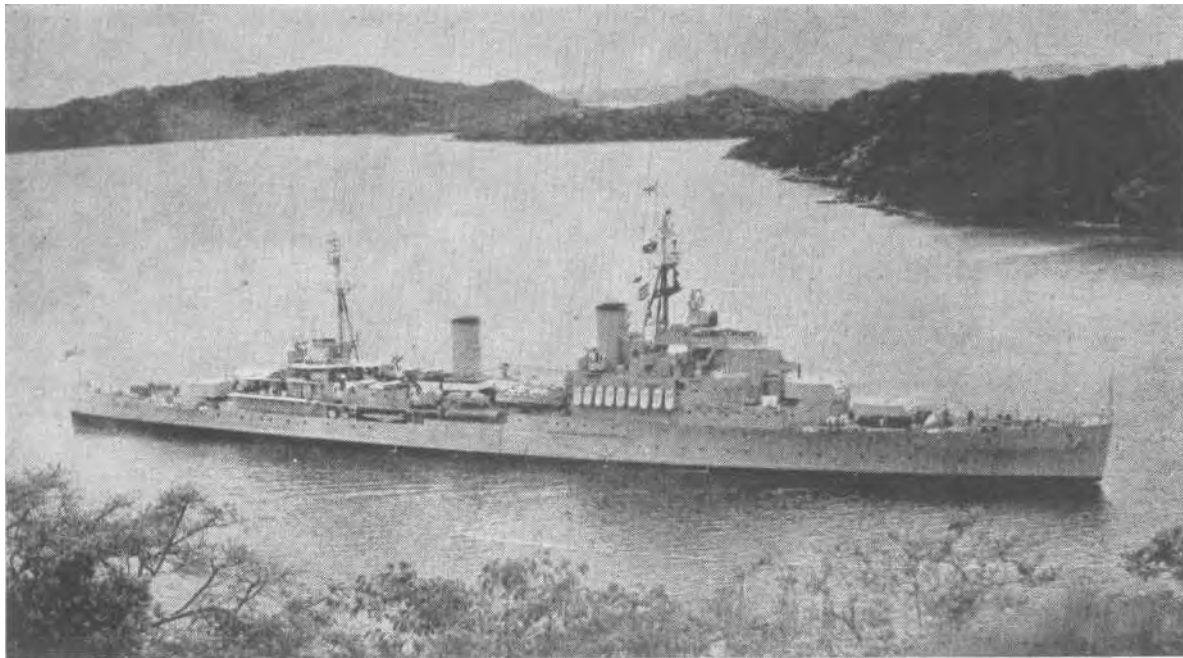


BETTER LATE THAN NEVER!



(Gambia entering harbour without Admiral's Flag on Foremast)

FROM..S.B.N.O.CEYLON.

ROUTINE.

TO.... ADMIRALTY.

UNCLASSIFIED.

INFO. .C IN C E. I.

180330. Z.

TRINCOMALEE 17TH MAY.

ARRIVAL H.M.S.GAMBIA.

D.T.G...180330.Z. MAY '55.

ORIG.. Q.H.M.

T/P. P/L.

TOD..0916EF.

R.W.

18TH MAY.



Vice Admiral C. F. W. Norris, C.B., D.S.O., Commander-in-Chief, East Indies Station is piped aboard his Flagship for the first time.



The Commander-in-Chief inspects the Royal Marine Guard

THE P. and T. CLUB

It is said that one half of the ship does not know how the other half lives. Perhaps if this were not so, a certain group of officers would be charging a certain group of ratings entertainment tax for services rendered. This is no concert party, but a real life entertainment given quite unknowingly and entirely free of charge.

I am referring to that stupendous act of the day that is heralded by the call of "First duty hands muster on the boat deck, crane driver close up". Nothing much in that you may say, but wait, these are merely the assistants; the star of the evening has yet to appear. To the uninitiated, all that happens is that an officer appears and superintends the hoisting of the ship's boats, but to members of the P. & T. Club this is the deciding factor of the evening's performance. According to the officer's style and popularity the balcony audience will assemble and watch with critical eye and comment with voice to match. To describe each individual style would take far too long, so I will attempt to generalise by studying the particular groups.

