

or four people, who ought to have known better, thought they would take a newcomer "for a trot," so they greeted him thus.

"Looking forward to meeting the Baron?"

"Baron who?"

"The Colonel."

"Who the hell's the Colonel?"

"Colonel Grippo."

"Who's he?"

"Oh, just a benevolent old gentleman."

"Don't strangle him, will you?"

"What do you think I am? Do you think I just wander round casually murdering people for the fun of the thing?"

"You want to get you fingers pretty supple for it."

"Oh,—I don't know what the hell you're talking about."

"No, well I suppose you don't. After all you're only a "nozzler" yet, but when you've been in the Service a little longer—"

The rest of the conversation is quite unfit for publication, but the published part serves to show how we all came to know and love the old boy before we met him. And when we did—

November 29th dawned cold (very cold) and clear. Almost before an early breakfast Lieutenant Commander Francke, U.S.N.R., with myriads of pressmen, appeared on board accompanied by the pilot. From that moment we never looked back, and were plunged precipitously into an overwhelming orgy of entertainment. Never shall we forget our reception there, nor our first experience of American hospitality, and indeed of America itself for most of us, and we reached the end of those eight days with feelings of real regret. Perhaps the most remarkable and happy thing about the whole visit, was not so much

the organised entertainment which we enjoyed, as the way in which we all, as individuals, were taken into the homes of our hosts and entertained privately. As a result, many real friendships and at least one marriage have come out of this visit.

St. Petersburg has been described by the opposition in Florida as the "City of Honeymoon Couples and the Unburied Dead." We did not find it so, but rather very much alive. True, the majority of the population favoured age, but that did not damp their youthful spirits or enthusiasm, and they certainly let us have it. Lunches and dinners, dances and drinks followed one another in rapid succession, and no time was allowed for sleep—neither, we regret to say, did many people mind. One officer absolutely astounded the "natives" by sinking seven "Old Fashioneds" in one sitting, a feat unheard of in the annals of St. Petersburg drinking. Neither did he turn a hair. Those in St. Petersburg who take their drinking seriously have never to this day been able to account for the phenomenon. Of course voices from the "sharp end" sensing a challenge, will say "what about the man who touched 32 pints in the Beer Stakes?"—but then it wasn't really *beer* was it?

The prowess of our athletes filled the local papers (some of it we must confess flowed from the pen of Leading Seaman Noble) and the populace was regaled and puzzled by "Soccer," and regaled but not puzzled (at least not in the same way) by Cricket, Swimming, "Rugger" and Fencing. We in turn watched their brand of Football, and this so impressed and excited the Warrant Officers, that when the Padre, attired in Scout uniform, was unwise enough to return from shore in the boat with them, they insisted on taking him to their Mess and filling him with gin, while they gave a demonstration with his Scout hat as the ball.

And Florida Military Academy must not be forgotten. She and her Cadets entertained the young gentlemen of the Gun Room right royally, and we all enjoyed the acquaintance of all there. We tried to show them how

"Rugger" should be played, and they at least appreciated the game. "Chiefie" Stopford and "Bunny" Bryant tried not to mislead one another too much—with what degree of success we shall never know.

The swimming, or, as the press described it, "the efforts of the 'ORION' Natators" took place, of course, in an indoor Swimming Bath. With all our hardiness, swimming in the sea then did not make its customary appeal. Nevertheless, we learned afterwards, that it was quite pleasant, especially in the really early hours of the morning. A party of officers and men returning from shore at 3 a.m. on Sunday morning, suddenly decided in favour of a moonlight bathe—that is all except Mr. Gately, who preferred to dance the hornpipe on the bottom of the "upturned" boat. Feeling all the better for the experience, they returned on board, consumed all the available liquor in the W.O.'s Mess, and then feeling even better retired for the "night." They appeared in a body at Divisions *and* Church next morning, sufficient evidence in itself of the sobering effect of nocturnal swimming. (This does not apply to "Colonel" Salt, who was not at Church).

