

sea-eggs. We sailed early on Tuesday morning—much to the relief of certain officers *with* their clothes. The tailor came off with them, apparently, at 0300 to the exceeding joy of the Messman, who had to be shaken in order to pay the bill!

During one of our two calls at St. Vincent not a few of us visited the Botanic Garden, probably more from interest in its historical associations than in horticulture. This garden was established in 1763 and placed, curiously enough, under the control of the Secretary of War. It is the oldest institution of its kind in the New World. It was in order to supply it with specimens of the bread fruit tree, that Captain William Bligh made his memorable and disastrous voyage in H.M.S. "BOUNTY" to the South Seas in 1787. We all know the story so well that it would be pointless to repeat it here—except to remind certain people, if that is necessary, that Captain Bligh was not Charles Laughton, even though Charles Laughton was William Bligh. Eventually, in 1793, Bligh reached St. Vincent in H.M.S. "PROVIDENCE," and landed five hundred and thirty choice and curious plants of various kinds in a flourishing condition at Kingstown.

We had now got our teeth well into the island cruise, and without mail, and, in many cases, with similar feelings to those which Captain Bligh must have experienced when he saw Mr. Christian standing on the quarterdeck of the "BOUNTY" with his fingers to his nose as the ship receded from the whaler in which he found himself, we arrived at Dominica.

This island, discovered by Columbus on a Sunday in 1493, and not yet entirely explored, is very French in many respects; many of the inhabitants are of French descent, have French names, speak a French patois and are by religion Roman Catholic. Roseau, the capital and port, is dominated by a huge white cross on the hillside, and boasts of quite an ornate Cathedral which is administered by the Redemptorist Fathers. Here we made the acquaintance of, and probably ate, "Dominican Chicken." Others, not realizing that they were the same

things as they had eaten, bought, as curios, the large varnished frogs brought on board by the natives—the sight of which would definitely have caused Mr. J. Wellington Wimpy to exclaim with feeling "Frogburger!"

Thankful for the relief of rain at Dominica and heartened by the thought of mail in the "LADY DRAKE," we left on Friday night for Montserrat, the home of lime juice cordial, and arrived there on Saturday morning. On the same day we said farewell to Major Wainwright, who had been with us as our guest since Jamaica, and who had marked his stay by being promoted to Major. We were very sad to lose such a very welcome and happy addition to the Wardroom. Our other change in personnel was the arrival early on Monday morning before we left of Sub. Lieutenant (A) R. H. H. L. Oliphant, to make his bow to the Navy after an initiation in the Air Force.

Some will remember Montserrat chiefly in relation to a certain disinclination to sit down which remained with them for some days after leaving the island. Experts in the equestrian art (shades of the Instructor-Lieutenant's "Jodhpurs") could have warned them—but they are wiser now. *Experientia docet.*

Islands now came and went in rapid succession and before we realized it, Nevis was upon us. Apart from the fact that at least thirty members of the ship's company were caught in the very act of "scoffing" the local Vicar's rum cocktails, the island is of some historic interest. Nelson was married there. At Fig Tree Church is the register containing the entry of the certificate of his marriage to Mrs. Nisbet, a resident of Nevis. It runs "1787, March 11th, Horatio Nelson, Esquire, Captain of His Majesty's Ship the Boreas, to Frances Herbert Nisbet, widow." At the time of his marriage the bride was in her twenty-third year and her first husband, a doctor, had been dead for eighteen months. Prince William Henry, afterwards King William IV, gave the bride away.

The First Lieutenant took the opportunity to have a "Field Day," and we spent a forenoon coping with a tear gas attack, and the surface of the ocean on the windward side became a mass of lachrymatory floats. We also went through the now customary ritual of hoisting in and out the Paymaster Sub. Lieutenant's skiff, but apart from this and all that went on at the Club, our stay passed off uneventfully. But what a beautiful bathing beach!

Of course, it is difficult to distinguish very materially between our visit to Nevis and that to St. Kitts. For one thing we met very largely the same people: we were in sight of either place all the time: we entertained the people of both places at one and the same party. St. Kitts had not altered since our last visit in March, except that now we had the place to ourselves. Three events stand as marking the visit. In the first place there was a lot of activity on the part of the Royal Marine Lewis Gun Section and rifle team: second, the howitzer which had long "clattered up" the port waist was landed—and fired. Third, the Commander for the first—and last—time appeared in tropical rig.

Antigua was reached on Saturday, September 10th. It is, again, a wonderful island, but like the others, has little social life and for most our only evening entertainment was obtainable at a shilling a bottle.

