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EPUB ISBN: 978-0-908327-41-6

PDF ISBN: 978-0-908330-37-9

The original publication details are as follows:

Title: Let's go home : the journal of a jubilee journey

Author: Noble-Adams, R. (Robert)

Published: H. Duckworth, Blenheim, N.Z., 1936

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Walter Nash
June 1951

LET'S GO HOME

The Journal of a Jubilee Journey

BY

R. NOBLE-ADAMS

Published by
H. DUCKWORTH
Blenheim, N.Z.

First Published 1936.

Printed by
WHITCOMBE & TOMBS LIMITED
Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin, Wellington, N.Z.
Melbourne, Sydney & London.

1936

Z 910.4
A 976325
25 MAR 1977

To
MY DEAR WIFE
Who Was My Good Companion
In All That is Here Set Down.

PREFACE.

HAVING written, while journeying to the Home Country, many letters and notes of observations concerning different countries visited, I make no apology for having sorted them out and arranged them so that they would form a more or less continuous narrative.

Some of my friends desired to have a record of the journey, and my friend Howarth Duckworth has cheerfully done no end of spade work in getting the manuscript safely set on the rails.

I would like to say that my journeyings throughout England, Scotland and Wales were made very easy and pleasurable by certain institutions which took me under their care.

In the first place, Offord and Sons, of Kensington, deserve our thanks for providing us with a splendid motor car. We were treated very courteously and considerately by them.

And then we found the Trust Houses a great institution; the traveller is assured of every comfort while stopping over at one of these inns.

And in case I forget, it is essential for the motorist's pleasure that he should belong to the Automobile Association and the Royal Automobile Club. Their patrols and guides were always most willing to assist and nothing seems too much trouble.

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HOW IT CAME ABOUT.

IT was pretty generally conceded at our house that what was required was a holiday—not the usual few weeks off for a New Zealand bowling tournament, or a jaunt in the "Morris" round and back again, but a really, dinkum-dyed in the wool, all wool and a yard wide sort of a holiday—one that would take us far afield to distant countries, where we would be free from the petty disturbances of a busy practice, where there were no telephones or door bells, at least none ringing for us, where one could do just as one pleased for a change, and could take all day to do it in.

"A lazy man's holiday", you may say. Well, just so, we both intended to be lazy. We thought we had earned the right to pull out for awhile, and enjoy a freedom which for years had been denied us.

And so we put our collective heads together, and one bright day in the autumn, after months of planning—delightful happy months, these—we set out on our quest, and left our New Zealand home for the Home our forbears left so many years before. I look back on these months of anticipation with much satisfaction. We were about to set out into the unknown to gain new experiences and to make fresh con-

tacts. There were a thousand and one things to arrange. There was the planning of the itinerary. This, I think, was a most entrancing problem; the building of castles in the air is a tame game to this new ploy we had invented for ourselves. We interested other near and dear relatives, who speedily became imbued with our views and joined in the project of a long sea voyage and a visit to dear old Blighty. Later, we realized that Great Britain was to celebrate the King's Jubilee during our visit.

Everyone conspired to make our weeks of waiting full of happiness, and, somehow or other, we never at any time or in any distant place felt otherwise than that all our New Zealand friends were travelling with us. We took them with us, and strange were some of the gatherings in old Britain, at Bath, at Stonehenge, at Uriconium. What a medley of ghost-forms accompanied us on our wanderings —Roman soldiers, ancient Druids, citizens of Blenheim and ourselves; and what strange, mysterious whisperings flooded our subconscious minds!

After a round of gaiety and fond farewells, the long-awaited day arrived, and on April 1st, 1935 (what a fool's day to set out on a journey!) we embarked on the R.M.S. *Ruahine* and sailed away into the blue. From this day onward I began a succession of letters home which describe in a scrappy sort of way my impressions, my voyagings hither and thither; often missing many days happenings, for I kept no diary. I have never been one to record my daily doings; I have never thought them important enough, and some I certainly don't want to see set down on paper.

So, just as the spirit moved me, and when I thought I had some interesting things to relate, I sat down and let my pen wander on. In this way news and views got horribly mixed up, and this record gradually evolved itself, with no thought of what the ultimate result might be.

The first letter to New Zealand was written on April 13th, and began somewhat in this way:—

CHAPTER II.

WE SET OUT.

4,000 MILES OUT—*R.M.S. RUAHINE.*

UP to the present we have had the most wonderful passage. The day we departed from Wellington was perhaps as perfect a day as it is possible to get. As we left New Zealand we watched the South Island disappearing in a golden haze; not a breath of wind. We have been afloat just 14 days to-day, and we might have never left the Sounds for all we know about it; just the steady, slight throb of the screws and the faint hum of the dynamos.

This boat has wonderful deck space. So far, I have won my first round of deck quoits (singles), and also our first round of the doubles. We have had two cricket matches, the first England v. New Zealand, I made top score for New Zealand and kept wickets. On Friday we played the officers, eight aside. I was picked for the passengers. No! I am not a selector. We lost to them by three runs. It was a great match, and all thoroughly enjoyed it.

On Friday night we had a race meeting on the sports deck. I am enclosing a race card, where you will see all the races; horses and their breeding, with jockeys. The deck is marked out as a course all numbered with squares,

and the horses move according to the throw of dice; all the riders are in jockeys' caps and uniforms (bought for 1/- at the shop, being just paper) and we had a proper "tote" going strong. The "tote" was worked in the usual way, but the blackboard with the amounts on each horse is kept hidden, so you don't know how much is on each horse. My horse, "Guillotine", owned and trained by myself, won the Panama Hurdles hands down, and paid 3/3 on the "tote". As I had five tickets, I collected 16/3, plus 13/6, the stake money. Leggat's "Cyder" won Trader Horn's trophy, and I had ten tickets on this horse. As it only paid 1/6 it was not quite so good. But everyone had a wonderful night, and we finished up at goodness knows when.