Regrets were mutual and our gratitude to Mr. Francke and his helpers beyond expression when, utterly exhausted, but happy, we weighed anchor, and forsaking the "Jockey Club," the Yacht Club, and the "Brass Rail," turned our faces towards Panama City where we sought sanctuary in "Oscar's," the "Glen," and of course, the Yacht Club.

Panama City shimmered in the moonshine. A lot of us saw it do that more often than was good for us. But to those who were able to see it clearly in the daytime, and to give it any intelligent consideration, it was a bit of a surprise. The smell which greeted us when we first arrived was a *shock*—and we are not referring to that. (They told us later that a pulp mill produced the perfume—we were in no position to argue about it). One of those who could see clearly in the daytime kept a diary—an exceedingly dangerous thing to do!—and this is what

he says. "Wednesday, December 8th, 'ORION' arrives at Panama City, Florida, which surprised us all (What? that we arrived? Editor). Can't make out why it is called a "city," a small place with a small population, but what it lacked in numbers, it made up in hospitality. Spent a very pleasant four days there" (sez you!). And that about sums things up nicely.

Panama City is very proud of its Sea Foods as we were soon to know. "Oyster Roasts," Oyster Cocktails and "Prairie Oysters" were the order of the day, and many will, for a long time, remember the Oyster Roast with the "Brother Elks" at the Elks Club.

Though small and perhaps somewhat primitive compared with other places, it was by no means dead. "Life" abounded, and the pace was not allowed to slacken. A few went on a "quiet run" to Apalachicola, and two Gun Room Officers ("Cookie" Clarke and D. H. Glen) were the victims of a very real "hold-up," but apart from that, and the fact that the "Bishop," as he now came to be widely known, nearly lost his reputation, things passed off in the usual way and an exceedingly good time was had by all.

"O was you ebber down in Mobile Bay  
Where dey screws de cotton on a summer day?  
When Johnny came down to Hilo.  
Poor old man."

we have all sung on many occasions, and the answer to the question is now "Yes," although we were not there on the occasion specified. We arrived in Mobile Bay on the morning of Monday, December 12th, having left Panama on the previous day.

Mobile is an interesting place, and quite old as American cities go. Mrs. Macpherson, a native of the city and the wife of the British Vice-Consul there, has written a small but very interesting booklet called "Glimpses of old Mobile" from which we quote, without permission, the following historical sketch.

"When in 1711, Jean Baptiste Le Moyne, Sieur de Bienville, established here his staunch little colony protected only by a palisaded fort and the fleur-de-lis of Louis XIV in far away France, he laid the cornerstone for the splendid Mobile that has withstood the ravages of time and the flags of five nations to become one of the outstanding cities of to-day.

"The tiny Fort Louis de Mobile prospered under the energetic Frenchmen, and by 1717 was outgrown and had to be replaced by a larger and more adequate fortress which was called Forte Conde. This was part of the Louisiana Territory then, and Mobile, until 1722, was its first capital.

"At the end of the Seven Years War in Europe, and the Treaty of Paris, England wrested from France all her lands in America east of the Mississippi, and thus the British Flag was unfurled to wave over the large and now flourishing village of Mobile. The British immediately changed the name of Fort Conde to Fort Charlotte, in honour of their young queen of England, and, under the shrewd and able guidance of the sturdy Scotch and English merchants, the town thrived and prospered. But the Spaniards under Galvez in nearby Louisiana were jealous and resentful of the rich British seaport on their very boundary line, and ever watchful of a chance to gather it into their own domain. Thus when Spain declared war on England in 1780, the surprised British Governor of Mobile was forced to surrender his Fort and a garrison of 80 men to an overwhelming Spanish onslaught.

"And so the emblem and influence of Old Spain came to dominate Mobile for nearly 30 years, when, without any bloodshed or firing, the town came at last under American rule, never again to bow to foreign power. In 1861, the Confederate Stars and Bars floated high over Mobile and her famous Bay; and with its lowering, the quiet old city, survivor of many wars and prize of several nations, asserted her rightful place as one of the oldest and most charming cities in these United States.