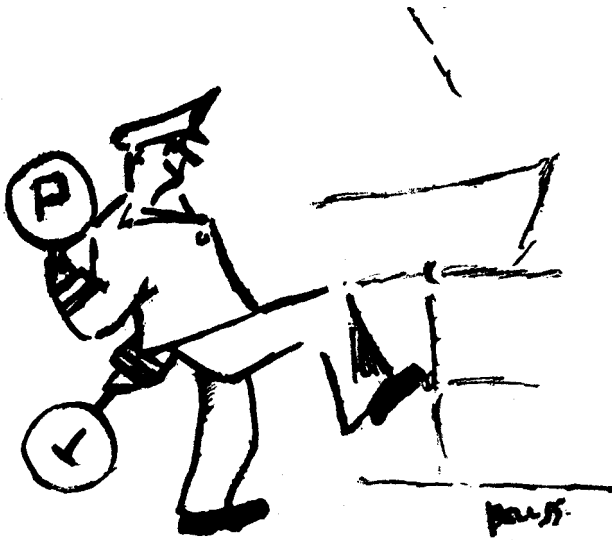
Firstly, we have the "this-exercise-will-be-carried-out-in-the-manner-laid-down" type of officer. He marches smartly up to the crane where he takes a firm grip on two bats (marked P. & T.) and then places himself in an advantageous position. He then stands at ease with the bats crossed in front of the body; this indicates that he is ready



to start and that he thinks everyone else should be. The right hand (attached to bat T.) is now raised vertically in one snappy movement, usually so quickly that it catches the crane driver on the hop. However the crane arm rises into the air. Having reached the desired altitude the movement is arrested by bringing the bat down to the "rest

bats" position. To get the hook and such tackle as is attached thereon to move up or down, the officer raises the arm attached to bat P. with the bat pointing in the desired direction (i.e. Up or Down). The speed is controlled by a clockwise wrist movement (the remainder of the body is kept perfectly still) assisted by the occasional verbal command such as "Handsomely" and others too difficult to print. To train this juggernaut left or right, the officer shows extreme initiative by again using bat T. (possibly because T. is the first letter of the word "train"; but it does not do to delve too deeply into such matters). To avoid confusing the crane driver more than is necessary, he indicates his preference for left or right by extending his T. arm to its full extent in the desired direction. After a series of such movements he finds to his delight that there is a boat on the end of the hook, which he lays on the boat deck like a new-born babe (I think that is what the shipwright said, anyway I know he mentioned midwives). His job completed, the officer replaces the bats to the bottom of the crane (edges of bats together; handles making an angle of etc. etc. and returns happily to his lair to read up the latest in A.F.Os.).

Our second group for study is the "Goodness-knows-what-all-this-is-about-but - we - had - better-make-a-show-of-it" type of officer. We believe that this type first came into circulation because of people doing a sub. for officers in group one. His whole approach to the job is essentially nonchalant otherwise he may be branded as incompetent. He saunters up to the crane and grabs the bats breaking immediately into a very neat juggling act that would astound Bertram Mills. This puts the remainder of his team entirely at ease, for here they see a man so completely confident that he actually tosses the sacred bats into the air. If they could only read his mind and see that he is only throwing them about because he cannot think of any other possible use for them. He wanders out on to the boat deck and throws up an arm, watching closely to see if this has any effect on the crane. The hook rises and makes a careful mental note that left arm is "Up & Down." With this information at his fingertips he now waves both arms in a casual manner, at the same time looking over the side of the ship so that the crane driver will get the general idea that there is something waiting to be picked up down there. He watches the boat being hooked on and then places his arms at odd angles to his body. This sign could mean "P up and T left" or at the same time it could be "T up and P down". It really means "the boat is on the hook now, for goodness sake get it up here and stowed away before anyone comes along". The job done he throws the bats at the crane and rushes off to complete the last chapter of "A Cold Slab for Hotsie" (an original novel, not a reprint).



The third and last group is the "Oh-dear-Oh-dear-what-shall-I-do" type of officer. This is definitely the learners' group and is usually although not always obtained from the gunroom. His whole approach is wrong; he is timid; and before he starts it is obvious that the crane and not he will be the master of the situation. He collects the bats and studies them carefully to see which is P. and which is T. and then with his fingers drumming a nervous tattoo on the bat handles, he walks out to where he thinks is the right place for him to be. He is quite right in his guess because he has placed himself where the crane driver cannot see him at all, so the chance of accident is reduced. He knows the basic principles laid down by group one, but he tries to carry off the nonchalant manner of group two. Add these errors to his nervous state and you will have some idea of what happens. He P's up when he should T left and T's down when he should not do anything. In short everything suddenly goes out of control, and many a member of this class has been dragged away to the sick bay screaming "P Up, T Down", whilst beating his head with the bats. This last action seems to have the desired effect for they often return to the stage completely free of their nervousness. Their first attempt is the only one that really draws the crowds because after they are so cautious that it becomes a little boring.

