witness to the caprice of natural forces, have in compensation added to the richness of the soil. Man, however, has been less kindly to the island. Geography placed it as an inevitable battleground between the forces of Europe and Africa, an essential possession for anyone who would rule the Mediterranean world, and so its story is one of invasion, war and tumult. A major crossroads of history for centuries, Sicily was first colonised by the Greeks and it was in their capital established at Syracuse that Archimedes was born. Since that time, not only by reason of its position but also because of its history and its contribution to Western civilisation and culture, the island became the very fulcrum of the Mediterranean. A journey in Sicily is a journey through time as well as space, and in digging up the past archaeological findings have been made which bear eloquent witness to the constructive capacity of the Sicilians from very early times indeed.

Italy, however, is the true cradle of Western civilisation as we know it. Most of us made Leghorn, Pisa and Florence, and we all enjoyed the Adriatic tour to Trieste; a few hardier souls meanwhile pilgrimaged to Rome, while as many as could did a trip to Venice. It was found that no other country combined in such degree everything that makes for beauty, grace and often, one would think, ease of living. In fact the Italians have anything but an easy life and many of them by our standards are miserably poor. Yet they are happy and gay, even in overcrowded and wretched surroundings.

The names of Italian cities long associated with beauty and great artistry spoke to us of the past, though this is but half the story. For to-day there are two Italys : that of the saints and artists, and that other Italy fast becoming a progressive and highly organised modern state.

In the north one sees Italy going all out for the benefits of industrialisation and technical skill, with Turin the centre of a thriving motor industry while Milan regards herself as the Economic Capital. Hydro-electric power has been harnessed in a multiplicity of projects. Traffic we found both fast and noisy, whether on main roads or inside town precincts, and it was recognised that the Italians have a love of driving on horn and brakes ! Born mechanics, they are, however, gifted too, as artists, musicians and singers. From their smiling landscapes and Edenlike gardens the Italian people seem to have absorbed vitality, laughter and song. In the little ancient wine shops hang beribboned mandolins, any of which a casual customer can take down from the wall to make his own music and sing the old Italian songs.

On still summer evenings as the sea breeze rises to cool the sunbaked hills, the chirping of crickets and the tinkle of mandolins fill the air. Listening to these melodies and breathing the spicy scents of orange, eucalyptus and aromatic herbs, we were almost convinced that in Italy we had found the land of hearts' desire.

in memoriam

Greece, it is said, MUST be visited once in a lifetime. It was here that the ideas governing our democratic way of life were thrashed out. It is this region,

**Volos
Memorial
Service**



too, so mythology tells us, that was peculiarly favoured by the gods - an area beautiful in green mountainside and in vistas of cypress trees set against a sparkling sea. Much of her beauty stems from the past, from her legends, and history dating as far back as the 14th Century B.C. : to the times of Homer, his tales of Troy, and of the wanderings of the wily Odysseus, to the times of the first ever recorded Naval battle of Salamis, to the times of the great Greek dramatists, philosophers and doctors.

It is a mountainous land with ranges up to 9,000 feet, mainly agricultural in the valleys and plains, though over half the land surface is sterile. Climate and soil are chiefly suited to the production of tobacco, wine from the grape, olives, figs and raisins, while to a large extent Greece is dependent for her prosperity on her mercantile marine. The people are of mixed stock, traditionally independent but held together by a common religion and deep reverence for ancient Greek civilisation. Intelligent and hard-working, the Greeks have great commercial ability. The peasant lives simply, his food being of the plainest, his house being small and rough. A hardy race with long political memory and intense patriotic feeling, it displays considerable intolerance even in internal politics.

Our visit to Volos was to commemorate the fatal gun accident which occurred on board H.M.S. DEVONSHIRE, off the island of Skiathos, in the Aegean, on Friday, 26th July, 1929. The then first cruiser squadron was carrying out single ship firing with main armament, and LONDON, together with SUSSEX and FROBISHER, had completed their practice shoots when at about 1000 DEVONSHIRE fired her first salvo from her 8-inch turret. Almost simultaneously eye-witnesses saw a sheet of flame appear from the back and top of 'X' turret, and some actually saw what proved to be the roof of the turret hurled high into the air and fall into the sea. It was some time before the magnitude of the accident could be ascertained, but the Captain of Marines and the majority of the men in the turret were either killed instantly or fatally wounded. The gunhouse was filled with fumes and fires broke out all around. As a result of the explosion

eighteen men lost their lives, of whom sixteen lie buried in an enclosure within the Greek cemetery at Volos, to which the DEVONSHIRE had proceeded in order to transfer her more serious cases among the injured to a hospital ship in the anchorage there.