"To-day the charm and mellowness of the Old Mobile is submerged beneath the bustling commerce of a busy seaport. Whirring factories, mills and a hundred varied industrial plants are sinking their roots into the deep, rich soil, and ships of all nations plow their heavy laden routes between Mobile and the four corners of the world. And to the far flung corners goes out the story of Mobile's famous Azalea—the flower that transfers the whole city into Fairyland for the six weeks of its reign. Each year thousands of visitors storm the city gates to wander along Mobile's Azalea Trail and drink in the unbelievable pageant of beauty and color."

The lady is also an artist and has illustrated the booklet with her own sketches, but these it is, unfortunately, impossible to reproduce either with or without permission.

Most of us saw some of the places of interest as well as "the other places." Bellingrath's Gardens, and Springhill College at least we tried to visit, and to old Christ Church, the mother church of Anglicans in the State of Alabama, we paraded on Sunday morning.

The Rotary Club, the Kiwanis, the Lion's Club, the Elks, the Civitan and others, had now come to be quite a regular part of the officers' lives, and wherever they went, lunch at one or all of these was part of the routine. The acquaintance of the Chicago "steak," first made in St. Petersburg, was continued throughout, and was sadly missed if perchance it did not put in an appearance. But it rarely failed. Meanwhile, the Ship's Company was admitted to the "freedom of the City," except the streets immediately adjacent to the water-front, which, in consequence, were the first to be explored. And of course we all heard of "Constantine's" and "Romona's."

It was here we met the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter "TAMPA" and the Mexican Cruiser "DURANGO." Apart from the Band, who had to work for once playing three National Anthems at Colours each morning instead of one, we all were pleased to know them. Out of this friendship grew the inevitable Pulling Race in which we

scored a walk-over, "DURANGO" coming second. We parted eventually, hoping to visit Mobile again during the commission and to meet the Mexicans at Vera Cruz, neither of which hopes was realised.

And so to the accompaniment of the dulcet tones of those vowing to "put the peg in" (which vow, is it necessary to add, they didn't keep?) we pulled out and moved towards New Orleans, La. Meanwhile the "Jaunty" began to go sick under the strain and finally fell into the clutches of "Doc" Lawrence and the "Bay."

But we are moving too fast. Before we reach New Orleans there is one thing more which we owe to Mobile—it taught us of Mardi Gras\*. Apparently this is kept up in grand style in the Southern States, but much to Paymaster Lieutenant Mowl's disappointment we were near Christmas not Easter, it was Advent not Lent, so that there was no possible excuse for this party. When we did eventually encounter it, we were not in the U.S.A. but in Trinidad and nobody was interested.

All of us had heard of the River Mississippi, none but a mere handful had ever seen it. It was wide, it was cold, it was muddy and there was a mist. But despite our difficulties, we at length got alongside our pier, and almost simultaneously met our first "show boat." Thereafter it seemed to remain with us constantly by day and night until we took our enforced departure. If only we dared print the speeches on the subject which the Doctor gave to the Ward Room at Breakfast, Lunch, Tea and Dinner, and between times!—but we mustn't. There is a limit beyond which even we must not go, and up to the present our tone has been fairly respectable.

New Orleans, as its name suggests, is predominantly French, but has a large Spanish element as well. Its cooking is a "dream" beyond the imagination of real experts in "big eats" and has to be experienced to be

\*French for Shrove Tuesday commonly called Pancake Day—the day before Ash Wednesday.



Photo by]

NEW ORLEANS, LA.—CHRISTMAS DAY, 1937.

[L. Torpe.]

appreciated. It is not full of architectural gems, but it has its quota, and Canal Street, from another point of view is absolutely unsurpassed.

All the usual formalities were gone through, and the "Baron" kindly appeared at the expected time. He was "strangled," "caned" and "kicked to death," but this didn't seem to deter him—rather he came up for more. A very brave and tough "Baron" indeed!