Well there you are. Something to suit all tastes. For the admirers of precision and graceful movement I would suggest group one. For the adventurous and lovers of the unexpected it is definitely group two. While for lighter entertainment you just cannot beat the first attempt of group three.

I would like to finish by saying a sincere "Thank you" to all those kind gentlemen who have done so much to enliven the dull evenings of the gentlemen living nearer the pointed end of the ship.

SOME FACTS AND FIGURES

CASH

The total amount of cash received and paid out during the commission is nearly half a million pounds.

The following currencies have been used

Sterling	Pakistan
Gibraltar	Iraqi
Maltese	Iranian
East African	Mauritius
Ceylon	Seychelles
Indian	Ethiopian
	and Maria Theresa dollars

POST OFFICE SAVINGS

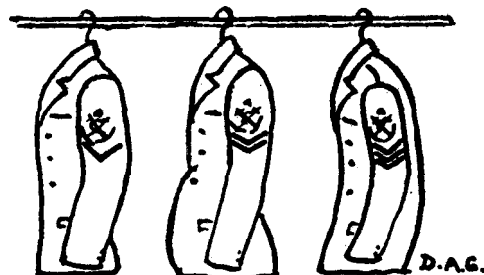
The total amount deposited . . . £23,500
 The total amount withdrawn £ 4,000

FOOD AND DRINK

We have eaten :-

35	tons	of meat
6¼	"	bacon
174	"	potatoes
27	"	sugar
9¾	"	butter and margarine
92,600		loaves of bread
127,000		eggs
47,000		tins of milk
2,000		gallons of rum

and enough tea for nearly a million cups of tea.



THE LAST AFRICAN CRUISE

MAURITIUS

THE first stop, with the Flag flying from the foremast, was Mauritius. We all felt, I think, that on our reception there, and on our enjoyment of the first official visit as Vice Admiral Norris' flagship the success of the cruise, or even the commission, depended.

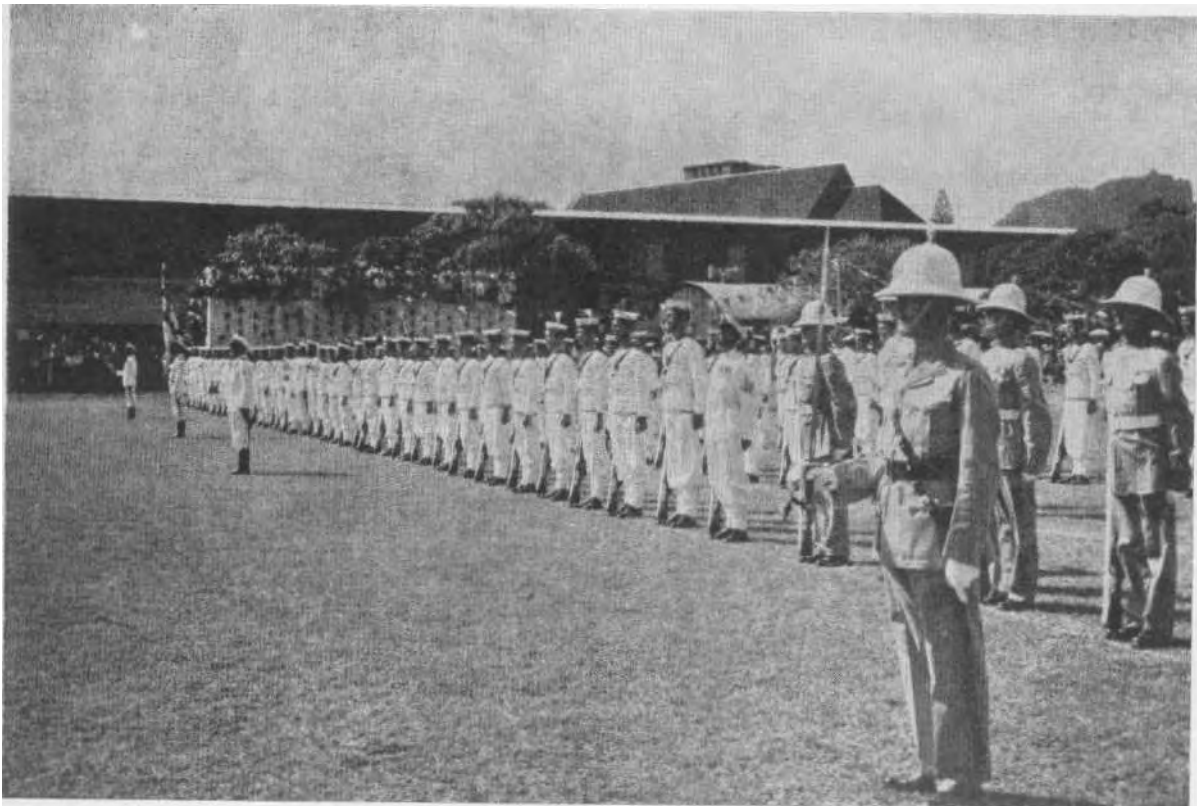
Well we think it was a success and we certainly did enjoy the friendly reception that we had from all on the island from the interested natives who queued up in their hundreds to get on board when the ship was open to visitors, from the units of the Army up at Vacoas and above all from the British and French residents who overwhelmed the ship with their hospitality.