This is another island with a naval tradition and a historic dockyard. Many of us made the journey to English Harbour and were not in the least disappointed. One's imagination can make the place live again, and can picture it, and its adjacent and once prosperous town of Falmouth, as it was a century and a half ago. Much of interest could be written about the dockyard alone, and it seems a tremendous pity that it is now too small to deal with modern warships. It was abandoned by the Admiralty in 1906.

Antigua is in every sense the centre and capital of the Leeward Islands. It is the seat of the Government, the seat of the Bishop, and the seat of learning, having one or two very good schools.



THE OLD NAVAL DOCKYARD, ANTIGUA, B.W.I.

Having marked our departure by a concert on its eve, we weighed anchor on the sixteenth and made for Anguilla, the "snakeless snake island."

One couldn't help feeling that there was a note of pathos about this isolated island. Among the whole population, there were three white people. A West Indian planter of advanced years and the Parish Priest and his wife—the wife being Canadian, the Priest English. They seem happy enough, but our arrival was a great event for them, and during our short stay the Band and the cricket team did much to bring them happiness. Meanwhile the Torpedo and Gunnery departments combined to have some fun with a demolition party and only partly succeeded in removing obstinate rocks, and others photographed the salt tips. We then returned to the Dominican Republic, this time to Sanchez.

But we were soon to receive a very rude shock. For some time war and rumours of war had disturbed our peace even so far from the homeland and now, almost before we had time to look round, we were in the midst of what we now call The Crisis of 1938.

Few of us will ever forget that week or so, and the events immediately leading up to it; the journey first in the direction of Bermuda, then in the direction of Jamaica; the recall at Jamaica one evening after leave had been suddenly cancelled; the week of patrolling the Caribbean, virtually at war; the anxious days when crowds listened on the 4 in. Gun Deck intently and almost dumbfoundedly to the news; the shock of seeing torpedoes with their warheads on, and so on. The shock of all this deadened and detracted from what would otherwise have been our bitter disappointment at missing Philadelphia—the land of our dreams. We were still in a whirl and a dream when, after the tension was over, and after two terribly hectic days of relaxation in Jamaica, and a very brief call at Turk's Island, we found ourselves once more anchored one Sunday morning, in Grassy Bay, with the "YORK" and "ORANGELEAF" to keep us company.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER VII.

being a further selection of metrical impressions by
R.O.M.F.T.

LANDING PARTIES.

Hold the fort for we are coming,

Coming along toot sweet,

As fast as the screws can drive us there,

Because a nigger's just our meat.

We've drilled and drilled for hours and hours,

We've sweated blood in the sun,

So when we arrive in Jamaica's Isle,

We, too, can have some fun.

Rifle drill is now child's play,

And baton drill? Yes, sir,

And at St. John to complete the lot,

We landed the Howitzer.

One platoon, two platoon, all intact

Right down to the smallest item,

With all the gear to disperse a mob,

And if need be to fight 'em.

So imagine the state of the lads aboard,

When we tied up at the wall,

When excitement stalked around the ship,

And suspense held us all,

One ear cocked for the bugle call,

One eye on our gear,

On our very tip toes, for when the call did come,

We'd be there, never fear.

And then one day 'twas a make and mend,

A bugle rent the air,

At half past two "Platoons fall in"

Oh boy! and did we swear.

Eyes bunged up, still half asleep,
 We got there in a daze,
 But no-one knew just where to go,
 Or how to clear the maze.

Equipment cluttered the waist knee deep,
 Stores lay all about,
 Guns and pistols, packs and belts,
 And we COULDN'T sort them out.

The Platoon P.O. of number one
 Finished up with number four,
 But he didn't have them very long,
 Before they weren't no more.

They faded away like a river in flood
 Washes away it's banks,
 And no words of command or orders barked
 Could keep them in the ranks.

The Howitzer got all mixed up,
 With the "Seafox" on the slings,
 And the cart for taking the stores out with
 Finished up with a pair of wings.

For an hour or so pandemonium reigned,
 Nothing would seem to go right,
 But order at last was made from the mess
 But by then didn't we look a sight!

Like horses straining at the bit,
 Awaiting the word to go,
 The sailors lined up in the waist
 In a straggling undressed row.

Big ones, little ones, thin ones too,
 Small ones, middle and fat ones,
 Some with rifles, some with canes
 And some with wooden batons.

Then the Captain came to talk to us,
 And he said "Well, swelp me Bob,
 Of the toughest toughs I've ever seen
 They couldn't beat this mob."