One thing tended to mar what was otherwise a very happy arrival. A.B. Munro fell by the wayside with a very bad attack of pneumonia and had to be landed and admitted to hospital at once. For some days his condition was very critical, but mercifully he came through alright, although it was a long time before he rejoined us.

Christmas Day was kept with all the Naval ceremonial belonging to the occasion. On the serious side of things there were more than 60 communicants at Midnight and the Services on the following morning, and then after a Service on the Quarterdeck, rounds began and "tots" were drunk. Almost for the first time in history one "Chief" parted with his "tot," and he has never been quite the same since. After "rounds," the day was given over to conviviality, and as to what happened after that we will leave a blank—chiefly because it is a blank in the minds of most people. There was more beer than that!

Boxing Day we will also leave blank.

We would like to be able to leave the next day blank too, but unfortunately that cannot be. One would have thought that after having had two "Sundays" in as many days—and observing them—that we deserved a better fate than was our lot, but then things don't happen like that. Monday, December 27th, was not our lucky day, and to some it appeared as the beginning of a run of bad luck. In all probability the fog already alluded to was to blame, but be that as it may, at 0750 sharp, a Dutch merchant vessel rammed us on the Port Quarter. Nobody was hurt but one or two of the ship's boats were made to look pretty silly, and so was the wooden pier,

but apart from a dent in the hull and one or two bent stanchions, the ship seemed to be alright above water. Our consideration then became focussed underwater, particularly on the propellers, but the muddiness of the Mississippi is so great that any satisfactory examination was impossible even though the divers went down. The upshot of it all was that, after some hours of uncertainty, it was decided that we should return to Bermuda and go into dry dock where the whole thing could be examined without hindrance. And so with heavy hearts we left New Orleans on Wednesday and instead of proceeding, as we should have done, to Galveston and Port Arthur in Texas, we moved in the direction of Bermuda and the "Isles of Rest." Apart from those who appreciated the opportunity of a respite from a period of intensive entertainment, we were not happy about it, and regarded the cruise as ruined.

New Year's Eve was passed at sea and was celebrated at the "blunt end" if nowhere else in the ship. Over a very pleasant rum punch in the Ward Room the Doc. introduced an assembly augmented by the Gun Room and Warrant Officers to a new rendering of "On Ikla Moor Bacht 'at" which he conducted in person, and by the courtesy of "Guns" we met "Alouette" for the first time. The party continued long and vigorously but it is not possible to report the events which took place after a song about a "Blackbird" (we understand that ornithologists for'ard maintain that the bird referred to in the song is not a blackbird at all, but a species of hawk), but we left them quite happy.

None of us were glad to see Bermuda Yard again on January 3rd, and we arrived just in time to see the remainder of the Squadron sail on their respective cruises. They meant us to have Ireland Island to ourselves.

We will not dwell on our first experience of the dry dock and the 39 steps; we will pass over the eternal "buzzes" that this meant our return to Guz; we will not even mention the paint for the ship's bottom which was



in England when it ought to have been in Bermuda. But eventually we were ready to leave the dry dock, and we sailed to resume our cruise on January 27th.

Vera Cruz was reached, after a somewhat choppy passage, on February 3rd, and there we dropped the "hook" for nine days.

The first thing we saw was our old friend the "MOTOMAR," a Spanish Nationalist steamer full of arms, which had, without avail, tried to obtain our assistance at Bermuda. She was easily recognisable although her name had been painted over. There were also a couple of Mexican warships here, but not the "DURANGO."

Vera Cruz was not a very clean place, very "red" in its leanings, and quite different from anywhere we had so far visited. The Doctor brought joy to our hearts on arrival by saying that it was quite unsafe to eat anything ashore, or to drink anything except beer, so we all polished up our Spanish and learnt what "Cervezeria" meant, and to say "Cerveza" and "Moctezuma" like natives. But in spite of its somewhat "grubby" and dusty appearances, Vera Cruz possessed a charm of its own, and we rather liked it.