The funeral for the victims was held on Saturday, 27th July, 1929, with full naval and military honours. The ship's recent visit was the occasion of a memorial service in honour of those occupying those simple graves in Grecian soil.

the seeing and hearing of marvellous things . . .

Africa has always been a continent both vast and exciting. We set foot in it at a variety of places, but had we continued to do so in even three times as many as we managed, it is a certainty we would be just as unable to attempt the impossible in summarising what 'Africa' means to most of us. Even consciously trying to arrange our ideas about it we find them vague and unconnected notions at least.

Oh, Africa, mysterious land
Surrounded by a lot of sand,
And full of grass and trees
And elephants and Afrikanders
And politics and Salamanders
And native rum in little kegs
And savages called Tuaregs . . .
And tons of diamonds and lots
Of nasty dirty Hottentots
And coolies coming from the East
And serpents, seven yards long at least,
And lions that retain
Their vigour, appetities and rage
Intact to an extreme old age
And never lose their mane . . .
Vast continent ! whose cumbrous shape
Runs from Bizerta to the Cape.'

A land divided into innumerable nations and peopled by vastly differing races, its administrative areas are even further divided in the differing interests of a variety of tribes. A land not of one voice, but of many : diverse and ununified. Africa to-day should not be thought of as a single unit but of a continent comprising a diversity in every sense, greater by far than any we would readily accept

at home. No longer the 'dark continent,' it is still the most exciting in the world. A land of untold resources with rapid commercial developments potentially everywhere afoot; a land offering limitless scope for touring and sightseeing on the grandest scale. Our visits took us to East, South and West of this vast continent and in each place we visited we were not left unmoved but our hearts were laid siege by the magic and intrigue that are part if not the whole of Africa's consuming spell. Not one in half a dozen of you would give the same answer as his neighbour if asked to tell about this great country, for to each this land means something different and for each they say she satisfies some dream.

built on dreams

The dreams of a few pioneers fascinated by the promise of East Africa and who saw for her a great and glorious future are the foundations of a land of sharp contrasts. Possessed of snow-capped mountains and mighty rivers serving fertile soil, it has areas also of semi-desert where nomadic tribesmen wander with their herds and camel caravans. Arab dhows run before the monsoon off palm-fringed beaches; arrogant unlettered tribesmen here and there refuse knowledge of the white man's ways; and hunters on safari swap adventures round their camp fires at night. For in this stronghold of the wild it is the order of the day to stalk hippo at sunrise with the camera at the ready, to watch weirdly clad natives hunting leopards, to meet slithering pythons almost in one's very tracks, and to have



Seychelles, 1,000 miles from anywhere.

baboons for company on the bonnet of one's transport. Whatever game is met, the experience of this great natural zoo where elephants have priority on the highways is breathtaking in the extreme.

In 975 A.D. legend records that when one Hassan-Bin-Ali set sail from Shiraz with six sons in seven ships he founded some settlements, one of which he called Mombasa. By the early 14th Century at least Mombasa was a thriving city, and in 1498 Vasco da Gama wrote of its being the seat of considerable commerce. Progress lapsed through almost four centuries of intermittent upheaval, but to-day Mombasa is once more prosperous and rapidly developing with a cosmopolitan population and the finest harbour on Africa's East coast; the chief port of Kenya, it is also the terminus of the important railway system extending across Uganda to the Congo borders. Some spent this second Christmas of the Commission up-country in Nairobi and beyond, others attempted Kilimanjaro's dizzy heights, some just lazed in Mombasa and on the shining white beaches of the coastal fringe, while at least one of us suffered 300-odd hot and dusty miles in an East African bus !