The scorn in his eyes and the iron in his voice,
 Made us feel knee high to a gnat,
 So we slid away like a crowd of sheep
 And hid beneath the mat.

DISAPPOINTMENT.

So we beat it for Turks Island,
 With a light and airy heart,
 After spending months and months in savage parts,
 We sailed away quite gladly
 From the Islands of the West,
 But we finished heading for the Isle of Rest.
 It's a lovely coral island,
 Set amid an azure sea,
 But it's a kink right in the blinking neck to me,
 For while we stay there in Bermuda,
 We'll all get the jit and willy,
 For it's so much taken off from dear old Philly.
 But round about 2 a.m.,
 On a memorable morn,
 We turned our bows the other way with scorn,
 And instead of going northward,
 We were going back down south
 With a taste so awful bitter in the mouth.

It's goodbye to dreams of Philly,
 It's farewell to Yankee girls,
 With their modern ways and blonde or brunette curls,
 For we're going to Jamaica
 With it's dust and heat and cotton,
 And the Paybob's tins all mounting off the bottom.

We've been saving up for ages,
 We've got hundreds in the bank,
 We've been living just to spend it on a Yank.
 But those quids can stay there idle,
 They can stay right where they are,
 Or I'd drown my sorrows in the Spanish Jar.

But I guess we'll take our drubbing,
 With now and then a quiet run,
 And at other times we'll swelter in the sun.
 But when I think of ice-cold lager,
 Music sweet and soft dimmed lamps,
 I could kick Herr Hitler hard, right in the pants.

ON THE EVE OF WAR.

Astern the sun was sinking
 In a blaze of gold and red,
 The night shades quickly gathered right ahead.
 Then the ships that carried Nelson
 O'er the bosom of the sea,
 Sailed from out the mists, to keep us company.
 We could see their pennants flutter,
 We could see their lanterns glow,
 We could see their sails a filling in the blow,
 And as they sailed beside us
 We could hear the far off hum
 Of the muted rolling of a battle drum.
 From the days of Drake and Raleigh,
 Down the ages to to-day,
 It's a drum that calls, a drum that seems to say,
 There's a danger over England
 And the war clouds float on high,
 The time for action strong draws very nigh.
 All the ships were trimmed for action,
 From the gun-ports, smoke and flame
 In a voice of thunder spoke of England's fame.
 And when the smoke had cleared,
 Round the bulwarks shades of men,
 Waved a warning from the world beyond our ken.
 So throughout the night of waiting,
 When the hours seemed so long,
 We could see the ships. The drum was getting strong.
 Until the hour before the dawning
 They sailed past us one by one,
 Dipped their colours, backed their yards, and then were gone.



BERMUDA YARD FROM THE AIR—THE FLEET "AT HOME."

CHAPTER VIII.

BERMUDA THE THIRD.

THOSE who have managed to wade through the last chapter are probably now feeling, on the one hand as exhausted, and on the other hand as pleased, as its author was when it was over. It is not a happy chapter, and has been severely criticised, but it was very heavy going, and was penned under the worst possible circumstances. The probability is, then, that we are in no mood to tackle Bermuda again at the moment, but it has got to come, so that there seem to be two alternatives—either put the book down and put off the evil day, or take it bravely, swallow hard, and think of the spoonful of jam which is to follow. With our customary magnanimity we leave you to choose.

Anyhow, while you are making up your minds, the "ISLAND QUEEN" as she had quite unauthoritatively been re-christened, was floating to her anchor in Grassy Bay. We moved in next morning (Monday, October 11th.) and those of us who had not already disturbed their peace, found Lord and Lady Grassy Bay, and the Hon. Clock Tower Jetty in rasping form. The "Kittens" and others, too, were in high fettle. But not all our time could be given to social joys, and we were still at short notice for steam.

That the crisis was not completely over was shown by the fact that we spent the next day provisioning ship and hoisting in new 4 inch mountings, on which work proceeded apace and forthwith. Still there were the optimists who thought that we might even now go to Philadelphia, but when the following week saw us at sea exercising with the "YORK" they came to their senses.

The next week, in atmosphere, savoured rather of the week preceding Examination "Schools" at Oxford, but with us it *was* examination week. We had been expecting it long enough, but at last the blow fell. The C-in-C came to sea with us on the Monday and we shot at "YORK"—but only a "Throw-off" (!) On the Wednesday and Thursday we had fun and games on board, and the C-in-C's inspection was held. There were more "G.Q's." and General Drills than that.