Cortes, the conqueror of Mexico, landed there in 1519 and called it San Juan de Ulua. Sir Francis Drake (a "Guzonian" in very sooth) appeared there 59 years later, in company with John Hawkins, and was done exceeding "dirt" by Don Martin Enriquez, the new Viceroy, who thought he would gain promotion marks in the eyes of King Philip of Spain thereby. Whether he did we don't know. But we do know that for himself and for his country he gained the mortal enmity of the two Englishmen. But all this happened before any of us joined.

The highlight of the visit, however, was the trip to Mexico City. Two parties of Officers and two parties of men were fortunate enough to go, and those who had the good luck to make the journey up and/or down by day really saw something worth seeing. Here is what one of them says about it.

"The journey to Mexico City by train was no less interesting than the city itself. Leaving Vera Cruz at seven in the morning, the trip lasted about 12 hours, with only one or two short stops. Much of that time, of course, was taken up in climbing the range of mountains which form such a majestic background to the tropical flats immediately behind Vera Cruz. These same mountains were our first glimpse of Mexico while we were still miles out at sea.

"For the most part, the flats are cultivated, a great deal of the land being devoted to the cultivation of a plant similar in appearance to the cactus, but which, we learned later, is used in making some potent native wine.

"But passing through this colourful scene of cultivated acres in the not too uncomfortable, if dusty, train, was only a prelude to the scenery which opened out before us as we started the laborious climb up the mountains. Some idea of the climb can be obtained from the fact that the train goes up 9000 feet from Vera Cruz before descending again about 2000 feet into Mexico City. No words of mine can adequately describe the thrill of looking down a sheer mountain face from the window of the train; the spectacle of an enormous valley spread out like a coloured picture hundreds of feet below, with the railway lines threading their way like some giant snake; or of disappearing suddenly into a black hole which has been blasted into the mountain. The first five hours of the journey proved to be of unceasing interest, but the plateau which is reached after the climb, and the descent into the City, become rather boring in its prairie sameness, with just here and there a Mexican village, some of which looked more like fortified outposts of the French Foreign Legion.

"On arrival in Mexico City, we were greeted by representatives of the British community and a troop of Scouts who were to be our guides during our stay. Hotel accommodation had been arranged for us, and after getting acquainted with our rooms, depositing our 'togs' and removing some of the prairie dust, we were escorted by our young guides to dinner.

"The British community entertained us at their club for the rest of the 'evening,' and finally we were left to our own devices—some feeling the need for sleep, others desiring to lose no time, in spite of the hour, to commence sight-seeing.

"Most of the second day, which in my particular case was a Sunday, was given to seeing the sights. The scouts never seeming to tire in their endeavour to satisfy our varied tastes, and in particular they were invaluable in dealing with taxis. One could not help admiring their knowledge of the City and their ability to pass on what they knew of places of historical and other interest. While most of us saw quite a lot of the city in the short time we were there, I think most of us felt a desire to prolong our visit, and the time for leaving came all too soon.

"It seemed that the whole British community turned up at the station to see us off, and not a few tears were shed as the train started moving out to the strains of "Auld Lang Syne."

"The journey back to Vera Cruz was made during the night. Most of us were glad to get comfortable and doze through the dark hours, coming to life again only when we reached the early morning mists overhanging Vera Cruz."

Mexico City is one of the places in the world which has to be seen to be believed. It is really wonderful. Commander Brooke lectured fore and aft about its history before we got there, but that, we regret to say, has passed into the realm of forgotten things, so we have tried with the aid of our memory, the telephone, A.B. Bunt and the Captain's Encyclopedia to piece something together.

The history of the Toltec and Aztec peoples is very interesting indeed,—but we must be careful not to overstep the mark, otherwise the Canteen Fund won't foot the publisher's bill. However, in view of the fact that the history of their civilisation is so inseparably bound up with the monuments of Mexico, and that many of us saw many

traces of them there, a few notes would not seem out of place. (Those who are not interested can turn over a few pages and get their heads down for five minutes—we'll see you later).