Everything going well. During the day we lie out on long lounge chairs and either read, doze, or yarn. In the afternoons we go to our cabin and have a snooze, and wake up at 4 p.m. and make our own tea in the cabin, to which we have company. We bought tea and milk powder in Wellington, and as I have a water boiler we are "set". Our cabin is just perfect, and as we have our bath-room attached, we are just as well off as in a first-class hotel. We have reading lamps over each bed, centre of room, and over wardrobe; also in bath-room, and a big electric fan in each.

The weather is now getting very warm and muggy. We are as far north to-day as the top of Australia nearly. Meals are good, too good in fact, and I have to cut down in order to preserve my figure, or to keep it within decent limits.

Last Wednesday we sighted Pitcairn Island. We stopped there about two hours, and were met by three large whale-boats full of people who came aboard selling fruit, paw-paws, oranges, melons and all kinds of basket-ware, trinkets, walking-sticks. They seem a very degenerate sort of people, no physique, and no intellectual look about them; a very simple people, poorly developed in every way; but as they

have been inter-marrying for several generations now, it is not to be wondered at. However, I am told that the community at Pitcairn have between £30,000 and £40,000 in the Bank of New Zealand in Wellington, and that they provide £200 a year to their mission, the Seventh Day Adventists. How they do it I do not know, because the Island is quite small—two by one miles is its size—and it rises 1,000 feet out of the sea, mostly barren rock. It would not keep a sheep, and the only animals there are a few goats and fowls. The history of the settlement is well known so I won't bother you with that.

They, like all simple, primitive peoples, are intensely religious, and have an abiding trust and faith which is often denied to more educated and cultured peoples. They sang several hymns to us: "Shall We Gather", "Jesu, Lover of My Soul", "Auld Lang Syne" and "God Save Our King", but their singing, though fervent and devout, was not the equal of what our own Maoris can do; not by a long chalk.

After having sold us their fruit and curios and entertained us with conversation and song, they, at a blast of our whistle, proceeded down the side of the ship on rope ladders and, embarking in their whaleboats, hoisted sail and proceeded to beat up the odd mile or so we were lying off shore. In an hour or two's time the Island was only a hazy blue in the distance astern. The next land we see is at Panama, 3,600 miles away. At Pitcairn we posted our letters, 36, I think, we wrote between us; the mail will be picked up by the *Tamaroa,* arriving Auckland April 24th, only two days after we make Panama. We have a very decent crowd on board, and it is strange how, in this short time, we have become a community, sharing our pleasures and our amusements just like one big family. Everybody knows everybody, and so there is no discordant note.

GOOD FRIDAY.

To-morrow we cross the line, there is nothing to report as, after all, one day is very like another aboard ship. The weather is all that can be desired, and we are sailing on summer seas which are not one bit monotonous as they are ever changing in their beauty and their colourings. Some days are grey and the skies leaden, but it is always wonderful and full of interest. Some sunsets are very fine, but, so far I have seen more beautiful ones in Marlborough. I think we are more rested now, and less jaded and tired. I will think this trip worth while if we benefit from the rest and freedom from the daily grind. The never-ceasing excitement and bustle of a doctor's house, with its telephones and door-bells, and all the happenings which keep one in a perpetual state of unrest, must, after a course of years, fray one's nerves, and result in all manner of nervous disabilities such as sleeplessness, and a general upset of one's inner workings. Here, one has nothing to do but eat, lie out on deck, read, talk and sleep; no responsibilities, no duties, not even the artificialities of present-day city life need be observed in any shape or form. One ought to come home quite steadied down and fit for a few more years' rush and bustle.

We are supposed to make Panama early on Tuesday morning, and have about four hours ashore. I will post this and the former note from there. I am enclosing a couple of menu cards so that you will see that the food is nourishing and sufficient. We have been having a good deal of cricket and we beat the officers the other day very easily. Next week we are playing Veterans (over 45) v. the Rest. The Veterans, on form, are expected to win. All are well on board and everybody is happy; dances three times a week, treasure-hunts, etc. To-morrow, Father Neptune comes aboard, and I will try to give an account of his Court and reception of passengers and new chums when I finish up this.

SATURDAY.

Father Neptune and his Court came aboard over the aft rail (blunt end) about 8.30 last evening. The boarding was heralded with bosun's whistles and coloured fire. The party was headed by the Court Musician playing one of those accordeon things one sees in jazz orchestras at times. Following him the Court retinue, preceded by Neptune and his Queen, Amphitrite, mounted to the promenade deck, and made a triumphal procession down a lane of passengers to the dais and throne erected for their Majesties. Neptune and his Queen wore golden crowns and were festooned from crown to feet in long strands of carded tow. The Queen wore two golden-pointed breast shields, and little else. She had a skirt of carded tow, anklets also of tow. Across her bare tummy were the words tattooed, "I'm no angel", and across Neptune's abdomen the words, "Nor am I". They were accompanied by a retinue consisting of the Court Doctor, a fearsome get-up (played by the lounge steward) with top hat; scraggy black beard—really only a photograph could do them justice. The Court Lawyer, wig and gown and all, was played by the wireless officer and the Barber arrived with comb, razor, brush—all of a fearsome design—looking like Henry Morgan the buccaneer of the Spanish Main; these completed the gentlemen in attendance. The Queen's finger and toe nails were dyed a brilliant vermilion. She asked me this morning how she could get the "damned stuff" off. She was, in civil life, the Steward-in-charge. The King's toe and finger nails were dyed a brilliant green. (The First Officer, by the way.) On taking seats on their thrones, they were duly welcomed by the Captain of the *Ruahine* in a neat speech, and Neptune, trident in hand, replied, saying how gratified he was at his magnificent reception and requesting to be introduced to any notabilities on board, whereupon Trader Horn (our Sports Chairman and who goes by that name, having a get-up quite natural