The New Year was celebrated (even by exiled Scots !) in the multi-racial atmosphere of Dar-es-Salaam, the capital and principal port of Tanganyika Territory, bejewelled with brilliant red acacia blossom. Founded in 1862 by the Sultan of Zanzibar, Dar was found to lie mostly around its harbour, where the business area backed by its bazaar and native market was situated centrally. Bustling and full of life, colourful and exotic, overcrowded and vibrant, it contrasted with the cooler, quieter and more placid pace of the European residential quarter so different from the twisting streets and narrow shops of the skilled Asian craftsmen. New factories, too, and industrial developments alongside improvements to harbour installations have contributed to making Dar a centre of considerable commerce.

Dar is not an old town; a century ago it did not exist. Named the 'Haven of Peace,' it took us to its hospitable heart at a time when exiles think thoughts of home : it freshened our hearts and shared solace which in the light of its commercial bustle would seem to belie its name.



**East African
Market Day**



Mombasan
Arches

or some secreted island, Heav'n knows where . .

We made a habit very often of visiting islands whenever the opportunity presented itself, and though there is no A.A. book to those of the Indian Ocean, we dallied among them as often at least as we took the authentic road to the isles ! On leaving the go-ahead new-world atmosphere of East Africa, we recognised a change in stepping back half a century in time to a nearly feudal existence in the Seychelles where sailors still wear straw hats reminiscent of our own Navy before the Great War. Set in the Indian Ocean a thousand miles east of Mombasa lie the ninety-two islands taken from France by Britain during the Napoleonic Wars. They may well have been visited from the Persian and Arabian Gulfs in the 12th Century, and they were certainly known to Portuguese navigators in the early 16th Century. The French set up their `stone of possession' in 1756, though the group remained uninhabited till 1768 and finally became British territory in 1814, remaining a dependency of Mauritius till 1903, then becoming a separate Crown Colony.

Mahe, the principal island, lying at four degrees south of the Equator, is the granite top of a mountain rising from the sea. About a third of the group are similarly formed, the remainder being flat reefs of coral, so that Port Victoria contains over two-thirds of the population itself. The attraction of these islands rests in many things : the tropical beaches, white and palm-fringed; the brilliant colour which is ubiquitous; the freshness of the hills; the varieties and wonders of an island archipelago a thousand miles from the nearest mainland, from the unique coco de mer palm with its double coconut to the black parrot of Praslin Island, to be seen nowhere else in the world. The wonders of the deeps hereabouts range from the giant thousand lb. ray and huge marlin to the brilliant and colourful minnows which make the underwater landscape a `goggler's' paradise.

The Seychelles are said to provide a unique experience, an escape from the weariness, the fever and fret of modern life : the guide book states the islands are

unmatched and offer something which cannot be experienced elsewhere. And certainly in the absence of the contemporary cacophony represented in the juke-box, funland or palais de danse, we found the attractions different-as visitors it was fine, but to be settled here would invite extreme impatience with hills to occupy the castaway but the infrequent visits of passing ships and the gentle shock of the falling coconut.

In complete contrast our visit to the Maldives and Male, four degrees north of the Equator, was the occasion for witnessing a page of recent history in the making.

The purpose of our visit, you will remember, was to take the Minister of State for Commonwealth Relations, Mr. C. J. M. Alport, M.P., together with H.E. the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom in Ceylon, Sir A. F. Morley, to visit Male at the invitation of the Maldivian Prime Minister, Mr. Ibrahim Nasir, to sign an agreement between our two governments giving the U.K. use of airstrip facilities at Gan Island. This was the outcome of a series of important discussions and a satisfactory settlement of a major and long-prospected agreement.

The islands themselves are all small in size, the population devout Moslems of mixed stock, while the climate hot and humid is notorious for the unvarying temperature of the atmosphere. The economy is extremely simple and fishing provides food for local consumption, and in the form of a curry material prepared from bonito furnishes the major export. The ship's visit was indeed a major event and the ceremony, decorations, celebrations and general air of festivity with which we were met were ample evidence of our friendly reception. The Sultan paid his official calls in his barge of State presented in 1897 by Queen Victoria, and it was quite a thought to realise that our national salute was returned by an impressive though ancient muzzle-loading battery in the old Portuguese fort ashore.