The Toltecs were there first and they are said to have come from the north in the eighth century. They appear to have been a people of mild and peaceful instincts, industrious, active and enterprising. They were great builders and highly civilised. But in the eleventh century a severe famine and pestilence all but destroyed them, and drove the survivors southwards to Guatemala and Yucatan, carrying their arts of civilisation with them. Two hundred and fifty years later found a new race of immigrants, the Aztecs, predominant in the land, whose rule was, in a great degree, a reversion to savagery. They were a ferocious race, with a religion gloomy and cruel, and they grafted on to the institutions of their predecessors many fierce and bloody practices. Thus they produced an anomalous civilisation which astonished the Spaniards by its mingled character of mildness and ferocity. Eventually after many wanderings they founded about 1325 the city of Tenochtitlan or Mexico. A hundred years later they had extended their sway beyond their plateau valley, and on the arrival of the Spaniards their empire was found to stretch from ocean to ocean.

They worshipped many gods, chief of whom was the frightful Huitzilopochtli, the Mexican Mars. His temples were the most splendid and imposing, and in every city of the empire his altars were drenched with human blood. And not only did the Aztecs practice human sacrifice, but they were also cannibals, making wars to provide their victims. Many of us saw the pyramids at the Temple of Quetzalcoatl and elsewhere, and this is the sort of thing that happened there. The victims (men, women and children) were borne in triumphal processions, and to the accompaniment of music, to the summit of the pyramidal temples where the priests, in sight of the assembled crowds, bound them to the sacrificial stone, and slashing open the breast, tore from

it the bleeding heart. This was held up before the image of the god, while the captor carried off the carcass which had been thrown down the side, to feast on it with his friends. In the years immediately preceding the Spanish Conquest, not less than twenty thousand victims, including infants, were annually immolated, for the propitiation of the rain gods.

Mexico City in Aztec days stood in the middle of Lake Tezcuco and was approached only by a causeway with bridges. The principal streets radiated from an immense central square, and the same arrangement is still preserved. In the modern Plaza Mayor the site of the old temple of Huitzilopochtli is occupied by the no less famous Cathedral which took nearly a century to build. The walls alone of this imposing building cost nearly £400,000, and its elaborate interior much more. Built at the foot of one of the two open towers is the famous Aztec (Toltec) calendar stone, of which many of us bought souvenirs. Other outstanding places, are the National Picture Gallery, the School of Mines, the mint, and the former palace of the Inquisition which is now a medical school. One of the tragedies of Mexico (where clerical collars are illegal!) is the number of beautiful churches which have been secularized or taken over by the Government and just left to fall into ruin. Some of them have become museums, art galleries, engineering schools, law schools, and one a conservatory of music. Among the monuments are those of Columbus; the Statue of Cuauhtemotzin, the last of the Aztec Emperors; and the very unlovely "Labour Monument," which looks like one of Epstein's very bad dreams imported from the U.S.S.R. In contrast to it we shall not forget the beauty of the "paseos" and of the floating gardens.

For those who were not interested in this sort of thing, there were plenty of cinemas, pubs, clubs, and the Wiakiki Cabaret. We were not "bothered" overmuch and so we saw what we wanted to see. And then at last bearing or wearing our "sombrosos," "Zarapis" and "Moctezuma" we left the city, feeling tired, happy and

a bit dry in the nostrils. The last real "sight" some of the officers were to see before leaving, was the arrival at the station of the Doctor and Lieutenant Manson, Royal Marines, in loud sombreros, the former boasting the added attraction of a monocle.

We returned to find the ship painted. In the meantime the boys had been to Orizaba—but perhaps the less we say about that the better. And then we left Vera Cruz, its square and its beer verandahs, and moved towards Kingston, Ja.