approximating to one's ideas of Trader Horn, a pair of bare bronzed legs and a flowing beard) was duly presented with appropriate ceremony. As Neptune, besides his desire to hold a Court, let it be known that he was desirous of obtaining a few extra wives (good by-play with his Queen at this knowledge being divulged), all the beautiful maidens in the ship, to the number of about a score, were duly presented to Neptune by Trader Horn for his approval and choice. After being examined by the Court Physician and questioned by Neptune's Legal Adviser, the whole lot of them were set aside for to-day's function, and further enquiry as to their suitability to become the wives of Neptune. In stentorian tones Neptune let it be known that on the morrow he would hold a levee at 4.15 p.m., when he would initiate into the mysteries of his Court all those who had not previously crossed the Equator, and perform the time-honoured ceremony. With this announcement, Neptune ordered his Court Musician to strike up. The procession re-formed, and their Majesties retired amid cheers and expressions of delighted amusement from the assembled guests. The last we saw of their exalted Majesties was when, with musical honours, they disappeared over the stern rail amid a blaze of red fire! To-day we attend the ceremony.

EASTER SUNDAY.

Yesterday, at 4.15 p.m., Neptune hove on board accompanied by his whole Court, Queen Amphitrite, Court Physician, Attorney, Sergeant-at-Arms, a corps of weirdly-clad gendarmes, and half-a-dozen painted mermaids in trailing, green tow garments with green locks of hair; faces dyed green, also legs and arms. These mermaids took up their station on a platform alongside the bath, and attended to the barbering and immersion ceremony. Neptune and his Queen occupied a throne erected on one of the forward hatches close to the swimming pool, which is about five feet

deep, and there sat in judgment upon the various delinquents, and pronounced sentence. The charge-sheet was in the hands of the Attorney-General, who read out the various offences and crimes of which the poor criminals were supposed to be guilty. These charges were, of course, most humorous, patterned after the style of a mock court. Neptune, after consultation with Amphitrite, pronounced the penalties and tortures which each should suffer.

These prisoners were then handed over to the Court Physician, who thoroughly examined them, taking their temperatures with a bath thermometer under the tongue, counting the pulse by the aid of a large alarm clock. They were then stethoscoped, and in most cases an operation was performed under aseptic surgical precautions, the patient being hidden in a large sheet. The scalpel was a long ointment knife about 12 inches in length. One would be hard to convince, of the horrid foreign materials found inside these patients: carrots, turnips, spuds, eggs, pheasants' heads, bullock's heart, strings of sausages and even beer bottles. After the operation the patient was compelled to drink a tumblerful of fluid poured from bottles containing liquids of all colours, smells and tastes. The men criminals were then escorted by the barber and gendarmes to the platform and placed in a tilting chair, back facing the water tank, where they were well lathered all over with a whitewash brush from a bucket of evil-looking lather, green in colour; no part visible was left unlathered. They were then shaved with a razor about two feet long. Hair oils of all colours of the rainbow were then massaged into their scalps, their hair brushed vigorously with two hair brushes that were probably deck brooms minus the handles, then cut with long scissors and, as a final indignity, they were tipped backwards into the bath and seized on by the mermaids who proceeded to give them some idea of what a rugby scrum under water might represent. Half-drowned, eyes staring like dead cods', looking like

creatures who had suffered an earthquake, a deluge, a typhoon, and then spent the remainder of the night in a haunted house, the poor silly blighters, trying to raise a smile in the midst of ruin and devastation, were allowed to realize their sins had been washed out, and that their sufferings were over for the day.

It was a most enjoyable afternoon's entertainment for the lookers-on, and I was pleased to think that my grandfather and my grandmother crossed the line some donkey's years ago; what I mean is that I sneaked through on their tickets. The girls, of course, were treated more gently. (I spent an hour last evening trying to stop the bleeding from a tongue that had been bitten clean through. The owner says he feels o.k. this morning, but his mouth, as he describes it, feels like the tin tray in the bottom of a parrot's cage. (My gentle surgery, I guess!) The final charge having been read out, the prisoners sentenced, and made to pay the full penalty, Neptune, Amphitrite, Sergeant and the whole retinue of the Court, peeled off their raiment of the briny deep and plunged into the swimming pool and cavorted, gambolled and generally had, what I should have called, "hell's delight", had I been in the midst thereof. Fortunately, as I said, I was among the missing, thank God!

This morning there is a very tired mob on deck; some have not showed up yet, but the lads did have a time—oh yes! The whole show was bright and exceedingly breezy, and the staging, dressing and whole production was most creditable. It probably would have given Friday Easther the horrors, and Noel Coward the jim-jams, but everybody had a good laugh and voted it a great show, and after all that is what makes a show, isn't it? To-day we have put all this behind us: we have definitely "Crossed the Line".

Last evening they finished up with a Ball—a *vice versa* dance. Men go as girls and girls as men; it was a great success. All are still well. We reach Panama Monday night or Tuesday morning.

Leisure Hours on Deck, s.s. "Ruahine."

Pitcairn Island.