Waving palms again fringed white beach sands and the clean blue-green tropical waters covered coral cities inhabited by myriad fish of colours which put those even of the rainbow in the shade. The major impression was one of spotlessness - of whitewashed walls, of burnished brass, of coral sanded roads, where everything gleamed in the sun, not the least the immaculate dress of the friendly inhabitants.

Thrusting upwards from the abyss of the Indian Ocean a few degrees north of Capricorn and occupying a space the size of a small English county lies the island of Mauritius. A volcanic mass, many millions of years before its discovery by the Portuguese, it was born in some violent convulsion of the sea-bed resulting in the island's arrival above the surface when tremendous upheavals and outpourings of lava must have taken place, for many aged crags and dead craters now covered with vegetation remain to-day while old lava flows sweep seaward from the high central plateau or squeeze themselves through gaps between mountains as bizarre as those of the moon.

Created in violence, the island has never quite succeeded in being thereafter a stranger to nature's turbulence. Lying in that region of the South Indian Ocean where the passage of tropical cyclones is most frequent, Mauritius has experience of heavy devastation, and indeed we found ourselves ordered to the relief and aid of the islanders on just such an occasion after the excesses of Cyclone Carol. There was consequent and intense damage to crops and to buildings, a dislocation of essential services and a consequent loss of life. Mauritius has been described as being 'like a place permanently recovering from a bad air raid the year before last,' and normally it is in a poor enough state of disrepair, and now again victim

Affairs of
State in
the Maldives



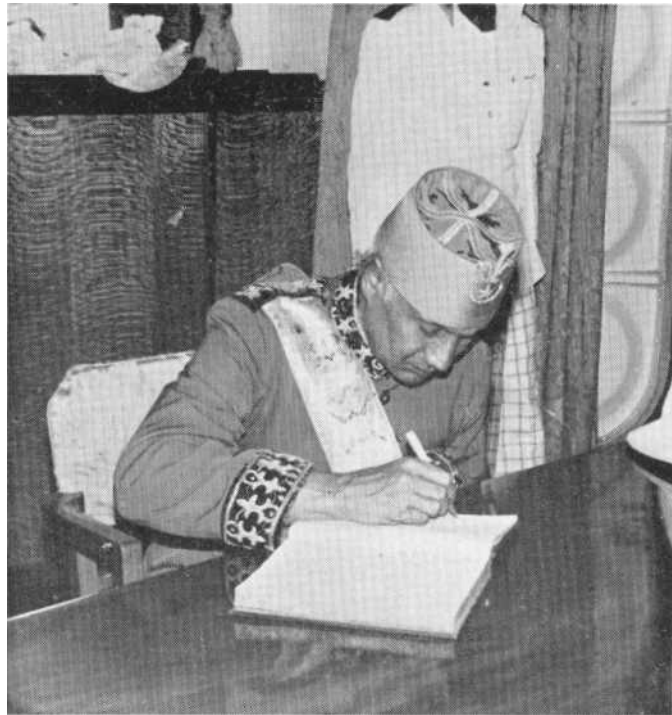
Road block -
Port Louis

The day the
roof fell in



of intense hurricane force winds we were prepared for devastation and havoc. Our working parties did in fact set about restoring communications and encouraging the clearing away of storm damage as well as bringing more essential supplies to the island. Specialised knowledge was made use of in setting reservoir supplies to rights, establishing a radio telephone link with opposite ends of the island, while the medical profession worked to the limit administering inoculations against the event of serious epidemic. A good heart and abundant cheerfulness achieved as much in encouraging the local inhabitants, as did the hard work itself demanded of us. Though necessitated by the misfortune of others, the visit proved one not only of great interest but one of some achievement in itself uniquely memorable.

But even the more normal appearance of the island to-day with waving plains of sugar cane, groves of coconut trees and orderly ranks of casuarinas, is vastly different from the general aspect which presented itself to the first Dutch settlers. In earlier days there was a mantle of forest from the topmost peaks to sea level- this strange indigenous vegetation still lingers on some mountain-tops and there is still the odd patch of original thick-limbed and tall tough trees of which ebony is the commonest; the gloom of erect grey trunks is enmeshed in the twisted lianas 'dropping from the upper branches like strands of immobilised treacle,' while the picture is set off by the solitary note of some bird or the sight of the lone heron pensive by some dark pool. Mauritius presents two faces and can be a colourless unblossoming world dripping softly with abundant rain, though it had more often been described as an island of "sweetness and light."