The next day, feeling that a quiet rest had been earned by all, it was decided to open the camping season—ostensibly to do firing at the range—and an advance party left for Warwick. They were followed very closely and eagerly next day by the first party of seamen and stokers. At the same time the midshipmen were sent to camp for the good of their health and marksmanship, and what was left of the Ward Room moved into the Gun Room, while the "holy of holies" was painted out.

A lot could be said about these days which followed, but, in view of what came to light in a conversation between the author and the camp Canteen Manager, perhaps it would be as well to leave each individual to dwell on his own personal memories (or lack of them) of this happy time. We will only say that all and sundry lived up to a reputation gained as early as the days in Montreal. Quite a number of officers too, seized the opportunity to go to Warwick—for the shooting!!

Meanwhile on board all was not dead. The Marines were inspected by the F.R.M.O., and on Guy Fawkes' Day a very mixed draft of 20 left for England. On the same day Mr. Keeping, after a last visit to the "Twenty-One," returned home also.

We are glad to notice that on November 16th, at 0930 six hundred pounds of soap were embarked on board. Was it coincidental that almost immediately afterwards six stokers left the ship for the United Kingdom? (Keep your wool on E. R. Department!)

On December 1st, the blow fell and we docked—back again to the purgatory of the "Thirty-nine Steps." (I counted more). Capt. Moxham had, with an astuteness we can only admire, foreseen this and carefully arranged for the R.Ms to go to camp at this time, and off they went for an entirely unmerited fortnight. "No justice" murmured some—but in envy.

On December 8th, a rotund and cheerful personage whom we were to know as Lieut. J. C. Boucher joined the ship, and next day Lieut. E. F. A. Dykes left us to go into retirement. Apart from this there was no excitement until Christmas—when it rained.

One of my greatest regrets is that this work, if and when it is published, will possibly fall into the hands those nearest and dearest to us. It cramps my style to an unbelievable extent. There is such a lot I could say about the secular side of Christmas (which at least one of our younger members began celebrating the day before) but discretion is here definitely the better part of valour. I will just say that it rained. I remember that if no one else does.

Early in the New Year the camping season began again, and the boys, who had not gone to Warwick, under the guidance of a very new type of C.O., descended upon Port's Island, and took charge for ten days. Having collected innumerable bottles (glass ones) and given the V/S staff some work to do, they eventually and regretfully returned, having enjoyed to the full the only ten fine days in January. (Now who's the Jonah?)

About this time we were gladdened by the appearance of H.M.C. Ships "SAGUENAY" and "SKEENA." The officers' Baseball Match between them and ourselves, having worried some of us nearly to distraction, was eventually cancelled by the tragic "CAVALIER" disaster which sent the destroyers to sea. That happened on January 21st.

At long last, on January 18th, the "BERWICK" arrived from the United Kingdom after a pretty grim crossing. Neither they nor we will forget their first night in Bermuda. The Dockyard took on a somewhat livelier note!

In the realms of sport during this period there were one or two outstanding events. At soccer we had to give best to "YORK" in the eliminating rounds of the Governor's Cup—(they were eventually and rather unexpectedly—according to the "York"—beaten in the final by the Staff and Departments) but we beat them at RUGGER and retained the Nicholl Shield. On Boxing Day, Moresby was enlivened by the usual comic Football Matches played to the accompaniment of song, cheers, jeers, the sackbut, psaltery and all the rest of the jazz band, in which the note of rattling bottles seemed to predominate. The same evening the Bermuda Athletic Association and the Bermuda Olympic Association jointly staged a boxing meeting in No. 1 Shed, Hamilton. In each of the seven bouts Naval fighters appeared and five of these were exclusively between our own warriors and those from "YORK." The main fight was between Mnc. Bunker and L/Cpl. Tipper (Sherwood Foresters). Bunker acquitted himself victoriously and well. In the other fights Sto. Higham, L. Sto. Grounsell, Cpl. McCulloch, A.B. Snaith, and A.B. O'Keefe did well, the first two winning their respective bouts.

Towards the end of January our rejuvenated Concert Party produced a very creditable show at the R.N. Canteen Theatre on two evenings, but apart from this and the fact that on January 14th, at 2240 the Emergency Party and Fire Party landed to extinguish a fire at Sally Port, nothing more of note happened during this stay in Bermuda.

We should have started our cruise earlier, but our refit was not completed. However, on January 27th, we very gladly stepped out towards Jacksonville, and the Ward Room once more became inhabited, having been for so long the dwelling place of a few.

INSPECTIONITIS.

Chasing round from morn till night
With a scrubber in our hands;
Cleaning up in the service way
In roaming scavenging bands;
Jumping here and jumping there
At the sound of a bawling gate
In too much of a panic to stop awhile and wait.
Getting ready for inspection
To the very depths we delve,
'Till many a man's been heard to say
"Roll on my blooming twelve."