PANAMA—*S.S. RUAHINE.*

We tied up at Balboa about 10.30 p.m. Tuesday night. Great excitement at getting on to dry land again after 6,000 miles at sea. We went ashore and walked over to see a large American luxury liner which had arrived from San Francisco at midday—the *Virginia,* 34,000 tons, 600 feet long and 80 feet wide. She carries 900 passengers and 300 crew. She can carry 3,000 cars—from New York to San Francisco for £20 per car, 5,500 miles. (U.S.S. Co. £5 for 50 miles!) She and two other sister ships do the round trip from New York via Havana, the Canal, San Diego, Los Angeles and San Francisco—16 days, and back to New York. You can do this trip for £35 return. It was nearly midnight, but we went all over her. The nurse—a Miss Richardson, a Scottish lassie who worked under Sir William McEwen during the war—showed us round. Words fail to describe this floating palace. She has a swimming bath in her about 30 feet square, also a concert hall fitted up like a theatre, with stage orchestral well and accommodation for all passengers. She has a complete hospital on board with accommodation for 14 patients with a perfectly equipped operating theatre, sterilizers, bowls, table—in fact, everything most perfect, and the last word in surgical efficiency. We talked to one chap in hospital who got the worst of a knife-throwing fight, having had his calf split open. (I advised him to cultivate a straight left.) I don't suppose you could find anywhere a more completely fitted up hospital on a miniature scale. The first class dining saloon seats 300 guests at one sitting, all at separate tables holding about six people. The beams in the ceiling have their lower sides hollow and covered with fine mesh wire through which air is passed in after passing over ice. This is used, of course, only in the tropics. The whole of this large saloon is as cool and fresh as if you were under the trees at Lake Rotoiti. We came home to our ship about 1.30 a.m. and

brought the nurse with us, giving her supper and then taking her back home again to the *Virginia*. We met quite a number of passengers who asked us where we came from, how long we had been at sea, where we were going, and wasn't the *Ruahine* a Japanese ship? We told them we were "N. Zedders", but were the white variety, and were really British people, that English was our mother tongue, and that we were not speaking English just because we had met them. I told them we were able to speak American also, but preferred English. However, the ones we met spoke English very much the same as we do ourselves, and I think the language we hear on the "Talkies" is not the language of the better class American, but is a mark and a feature of a less educated and inferior type of person. These people we met were most interesting and friendly—most unlike New Zealand people or English. Everyone stopped us, recognizing us as strangers on the boat and made enquiries about us and our country—asking how much it took to do the trip, how the boats ran, how long it took? Several expressed a desire to come over and see us soon, as they had seen everything except New Zealand and Australia. I could imagine these people visiting our ship at 1 a.m. and getting a cold stare and a reception calculated to freeze one stiff—in fact, I don't suppose a soul would have spoken to them. We are so stand-offish and apparently so distrustful of strangers. We get right back into our shells and do not encourage friendliness. In other words, we are not good mixers. This, I think, is to our great disadvantage. We are too insular and self-centred. We finally got to bed at 2.30 a.m., and we were up again at 5 a.m. to see the *Virginia* off up the Canal to Colon at 6 a.m. After an early breakfast we took a taxi—all the taximen here are negroes—and had a drive round Balboa and over Ancon Hill where most of the American officials live, past the Ancon Hospital and over the Canal Zone into Panama Town.

You must first of all be told that the U.S.A. own and administer a strip of land ten miles wide surrounding the canal from end to end, which they obtained from the Republic of Panama in 1904. This Town of Panama is outside the Canal Zone and is the capital city of the Republic. On one side of a street is American soil, the other side is Panamanian. This town is inhabited by descendents of the Spaniards, called Spanish-Americans, negroes of all degrees of purity and impurity, Chinese and mixtures of indescribable origin. It is a busy city with narrow streets and shops of every variety and description. All the shopkeepers speak fairly good English. The great difficulty is to translate your English quids into dollars, cents and dimes. The English pound note was worth 4 dollars 80 cents the day we were there. English silver was not wanted at any price at all. Ted and I got two pure linen suits for $9.50, equivalent to £2 or there abouts. I know I spent £5 before we knew where we were. Our taxi we had for four hours at $3.00 per hour. We went everywhere, saw everything, did everything and were done by most everybody and reached the boat just before sailing at 1 p.m. thoroughly done ourselves. You hear people say, "Don't go to Panama—there's nothing to see". Isn't there? Well, I wouldn't have missed it for a good deal. By the way, it seems strange to realize that this Canal is under military law right through and that Uncle Sam keeps a large standing army all along the Zone, and warships both ends. The approaches are well fortified. Armed guards, bayonets fixed, patrol all the locks and would shoot on sight if any interference were noticed. The whole administration and the *modus operandi* of working the locks, pilotage, beacons, the provision of hospitals (the Gorgas, named after Lieut.-Col. Gorgas), and water purifying plants, and huge army encampments and barracks (permanent) are the last word in human efficiency. In addition, flying boats patrol the Canal and there is an air base at each end.

Although making eastwards towards England, we were sailing up the Gatun Lake the other evening with the sun setting at six o'clock directly over the bows—due west we were sailing. When you get through the Canal to Colon you are really nearer to New Zealand than when you started off at Balboa, you have been sailing north-west all the time. At Miraflores, where you pass through the first locks (two in number), rising up 54 feet into the Miraflores Lake, is situated the water purifying plant for Panama and Balboa. The red-roofed buildings are set on a beautiful knoll amidst tropical vegetation on the eastern bank, and there the whole supply for the Pacific Zone is thoroughly treated. The water flows through pipes for eleven miles from the intake in the Chagres River at Gamboa. It is first sprayed high in the air, rising up about 20 feet to remove vegetable odours and taste and to oxygenate the water. From the vessel's deck it appeared like a smoke screen. It is then chemically treated and afterwards led to large basins or sedimentation tanks where any foreign matters settle. It is then taken on to another building where filtration is performed, the water passing through beds of sand and gravel. There are fourteen of these and each contains 4ft. 6in. of gravel and sand. It passes on to a well holding 900,000 gallons and is then pumped to two concrete reservoirs on Ancon Hill above the town. Gatun and Colon have similar plants. In the Canal Zone about three billion gallons per year are consumed. Shipping takes about one and a half million gallons alone. On the day we passed through, the Canal dues amounted to 50,000 dollars (23/4/'35). The *Virginia* alone paid 15,000 and our *Ruahine* 6,000 dollars. Twenty-six ships passed through the Canal that day. The total earnings per year exceed 40,000,000 dollars. When the British battleship *Hood* came through, it cost her just on 24,000 dollars. That was the heaviest toll ever paid on any ship. The total cost up to 1923 of the Canal and administra-