You will read elsewhere of the sporting activities during our stay, a formidable programme against tough opposition that was a foretaste of the number of games to be played on the cruise.

Here for the first time we gave a performance of the Concert Party which was very well received, and here also we saw for the first time the appearance of the 'grippo board' in the Regulating Flat.

Shortly after our arrival we landed the Queen's Colour for the Queen's Birthday Parade, where the arduous training on the playing fields of Trincomalee paid dividends, and all felt pride at the part played by Gambia's ship's company.

From the multitude of activities that went on in Mauritius we have selected the 'First Banyan' for inclusion in the Commission Book. After this one the pattern of the banyan has been repeated from Zanzibar to Dar-Es-Salaam and Seychelles and of course, in the home of the banyan, Trincomalee. Wherever there is a chance of the day off, a clear sky and a sailing wind, the cry will go up "Anyone for a Banyan?" and if you went, this is the sort of thing you might have found.



Queen's Birthday Parade.

EXPEDITION TOM BEAU

or

THE FIRST BANYAN

Wanted: Two whalers' crews for an overnight Banyan to Tombeau Bay.

A committee was quickly formed under the chairmanship of Lt. Cdr. Butt, the leader of the expedition, to discuss the ways and means.

It was soon realised that an expedition of this calibre had to have a really good system of supply - food being the major item on the agenda. P.O.(S) Hutcheson was nominated as food caterer and never was so much gathered in, in so short a time. There was nothing shaky about his organisation. Every item, even a tablecloth was provided.

The crews were quickly formed and what a motley, some say ghastly, collection they were. 'Legs' Leverton took charge of the second whaler and with him went 'Tiger' Hepburn (famous for his cliff-climbing exploits) 'Guts' Lambert (the best cook in the company), 'Skins' Horne, 'Oggie' Horne, 'Darkie' James, 'Bagsy' Baker (the man who invented the bellows for sailing), and two Sea Rovers, Everett and Knocker, formed the rest of the crews.

The day of the Banyan dawned bright and clear and with the minimum of delay the expedition got under way. The sugar cane telegraph must have been working for after an uneventful journey a landing was made.

No sooner was foot set on shore than a committee of welcome composed of the local inhabitants appeared. The wonders of education soon solved the language difficulties and barring a shaking of the head over the insanity of the English, friendly relations were established. After we had all admired a small ketch under construction in a clearing and looked at the local fresh water system - a running stream - a large table and benches were placed at our disposal, a camp site was selected and a fire was lit.

A swim was indicated after all the exertions of the day and led by two fearsome looking creatures with masks, flippers and spears, the party (negative cook) took to the water. Soon the pleasant aroma of cooking pervaded the air and drew the swimmers and the spearmen who had failed to provide us with a fish course, out of the water. What a cook! What catering! What food! Healthy appetites soon produced clean plates and satisfaction was expressed by all.

After lunch the majority voted for a siesta, but some of the hardier and more venturesome types decided to go and explore. After a silver collection, fully booted and spurred the explorers (I was one of them) set off.