H.H. the Sultan of the Maldives



Essential services
maintained -
All in a day's work



Reinforcements
called upon

the meeting of unknown friends . .

The great southern U of the African continent is a land of startling opposites and it would be possible to spend years holidaying in South Africa without seeing the same place twice. We found Durban bustling and hospitable with its surf-lined beaches and prancing ricksha warriors; Port Elizabeth alive and gay, sunny with the memories of its original English settlers; and Cape Town memorable and historic, presided over by the majestic Table Mountain. Indeed, it would take nothing less than a minor Milton to do justice to the scenery, especially of the Cape Peninsula and its magnificent thousand-mile drive, the length of its wild and splendid coast.

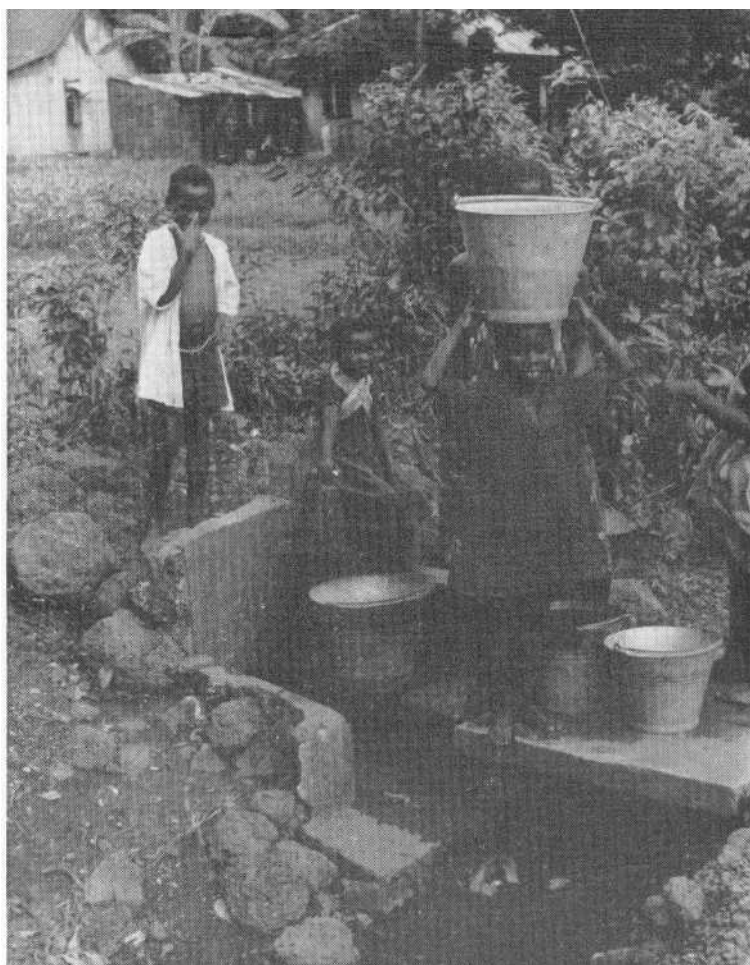
We'd never had it so good, nor will we again. We must agree with H. V. Morton that we had alighted 'in a country of haunting beauty among a people whose kindness and warmth of heart are not anywhere exceeded.' It is refreshing to remember that when temperatures are down at home, in these southern latitudes summer is swelling to its full, people are swimming in warm ocean currents and browsing like meerschaum on wide sunny beaches. Iced drinks are more popular than coffee or tea, and a mug of steaming kye is an almost forgotten experience. A land of gold and diamonds, sunshine, sport and enjoyment, abundant hospitality and a legion of unknown friends - we never looked back !