tion was almost $400,000,000, of which about one-third was chargeable to national defence and the other two-thirds to commercial use. Depreciation charges provide for the amortization of the Canal investment, aside from profits, in 100 years. There are nearly 40,000 persons living in the Canal Zone, about 10,000 of whom are in the army and navy forces. The civil population in round numbers is nearly 30,000, of whom about 20,000 are blacks. The annual pay roll equals $14,500,000. This includes the railway system, which runs from end to end of the Zone, as well as the Canal. Well, I wasn't going to say anything about the Canal, thinking I might have to save it for a Rotary Club dinner, but as I have let my pen run away with me, I have doubtless saved myself any necessity of spilling the beans. I could spend hours writing about this wonderful waterway. The early history of the Canal goes back to 1513 when Balboa first crossed the Isthmus one hundred miles further south and saw the Pacific Ocean for the first time. There is a great monument to Balboa in Panama facing the sea-front in which he is depicted gazing earnestly out into the vast spaces of the mighty Pacific. The early discoverers from his time hoped to find some waterway through to the Pacific, but it was soon realized that the Strait of Magellan far south was the only way through. Alvare de Saavedra, a companion of Balboa in his discovery, and one of Cortez's most persistent searchers for a waterway, in 1529 prepared the first plans for a canal. The first actual work, however, was done in 1882 when the French, under de Lesseps, started in on the Culebra Cut, but now known as the Gaillard Cut in honour of Lieut-Col. Gaillard, the American engineer who completed the cutting of this portion in 1913. Set in the steep, rocky face of Contractors' Hill, 103 feet above water level, one sees from the deck of a passing steamer a bronze tablet let into the solid rock commemorating his memory. This French company worked until 1889, and a re-formed

company resumed operations in 1894 and continued under most dreadful conditions and against the ravages of tropical diseases until they were bought out by the U.S. Government in 1902 for $40,000,000. The story of the fight against disease is an epic, and is one of the brightest chapters in the history of medicine, and the name of Dr. Gorgas will go down in history as the man who made the Canal a possibility by his efforts in dealing with the mosquito, which was the carrier of the malarial parasite, and played an important part in that other fatal tropical disease—yellow fever. It is a fact that it is a hard thing to find a mosquito in the Canal Zone. I never saw one, at all events. All the houses in Balboa and the hospital are screened. There are no windows in the Canal Zone house, that is, no glass, only screens, but they are not necessary—merely precautionary. In Panama City, outside the Zone they don't even screen the windows. Everything is left wide open to the sun, and the breeze. Blinds are used at night, but in one part of the city there are no blinds and the doors of the bedrooms open directly on to the street, and the ladies are waiting. I leave you to guess what they are waiting for, but I can give you no further information. These women are medically examined twice a week, and seem to be never out of work, and seldom go on strike. This was a digression—the pen once again set out on a sail on its own. To-day yellow fever and malaria are practically unknown and mosquitoes are unknown. Drainage of swamps and the use of kerosene, raising of the water in the dams, allowing the little fish to get at the larvae and exterminate them, have practically outed the mosquito, but strict precautions are always taken and stringent rules and regulations with regard to the water in receptacles and stagnant water are much in evidence and offenders heavily fined. All the towns in the Canal Zone

are provided with up to date sewerage systems, and as their water supply is absolutely pure, the health of the various communities is extremely good, although living in such a tropical situation.

In a recent year, not a single death from malaria was reported of an employee in the Zone. Eleven years after the Americans commenced work, the first ocean passenger liner passed through from the Atlantic to the Pacific. This was the Panama liner *Kroonland,* on 2nd February, 1915. There is an erroneous idea that by the cutting of this Canal the waters of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans were intermingled. That is not so, the idea is only a beautiful poetic one, as the waters can never meet. All the water between Miraflores Lake and the Gatun Lock is fresh water from the Chagres River and it will always remain a fresh water lake. We did not go ashore at Colon and Christobal as, after being stepped down three times at the rate of three feet a minute in the Gatun Locks, which takes about an hour, we find we have dropped about 85 feet to the level of the Atlantic Ocean, and we reached Colon at about 10.30 at night, dropped the pilot and put straight out to sea on our way to Curacao, 706 miles distant. By the way, the Canal waterway is over 50 miles in length. The great difficulty was the divide or backbone at the Culebra (now Gaillard) Cut. After shipping was through, slippings took place all down these reaches. The cut was made so deep that the pressure of the surrounding country forced the bottom of the Canal up and caused slides to occur. All along that particular part one can see what has been occuring and can realize the worry and anxiety which must have been a nightmare to those concerned. Huge dredges and grabs are still at work in the Gaillard Cut and the whole way through this portion is most wonderfully bestrewn with guiding beacons which have to be kept in line, some to show the centre passage, others to delineate the safety margin at each side. Tugs are kept at

various points to assist ships which get into trouble. The passage through the Gaillard Cut is lit up at night. On the port side every hundred yards are placed small red electric bulbs at water level and on the starboard side white lights. The Canal is not used regularly at night, but adequate provision is made for night work if necessity arises. For instance, we ourselves did not get down to the Gatun Locks till well after dark, but we went on. It is marvellous to see these locks working, absolutely no noise and the whole performance is electrically controlled from a central tower, where a miniature working model of the locks shows to the officer in charge the precise stage of the proceedings. He controls the whole thing with an electric key which works the model, and that model controls the whole mechanism of the working of the locks. There is no pumping in and out of water. Everything of that nature is purely a matter of gravity—water flowing in and water flowing out—all controlled by valves which either allow water to flow through the floor of the lock in a series of holes, or to flow out of the lock by a similarly controlled series of outlets. The ship does not proceed through the locks under her own power, but is guided and pulled through by steel ropes attached to electric motor engines called "mules". It is all very wonderful to a new chum and is a marvel of engineering accuracy, and works with the precision, efficiency and quietness of a good watch. The lock gates are all electrically controlled and work together forming a V-shaped gate across the lock. Huge chains, weighing twelve tons, hang in front of the gates, and pay out very gradually if the ship gets away out of control, thus stopping the ship before she reaches the gates, so that no damage can be done—a marvel of ingenuity. They also have emergency swinging gates for use in case of accidents. Everything possible seems provided for.