It was rather hard luck on the Doc that when we reached Jamaica we were only to stay a few hours. His wife was waiting for him. However, our accident in New Orleans had cut our stay there short. At 1106 we anchored with standard compass in position 196½ degrees, 1.23 from the Roman Catholic Cathedral dome in seven fathoms with five shackles on the starboard anchor, and there we stayed until 2016 when for some reason we weighed the port anchor. Then having embarked our stores and disembarked William Ordish Spendlove, O.D., as a cot case, and the Sub. having safely returned with his new palm beach trousers, we moved on to "C. Truj."

There is a song about Ciudad Trujillo sung to a very catchy tune, but for some reason no one will tell me the words, so that, much as I should like to, I can't quote them here. But I have a feeling that they would describe the place much more graphically than I can.

For many reasons Santo Domingo is an interesting island. The west end of it (about one third of its area) forms the black Republic of Haiti, and is French speaking; the other two thirds are Santo Domingo, much more thinly populated, more or less white, and Spanish speaking. There is little love lost between these two republics—but we are not concerned with that now. The real interest of the island is that it was the first to be discovered by Christopher Columbus (Cristobal Colon as the Spaniards call him), and he is buried in the Cathedral of the city of San Domingo (now rechristened Ciudad Trujillo).



We don't want to raise the usual controversy on the subject and argue that he is buried in Seville Cathedral in Spain (this theory is supported in Havana Cathedral), because now it is generally accepted that his final resting place was in Santo Domingo. He first landed in the island on December 6th, 1492, and it has many interesting historical associations with him. Another fact of interest to us is that it was raided by Drake in 1585.

It was such a contrast to Vera Cruz; so much cleaner and more up to date. That may be due to the American influence, but is certainly due in part to the disastrous hurricane of 1932, after which practically the whole city had to be rebuilt. The British Navy is very popular there especially in view of the great assistance rendered by H.M.S. "DANAE" at that time, and the street named after her was bedecked with flags throughout our stay. "Jack's" popularity made "Baron" hunting too simple for words, though he found "strangling" him in a foreign language a little difficult—but his Spanish was improving although he himself perhaps was not.

Our four days were all too short both for ourselves and the "senoritas," but it was February 21st, and we had to move, so taking a last longing look at those beautiful caps worn by the policemen we went our way, and arrived at St. Vincent, B.W.I., on Wednesday, February 23rd.

It would not be untrue to say that this was our first real experience of the British West Indies, and we view it, as we have come to view all the islands, with rather mixed feelings. It was very small, but very beautiful, and the climate was hot though not unpleasant. But for the majority of us there was very little in the way of society or entertainment, so we had to be content with our own. Water polo was played against a local Kingstown team, and there was much bathing and sailing. The Sergeant of Marines had his first introduction to "sea eggs" and has no desire to renew the acquaintance.

It was here that we were joined by Commander (E) N. E. Dalton who had been waiting for us at the "Pelican," and "Freddie" Stopford's departure now became imminent.

Tobago received us on February 26th, at 0906 after a night at sea. It was a gorgeous place, a real tropical dream. Not many libertymen landed, but some of the officers, especially "Jerry" and "Cavage" will always remember that happy bathing party on the palm-sheltered beach on the Saturday afternoon.

We sailed for Trinidad on Monday morning early, exercising the aircraft en route, and were off Port of Spain by 1330. Having taken our leave of Commander Stopford and seen him over the side chaperoned by the Padre (who was alleged to have a dental appointment) we proceeded to the oiling jetty at Pointe à Pierre, doing an inclination exercise with "APOLLO" on the way. It was Mardi Gras in Trinidad.

When we got back to Port of Spain, "YORK" and "APOLLO" were already there, and on March 3rd, we were joined by "EXETER" which we met for the first time. Practice for the Regatta occupied most of our time in Trinidad. We had, of course, been at it all the cruise, but now it became really intensive. The Junior Officers' pulling race had to be rowed off before we left because "APOLLO'S" midshipmen wanted to return to England—and then knowing in our hearts that we were "for it" we sailed away on Sunday, March 6th.