Leaving the camp site we struck a path which seemed to hold untold possibilities. Spirits were high and within the first hour several miles of sugar cane were passed uneventfully. Soon thirst made itself felt and spirits began to flag when at last signs of habitation were found. Interpreters

were summoned and eventually the locals were made to understand our needs. We were led, accompanied by a host of children to the village food store. There it was! - tier on tier of liquid refreshment! With much discrimination and after considerable thought (aided by some bottles of beer), suitable wines were selected. With the load evenly distributed and spirits soaring once again, it was decided to retrace our steps. Only a short distance was covered before the load had to be lightened by the simple expedient of emptying a bottle or two! A little later still it was decided that the loads were too heavy and so a taxi was hired (don't ask me how a taxi suddenly appeared on the scene). After being driven at breakneck speed by a driver who must have had more than a fair share of 'Stirling Moss blood' in him we hurriedly got out and passed round another bottle of wine to soothe our shattered nerves. The walk back along the path to the beach then started. Suddenly a sound brought everyone to a standstill! It was repeated. No words were needed - everyone was thinking the same thing - Chickens! Chickens for dinner it would be, by hook or by crook! The sound was traced to its sources - a worker's village. After a bit of bartering and having convinced them that we were the personal representatives of the Commander-in-Chief, a price was fixed and we departed, the proud possessors of the second biggest cockerel in the village.

On our return, the problem of who could pull, pluck and kill a chicken (or vice versa!) was solved by detailing off the caterer for the operation - a job he performed admirably. The table was spread and suitable wines selected while our cook produced a magnificent meal. Lt. Cdr. Butt then proposed the first toast - to chicken! Suddenly someone jumped up with a cry of "It's vinegar!". Sure enough it was. Fortunately only two bottles of our precious stock were found to be useless. Owing to the language difficulties we had obviously not been properly understood.

What a dinner it was-

Shell fish.

Chicken fried in butter.

Boiled potatoes.

Green peas.

Tinned fruit cocktail.

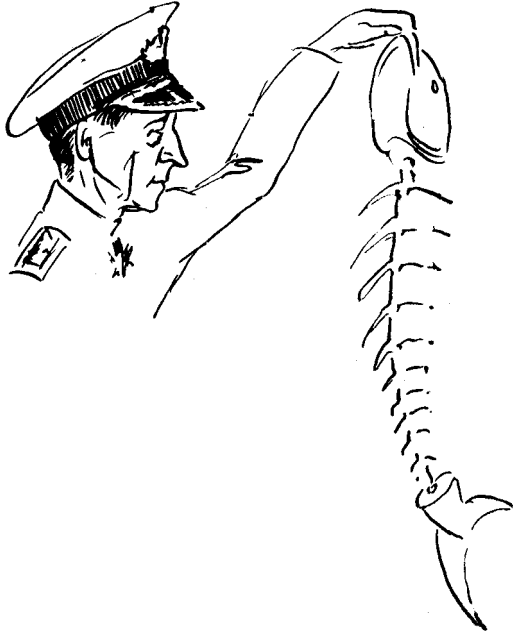
And of course the best wines (vinegar optional)

After dinner all settled down for an early night - clustered around with feet towards the fire. A good night's rest; an early swim and then a huge breakfast of herrings in tomato sauce and scrambled egg.

The camp site was then demolished, the fire buried and the boats prepared for sea. An off-shore breeze bore us away and we returned to Port Louis harbour after a truly marvellous Banyan which was enjoyed by all.

P.G.L.

MOMBASA MEMORIES



EARLY in the bright morning of June 14th - so long ago - our "lean grey shape" (as the 'Mombasa Times' later described the ship) slipped quietly into the ship-strewn harbour of Kilindini and berthed alongside the fuelling jetty until the following afternoon. Even Her Britannic Majesty's Flagship of the East Indies Station was not permitted to attach itself to the African continent for a longer period than this in this thriving port - so great is the demand for wharfage facilities. Nevertheless we subsequently anchored in midstream for a full fortnight - our longest stay at any port during the cruise.

Mombasa Island is not part of Kenya Colony but is in Kenya protectorate which also incorporates a 10-mile wide coastal strip on the mainland rented from the Sultan of Zanzibar. Consequently official calls were even more numerous and protracted than usual; but when the last blue wisp of smoke from the saluting guns had drifted away and the captains and Queen's representatives departed, a swarm of voluntary members of hospitality committees invaded us and finalised the details of ceremonies, concerts, dinners, dances, entertainments, games, sundowners and safaris organised for our mutual pleasure.