Well, this letter will give you an idea that if there is nothing to see, as they say, I certainly got my money's

worth, and it sure is 100 per cent. efficient, and was conceived and engineered by "He" men. Probably I will find some "He" men also live in Britain. Yes, I think so.

By the way, this Canal cuts off nearly 8,000 miles from the journey round Cape Horn, so if the Canal dues seem heavy, look at the saving in oil fuel alone, not to speak of the time.

All are well, and although we are now in Atlantic waters and sailing the Caribbean Sea, the calm, smooth weather still accompanies us. This is the famous Spanish Main you read about, and in by-gone days was the scene of many a frightful happening at the hands of those sea pirates, the buccaneers. The Spanish plate ships, bearing the treasures of the Incas also met with severe loss and disaster, being waylaid and captured by the filibustering English of Queen Elizabeth's time. So far, I have not sighted one ship on the Caribbean, so those days when countless ships sailed these waters are evidently gone. In any case, if we are freebooted or captured, my stuff is insured with "Osh", so if you hear no more from A.C. and me you had better send in a claim.

Now I must finish up, as I have to post this at Curacao this morning.

CURACAO—THE N.Z. SHIPPING COMPANY'S *S.S. RUAHINE.*

A fortnight to-day we land in London. From now on all is plain sailing. No more ports of call, a through run for the English Channel and the Straits of Dover. I suppose we will be a little early for the Channel swimmers. I believe the water in the season is so thick with aspirants to fame that the boats have to slow down and keep the fog horn blowing. Yesterday we arrived off the Dutch Island of Curacao just before breakfast. We steamed along the southern coast of the Island, passing Willemstad, the capital

city—which looked quite an imposing town from the sea—making for Caracas Bay, where we took on 2,500 tons of oil. This will take the ship to England and back again to Curacao. There is a huge oil depot here about two miles from the capital city. After breakfast we all went ashore in a tender and after bargaining with the negro taxi drivers, we sorted ourselves out, and for 25/- return, English money, we were (the five of us) soon driving over a beautiful bitumen road for Willemstad. There is rather a wonderful harbour here, a narrow river-like entrance (no bar—several in the town) crossed near the mouth by a swinging pontoon bridge, up a long reach lined with big shipping (St. Anne's Bay). The harbour then opens out into a huge lake-like expanse called the Schottegat, where all kinds of shipping lie. We spent most of the morning shopping, seeing the town and taking photos. You will notice in them the number of soldiers about in arms. You see, they live in hourly dread of some of those South American Republics having a game with them. A Dutch gun-boat is always stationed in the port to deal with possible invaders. It is only a few years ago that the Governor was imprisoned in his own palace by a neighbouring republic, so now they take no chances. The streets are narrow for the most part, but the town is a model of cleanliness. Being Dutch, you would naturally expect this. Trade of all kinds seems brisk, and merchandise and clothing remarkably cheap. This is because customs duties are very low. On the other hand, drinks and meals are very expensive. A small bottle (pint) of lager cost 2/-, a gin sling (small glass, not a long sleever) also ran to 2/-. We asked what lunch would cost and were told 7/- per head. As a result, we staved off the pangs of hunger with half a crown's worth. A huge sandwich, bread and butter, covering the whole of a large dinner plate, about an inch in thickness, liberally covered with a thick slice of ham the same size as the bread and garnished with a gherkin.

This, with a pot of tea (most refreshing tea), as I say, cost 2/6 and furnished our midday meal. We lunched at the Hotel Americano, on the balcony overlooking the harbour, directly across from the Governor's palace. I took a snap from here. The shops are all very quaint and interesting to foreigners, as they seem to have no fronts, but are wide open to the street. A negro or native of some kind, probably Dutch extraction or even Jewish, will be at the street frontage inviting you in and calling his wares. Some are very insistent that you should come inside and see "Ze be-autiful seelks" (silks). There is quite a large Jewish colony here and they have most ornate homes. The houses, to us, are weird—no windows, just green louvred shutters; no balconies or verandahs, and all—even the poorest cottages—with tiled roofs. The front of these Jewish houses has, as a rule, a most wonderful tesselated mosaic pavement extending right from the street to the house door, and the full width of the section—no gardens.

In one shop where we were endeavouring to buy some particular article, we were served by a quite white girl with auburn hair, who was not very perfect in her English. On leaving the shop I noticed an open book on the counter which she had been reading and I glanced at it. It was written in strange heiroglyphic characters which I recognized as Hebrew. I said to her: "This book is Hebrew, isn't it?" And she replied, "How did you know that? That pretty clever, I think". I told her that our bible was partly written originally in Hebrew, and that was how I knew as my father used to read a Hebrew bible. She said, "Pretty good, that". I asked her if she were a Jewess and she rather took the wind out of my sails by replying: "Yes, are you a Jewess, too?" Well, I ask you! I was too confused to reply and A.C. dragged me away before I could explain the position satisfactorily. These shop assistants are very polite and obliging and all speak very understandable English

as well as Dutch, and the language of the country, called "Papiamento". We had no difficulty with money here, as all we had to do was to ask, "Well, how much in English money?" and we were told at once in English shillings. I heard that one shop-keeper actually took New Zealand Reserve Bank pound notes and allowed 20/- for them. When we went to post our letters we found that they would accept nothing but Dutch money, so we couldn't post them and will have to carry the mail on to England. Anyhow, a letter cost 7d. to post, and we just wouldn't encourage the local Coates.