Firing off our six inch guns,
Point fives and H.A., too,
Exercising day and night
G.Q's and sea-boats crew;
Sweating ink in the engine room,
As cold as sin up top;
Getting ready for inspection
It's efficiency or drop.
Only the strong can stick the pace,
The weaklings fall on the bench,
Till many a man's been heard to say
"Roll on my blooming pensh."

Standing as stiff as ram-rods
While the Old Man goes the rounds,
And his satellites come up behind
Like a pack of homeless hounds;
Then laving your kit on the quarter-deck
In an awful nightmare dream,
Till the sight of a rolled up jumper
To your throat brings a hideous scream.
When you're having your inspection
Is no time for quip or song
For many a man's been heard to say
"How long, dear Lord, how long?"

But all good things must have an end,
 You've time to have a smoke
 But your stomach felt so empty
 That it rattled when you spoke.
 Your knees felt made of rubber;
 You long to have your tot;
 And your dinner, when it came along,
 Was anything but hot.
 Can you wonder at the heartfelt wish,
 All you who never roam,
 When many a man is heard to say
 "Gosh, How I wish I was home."

Breathing safely for a while,
 Now inspection's past,
 Living life quite normally,
 There's peace before the mast;
 Until the C-in-C's report
 Much dreaded, comes along,
 Then off we go all o'er again
 Putting right what's wrong.
 Chamferring here and chamferring there,
 Never knocking off,
 Till many a man's been heard to say
 "When are we gonna pay off?"

R.O.M.F.T.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SPRING CRUISE, 1939.

MANY in the ship had come to view the United States of America in a somewhat similar light to that in which the men of old held the Land flowing with milk and honey. All their dreams of heaven had reached their apotheosis in St. Petersburg, to which in heart and mind they often returned. But now even this was to be surpassed. It may be that six long months in the islands, on the verge of war, and in Bermuda, had roused in one and all a longing for the highlights, but whatever it was, things didn't half move when we arrived in Jacksonville. We arrived in time for the President's Birthday celebrations, and from that time we slept not day nor night. No quarter was given or received (Forgive me if I have said that before.) Judging by the number of baronial cars to be seen, the whole of the Freeman family must have moved in en bloc for the visit—and were still alive to see us off at the jetty when we departed.

Perhaps it will be best to avoid generalising and to leave each one to ponder his own memories of this first port of call on our return to Florida. We all have them; we shall all talk about them; and perchance the day will come when in speaking of our visit there, some of us will delight—or horrify—our grandchildren. Two at least of our number will never be allowed to forget Jacksonville for they have wives to remind them of the visit—and all in a week.

We could, if we were given that way, follow the example of some and insert here a list of hotels, clubs, pubs and other "dives," where one and all obtained

spirituous refreshment and consolation—but we will be original; we won't even mention the "refreshment room" at the end of the jetty—or the oceanarium at S. Augustine. Eventually we departed (at least all but two, who liked the place so much that they decided to stop) tired but sorry—leaving on the jetty more cars than that, and such a crowd of waving "barons" as had never been seen before.

During our stay we had, in our turn, been host to quite a lot of people, and it seems difficult to realize (even for those who experienced the sensation of being rather like the jam in a sandwich) that on one day visitors were coming on board at 50 to the minute. On Sunday, February 5th, over 13,000 people visited the Ship. Of course the Scouts, Guides, Y.M.C.A., etc., etc., had their day, and we virtually held a reciprocal "open house" for a week. Certainly very little work was done—on board.

We were grateful for the two days (and three nights) which followed our departure. We spent them at sea and were able to rest from our labours (ashore). Our memories of these days are somewhat befogged, but with the aid of our siren, which kept up a running commentary in G, we managed to arrive and anchor off "S. Pete" on Thursday, February 9th, at 1000, not very much adrift.

This visit to S. Petersburg was much quieter than our first, at our own special request, and in the opinion of many this was a pity. But our earlier visit had been so full that it was felt that it would be a good thing if we were left free of official entertainment, so that we could renew and consolidate our private friendships. In this respect the visit was successful. To this end the Ship's Company held an "At Home" on board on Saturday, February 11th, and the Officers held a dance on the following Monday.

What transpired eventually to be a tragedy, can be said to have marred this visit. Before we left, Mne. R. Draper was admitted to hospital ashore suffering from a complaint, from which, we heard later, he subsequently died at his



Photo by]

St. Petersburg, Fla.

E. Torpa.]