For many the step ashore was their first on African soil and eager interest lit their eyes. Yet even to those who had visited it before - mainly in the war years - Mombasa was exciting. It was true that the Portuguese Fort Jesus, now filled with Mau Mau malefactors, was outwardly the same; towering over the Arab quarter's narrow streets, it still guarded the entrance to the Old Harbour, where during the North East Monsoon the dhows from Arabia still congregate in hundreds and discharge their cargoes of carpets and curios. (Nowadays their outward-bound cargo is not man,

but mangrove). But the modern district of the city has changed very much during the last ten years. On what were wide open spaces along the Kilindini Road have sprung up houses, schools, shops and offices. The harbour installations have increased tremendously but still cannot keep pace with impatient ships that have to wait for days before they can unload. To help reduce the two-year backlog of imports and the pulse of balding shipowners, building and development goes on apace and the hillside overlooking the jetties is being gradually scraped away to make room for bigger warehouses. Though the air is hot and humid it quivers with activity. This is no place where the white man lazes under a palm tree; he works hard and long in air-conditioned offices. His wife and daughters shun the coffee-cups and find employment as secretaries and typists.

Here for the first time since leaving Malta one could gaze into glass-fronted shops and be tempted to buy presents for relatives and friends. From the street hawk, too, delightful inexpensive (after the essential bargaining) African curios in carved wood could be purchased - ebony heads of native maidens, elongated giraffes in comical pose or

(Continued on Page 29)

Appreciation

We, THE CHAIRMAN AND COUNCILLORS of the African Advisory Council of Mombasa wish to record our thanks for the kindness and generosity extended to certain of our number and also to other African notables from other parts of the Colony and Protectorate of Kenya on the occasion of the visit of H.M.S. Gambia to Mombasa. We wish to say that we were most impressed by our visit to H.M.S. Gambia and pray that your protection of the merchant ships of the Commonwealth may always be attended by good fortune, and that your ambassadorship of goodwill is appreciated as much elsewhere as it is here.

Robert J. Winson
P. M. Mwanishi
Mt. Killa Salib
M. M. Mwanishi
M. Mwanishi

To the Captain
 Officers & Men of
 H. M. S. Gambia

Mombasa June 23RD 1955

AN ASCENT OF MOUNT KILIMANJARO

Mombasa - 0730 on June 20th

"Is all the gear ready?". "Enough warm clothing?". "Where's the barrier cream?" "You'll never make the boat!" Cases and bags thrown into the stern sheets. Clatter of feet on the ladders - everyone's here. The cox-wain's whistle and "Bear off forrard!". Eleven men watch GAMBIA getting smaller in the pink morning light. Leaving the real life, the earnest life for a space, to go up into the mountains.

Alongside the jetty. Ashore in a rush. Three vans waiting. "Load the gear quickly!" Nip through Mombasa. Not much traffic. "Stop the car, I must buy some sun-glasses". "Hold on a minute I must cash a Traveller's Cheque". Five minutes drive and there's the bus - a local bus, hot and cramped. Throw the kit up on the roof, high already with sticks of furniture and a pram. Lurch along the road - a break at Voi for lunch. On again - in front the brown dry tarless road. Behind, the swirling dust for half a mile. Hills - the gearbox screams in first! Himo at last and change the bus for an old Ford van. Race up the road with a boiling radiator. Ahead, the mountain fills the sky: cloud over the peak. Here's the hotel. Wash off the dust. Strawberries and cream for tea. The blessed coolness of the air at 4,500 feet and the sight of a log fire. How good to sleep under a fur counterpane, two hundred miles from Mombasa.

Sixteen porters, two guides, a cook and eleven climbers and we are off. Up through villages. Children sing in a little school. Bee-hive huts. Under a tree a small boy with big eyes and a finger in his mouth watches us go by. Then no more huts and the way is steeper and narrower. Climb up for two hours. A rest in a clearing - a sandwich lunch. Move on again, into the rain-forest now. Mud on the path and the smell of wet wood. Bismark Hut, ten miles from the hotel AND in four hours; not too bad. Smoky fire, hot supper, hard wooden bunks and sleep.

The breakfast was good. Out of the hut at a quarter to nine and up through the forest on a steep slimy path. Into wet meadows after an hour. The forest is below and fine rain is falling - the wind cutting hands and wrists. Sandwiches and a smoke, but it's warmer to keep moving. Two climbers pass us - one of them had got to the top. They go down into the mist, we climb on. Over four hours from Bismark and rain all the way. "What's that ahead? - darker than the mist". "Peter's Hut!". We're at 12,500 feet and we've come eleven miles today. "Light the fire". Cook food. Wring out wet clothes and hang 'em up somehow. "Can't find a line". "Use your boot laces!". "What's this, a visitor?". A girl called Teddy, climbing alone with guide and porters! Descending now, having made the top.



Taking a well earned rest at the summit.