You never saw such a dry, barren country as this Island is. Nothing seems to grow but a giant cactus, and as for grass, there seemed to be none—just dried earth. We were told that once it never rained here for eleven years, and with the exception of one shower last October, it had not rained now for four years. Our Marlborough farmers will be interested to hear that some places are worse off than our own little province. Well, you ask, how do they get on for water? The answer is that they have two or three artesian wells and have a large condensation plant constantly distilling the sea water. The main part of the town is supplied by gravitation, but further out we saw funny little carts carrying large barrels drawn by poor little patient donkeys, going from door to door selling water by the pint and quart in the manner of our own purveyors of the morning's milk. This is not a travellers' tale. This Island grows nothing—no coconut, no banana. It cannot support a sheep or a cow, and what the donkey lives on I don't know. We never saw a horse on this Island. Everything in the shape of fruit and comestibles comes from Venezuela and the rich region round Lake Maracaibo, about forty miles away. Shallow draught tankers bring the unrefined oil across from Venezuela to Curacao. There is a small fleet of these vessels, and it is here refined and stored in large oil tanks. Most

of these works are owned by the Curacao Petroleum Industry Company, a subsidiary of the Royal Dutch Shell, and large tankers are always to be seen in Caracas Bay filling up with the refined oil and carrying it to all parts of the world. This industry has caused Curacao to become one of the largest and busiest ports in the world. In 1931 no less than fifty million tons gross register of steamers called at Curacao. The only other industry of value in this Island is of interest to the agricultural community. A large hill—Table Hill—is practically a huge deposit of calcium phosphate. This is shipped to Baltic sea ports and there manufactured into superphosphate. More than 100,000 tons are shipped away yearly.

This Island was the haunt of pirates in the early days, and at Caracas Bay, overlooking the harbour, is an old Spanish fort on a cliff. In Caracas Bay territory you are not allowed to smoke—too much oil about. As the road enters the Bay, there is a sentry house where an armed guard scrutinizes each car and gives the occupants the once over. Ted was smoking his pipe on coming back and was promptly told in a peremptory tone, "No smoking". We saw all we could in the short time at our disposal. We couldn't pull the women folk away from the quaint shops and the wonderful bargains, but we had a most interesting and instructive morning and returned to the ship about 3 p.m., hot and tired. We pulled out at about 3.30 p.m. and enjoyed a cold shower and a complete change. A complete change here means a fresh shirt and a pair of white pants. It's all you need and all you can stick.

SUNDAY, 11 a.m.

We are just passing, on the port side, a small island, Sombrero, with a very tall lighthouse. This is one of the Windward Islands, and is on the outer fringe of the Caribbean Sea. It cost our ship £78 to pass this Island, as the

lighthouse is controlled by Trinity House, London, and English ships must pay dues. Foreign owned vessels do not pay.

We are now in the region of the Sargasso Sea, the subject of many travellers' tales in years gone by. As a graveyard for derelicts and other debris, floating ever round and round, becalmed in a sea of silent weed until decay sent them and it to the bottom, the yarn is a complete wash-out. Certainly we are in a current which is bestrewn liberally with a yellowish-green weed known as Gulf weed, but it would require a vivid imagination to visualize the pictures drawn for us by the mariners of old times concerning this Sargasso Sea. And so to London.

CHAPTER III.

LONDON.

CONWAY COURT HOTEL, GLOUCESTER TERRACE.

WE have arrived in London. This, however, is not the London of yesterday—the London of every day which, through various *media,* we know so well—but a mad, glad London, an immense city *en fete,* such as may only be seen on occasions of great national rejoicing. It seems perhaps strange to us, living as we do in our far flung little spot, New Zealand, that so much rejoicing could surge through the soul of this vast metropolis at the mere fact that their King and Queen have reigned 25 years. And yet it is so, and not only this London, but the whole of Great Britain is sharing in the wonderful expression of loyalty and honour to their Sovereign and his Lady.

Yesterday we awakened about 5.30 a.m. and found ourselves gliding up the river Thames to our final destination in the Albert Dock. A calm, still, beautiful morning, and we watched the sun rising on an England whose most striking note was one of a most beautiful greenness. I think that would be my answer to the question: "What struck you most at first sight?" The wonderful softness of the atmosphere, the verdant green of the grass and foliage. It is a

different green entirely compared with that of New Zealand. Ours is a hard, staring, clear-cut landscape and our colour is more sombre. And then I also realized that this land was a vast hive of industry, at the moment silent and still, but soon to awaken from its sleep to swarm with busy workers, making this water-way the most wonderful centre of industry in the whole world. It is impossible for me to picture all this in words as I would like to, but I fear that I would be spending a large proportion of my time with my pen in my hand, and I am selfish enough to want to be out and doing.

We arrived ultimately at our destination. After a tortuous passage through Dockland, seeing en route representatives of all the shipping companies of the world, more or less, we tied up alongside the *Rangitiki* in the Albert Dock, and for the first time in our young lives passed everything with flying colours, and were not asked even for an examination. T. says we must have honest faces, because some of our fellow-passengers had a rough spin. I saw several whose trunks were practically gutted, in the search for contraband. One dear old chap had a pair of binoculars presented to him by friends before leaving New Zealand. The Customs man said they looked too new and he had to pay full duty on them. I simply made out a list of what we had and ended up with "Bay Rum bought at Curacao, eight ozs., worth eightpence". Everything we had noted down he asked, "Wearing them?" and we said "Yes, occasionally", and he thereupon smiled and green-chalked the lot—never opened a bag. Verily, honesty is the best policy.