History records that Phoenician galleys and Portuguese cockleshells had navigated these waters before us, and indeed we sensed the historic mantle which relates those earlier voyages along coasts of remarkable beauty, of rich rolling green hills and distant escarpments, of glittering headlands, warm lazy surf and golden beaches. Here was the seaway to the Indies, long sought and epoch altering, the discovery of which changed the entire course of human affairs. In the wake of da Gama we had come to learn ourselves some of the romance and drama of the settlement of this southern sub-continent. A golden tale, of early Eastern imperialism, of treasure-laden East Indiamen, of scudding pirates and gay adventurers, of epic clipper passages of those lean sisters of the sea, grain-laden from the Australias to Europe. Even to the present times of speedy air routes criss-crossing the blue vastnesses of the Indian Ocean.

To Durban's quaysides ships bring the voices and scents of a hundred nations, where a maze of cranes handles six million tons of goods annually. And on tree-lined hills overlooking the harbour a babble of wild monkeys chatter and play amid the luxuriant growth and wild flowers of a primitive and largely untamed continent. Big arterial highways carry thousands of cars into and out of the city daily, the curved roads cutting irresistibly through hillsides and mounting ever higher towards the interior, or rolling north and south to seaside towns that line the ocean like so many coloured beads thrown up by the blue waters. Leading off these highways, almost unnoticed, are little paths and tracks that vanish into the dim reaches of misty valleys and hills where tribal Zulus live their simple pastoral existence, or where sugar cane plantations stretch unending, billowing green and cool in the winds from the nearby sea. The city itself presents white businessmen worrying their way down crowded street pavements passing holiday-makers on their way to the beaches. Black ricksha boys dodge through the rush of modern traffic with their loads of sightseeing tourists, while Indian merchants in quaint Asiatic bazaars bargain with prospective buyers amid the perfumes of the East.



Bread-



-and water

We came to Cape Province first by way of Port Elizabeth, where in 1820 the Eastern cape was settled by those newly arrived five thousand who stepped ashore in Algoa Bay. This influx has been responsible even to this day for the decidedly English flavour which signifies life in this vicinity. Port Elizabeth itself stretches for almost ten miles along the shores of the bay. Gay holidaymakers work up a suntan at some of the best beaches in the Union and scores of little fishing boats bob to their own reflection, while seagulls cry applause at the weather. But underlying the polish of sophistication, Port Elizabeth retains its small-town reputation for friendliness and the kindness of its peoples' hearts is best summarised in the inscription of its famous memorial to the horses which fell in the South African War

" The greatness of a nation consists not so much in the number of its people or the extent of its territory as in the extent and justice of its compassion."

There was, too, plenty to see, from the famous snake park to the Addo elephant reserve forty-five miles away, and though the memories of our visit are not recorded in stone, the recollection of the 170ft. Campanile built to commemorate the landing of the 1820 settlers will always inspire agreeable thoughts of the more than friendly city.

Half a dozen years before Columbus discovered America, the Portuguese had rounded the Cape, but Cape Town itself dates from almost two centuries later, when in 1652 van Riebeeck established a Dutch East India Company settlement a half-way house between Europe and the Indies. Much of the foundations of the South African peoples were laid in the 150 years of Dutch ownership, and in 1795 the British occupied the Cape after the decline and bankruptcy of the historic Dutch company. The small colony was returned to Holland in 1803, but the British again took control shortly after, continuing till the emergence of South Africa as an independent member State of the British Commonwealth in 1910, after the South African War. South Africa's Parliamentary capital and oldest city, Cape Town follows the curve of a natural harbour at the base of Table Mountain, that world-famous flat-topped landmark. The home of more than half a million people, it is the Southern gateway to the African continent, as well as being a seaport of world prominence.

Scenically, the Cape rates in the top flight and the peninsula is magnificent in its promise. The city itself is characterised by expansion, building, reorganisation, while shopping, entertainment and sightseeing are major attractions. Full of strange little streets with no apparent reason for their being, Cape Town easily imprints itself in the memory, and the hospitality we enjoyed there is as symbolic to us of South Africa as the giant protea floral symbol of the Union.

And as we sailed for home, Table Mountain, that historic beacon to the traveller, symbolised for us the wonderful friendships, the generous hospitality from the heart that everywhere immersed us. A backcloth to the bay, the mountain continually tempted our eyes astern till it faded on the horizon. And we knew that below that distant hazy bastion lay Cape Town, mother city of South Africa and focus of the many memories that made our visits in these waters altogether magnificent and never to be forgotten.