We were "for it" without a doubt. All the way to St. Kitts we exercised; we hoisted aircraft in and out, fired "fish," went to Action Stations by day and night, general drill with and without respirators, revelled in "dog watch" evolutions—in fact we did every conceivable thing except a full-calibre shoot and we were resigned even to that. And we learnt the truth of the old saw "when two or more ships are gathered together they shall darken ship"—even in the tropics. Such "dripping" was never heard, and there was a chorus of "R.O.M.F.T." (which, for the benefit of the uninitiated, means "roll on my twelve.") Still, never mind, you shouldn't have joined!!

There followed some uncertainty as to whether we should hold the Regatta at St. Kitts after all. We found it a bit choppy there, and after a few days it was no better. There was much talk of Tortola, but eventually we just moved our berths and stayed where we were.

The Regatta began at 0835 on the 17th, and ended some days later with "EXETER" more "cocky" than usual. On the last night, the whole island must have been awakened by the cries of "'Oggie, 'Oggie, 'Oggie" which rent the air—"EXETER" did not mean it to be a quiet victory. A record of the Regatta results appears in another place, but we must just mention two points now. One is the outstanding and astounding performance of the Stokers' Cutter, and the other the Marines' Whaler. Anyway we ended up third, "APOLLO" the victor of 1937, being second, and, of course, the Flagship last. Quite seriously our chances of "doing something" the following year looked very rosy indeed.

Then once more we turned in the direction of Bermuda, casting rather jealous eyes at the "YORK" as she sailed away to Washington. Flagships have all the "jam!"

#### NOTE ON THE BARON.

Since writing the preceding Chapter, some information has come into our hands from H.M.S. "YORK." It throws no more light on the Baron's ancestry than we have already given, but does provide some interesting information of which we were not in possession. The author takes full responsibility for quoting passages (almost bodily) as usual without permission, and has taken the liberty of altering them where he thinks fit, in order to make them coincide with his own theories on the subject. He hopes that this book may never, never, stray into the hands of the one who perpetrated a similar work in our sister ship. Anyway, here we go—and we are speaking of the Freeman family.

"The family first came into prominence some twenty years ago when the original Mr. Henry Freeman (shortly afterwards knighted) amazed the social world by announcing his intention of devoting his entire fortune to the entertainment of His Majesty's Navy. The actual amount of this fortune has never been discovered but it must run into several billions sterling and despite the heavy inroads made in it in recent years, it continues steadily to increase. Even the source of this vast fortune is shrouded in mystery. Some say 'twas made in oil, some in gold mining, others declare the Argentine (meat?) responsible for the amassing of this vast hoard, but Sir Henry himself, like the Service he serves, preserves a discreet silence.

Shortly after the announcement of his amazing intention, Sir Henry—or Sir "Harry" to give him his more familiar title—was given a Barony and assumed the title of Baron Agrippa, after his famous charitable Roman predecessor. (Actually, our "Yorkist" friend has made a "bog" here. We all know, of course, that Agrippa was the name of one of the Herods who fiddled while Carthage was burning.—Ed.) The name has since degenerated into the more common one of "Grippa," by which he is known to thousands of his admirers.

The family crest is a somewhat peculiar one being a combination of the old and new. It consists of two clenched fists surmounting an oxygen breathing outfit beneath which are the words (Latin) "*Dum Spiro Spero*" (*While I breathe I hope*) commonly misconstrued by the vulgar as "*Let me breathe*" or by the more vulgar still as "*Strangle 'im*" (There seems to be another mistake here. The coat of arms we know is actually in quarterings, two of them being occupied by the symbols mentioned, and the other two by a set of grappling irons and a pair of "footie" boots respectively. The motto is still the same and is similarly interpreted.—Ed.)

His Lordship has eleven brothers—all with fortunes equally as large as his own—and it was not long before they also became affected with this strange philanthropic