A special train awaited us, and we got a first compartment to ourselves, and set out for Liverpool Street Station. By the way, we found a train which is slower than the Picton Express, and more bumps to the mile also. On our way up we passed some dandy engines—L.N.E.R.—the same brand as the *Flying Scotsman*. Compared with our engines,

Pontoon Bridge, Governor's Palace, Willemstad, Curacoa.

Scene at the Derby.

they are as Gloaming to the butcher's horse. You can see speed and latent power in their beautiful lines, just as you can in a racing yacht. Liverpool Street Station at 10 o'clock. We took a taxi (hood down, was the order from the women folk) and in glorious sunshine, a cloudless sky, and hardly a zephyr, London opened its arms, spared a brief moment from its Jubilee festivities and welcomed into its huge organism, with flags, bunting and general rejoicing, the Moores and the Noble-Adams. We were now in the very maw of London and proceeded with all our faculties to digest and to be assimilated into the body corporate of the great City. From Waterloo Station to our digs opposite Hyde Park, our route took us through the heart of the city, Threadneedle Street, Royal Exchange, past St. Paul's, High Holborn and so into Oxford Street. The traffic is indescribable. There are all kinds of beacons, signal and traffic lights, crossing and traffic cops and men at point duty everywhere. One gets confused at the multiplicity of "Do's and Don'ts". Often enough, as we rushed giddily down Cheapside, Newgate, Holborn Viaduct down to Oxford Circus, we were at times three abreast. Once a "cop" coming up in an ambulance behind us asked our man this wise: "Say, cabby, do you want the whole blooming road?" By the way, the first man I met ashore after passing the Customs was our railway guard, who asked for our tickets—before our train had moved a yard—and remember we were not in Aberdeen—London it was. Well, on receiving it he looked at it carefully to see that I had not been sucking the date off it, I suppose, punched it and then paralysed me with "O.K., Chief". Verily, this wonderful language is universal! Don't forget to let Dr. J. know this, as he might be able to correct this "improper Americanism". The up-to-date expression is: "Okus, Big Boy". This by the way.

Gloucester Terrace at 11.30; so it took us 1½ hours to drive through London from one side to the other of the

City proper. At our hotel everything is quite in order. We have a large room all newly done up, hot and cold water, a nice wash basin and electric light over beds as well as in centre of room, bathroom and conveniences next door—very convenient. Two beautiful twin beds adorn this room, and look too wonderful to sleep in—all gilt, but yet austerely simple in design. A gas-fire is also one of the comforts, and we have ample dressing tables, and three-door wardrobe. Everything in the place is sweet and clean and the meals are nicely cooked and taste ever so much nicer than ship's fare; probably because it is not frozen.

Before lunch we went for a walk up as far as the Edgeware Road and did a bit of shopping and rubber-necking. The day continued brilliantly fine, and as the King and Queen were to make an official drive up to the Marble Arch from Buckingham Palace, we proceeded down through Hyde Park in the afternoon to the Ring alongside Park Lane, up which the Royal pair were to come.

The crowd were so excited and so dense that, after all our trouble we nearly got blocked out from a sight of it, especially as some kind fathers were hoisting their kiddies on their shoulders directly in front of us. I tapped a policeman on the shoulder and informed him that we had just stepped off the boat after coming 13,000 miles to see this Royal progress, and we were rather badly situated. He replied, "Where do you come from?" And I told him "New Zealand". With that he answered, "That's good enough for me" and grabbed us both and placed us right in front of the line of police, and we were home and dried.

The cheering was awe-inspiring as they drove through. Dense crowds lined the road right from the Palace, up Constitution Hill to the Marble Arch, and when I say a dense crowd, I cannot express to what I saw. The pomp and ceremony of it all fairly took my breath away. I have never been one to admire trimmings and the pomp of proces-

sions, but I must admit that since seeing the King go through yesterday, I had formed my ideas in ignorance of what it all stood for. I know now! And I felt a big lump come up in my throat and I could simply not speak as I realized, as probably Saul of old did when he said that he saw a great light. And silently I thanked my God for what this King and Queen meant to me as an individual, and to this people as a whole, and to our glorious Empire. Anything more awe-inspiring and reverential on this earth than that Royal passage, with its brilliant escort of Life Guardsmen on coal-black horses, followed by the carriages of the King and Queen and their retinue I cannot imagine. Certainly our Sovereign is much beloved, not only as the holder of that office in the realm, but truly as the Father of his People. Last night Captain Humphreys drove us down through Mayfair to the Birdcage Walk, adjoining the Palace. This was the last night of flood-lighting of the Palace and various other places, and we simply had to see this. We got well in front of the Palace, to the left of Queen Victoria's Memorial, facing the balcony on which their Majesties appear for a short time. When the flood-lights were turned on, the Palace was a most glorious sight. The whole great building stood out clear cut and massive against the pinkish glow of the western sky. When I tell you that down the Mall, the Birdcage Walk, Whitehall and in the vicinity of St. James's Park it is estimated there were 250,000 people, you will have some idea of the crowd. I have seen in Sydney 54,000 people at a Test Match, but this crowd last night I certainly will never see again until I enter the pearly gates. After the King and Queen had come out on the balcony, the crowd began to move. As it didn't all want to move the same way for very obvious reasons, a few sets of cross purposes were set up. However, by forming lines and keeping together we scrummed our way down the Birdcage until we took the ball over the line somewhere in the vicinity of

Big Ben, which thereupon tolled 10 p.m. By the way, this was also wonderfully lit up. The tower of the clock and the Houses of Parliament, I mean. After carefully working the game down here and feeling a bit winded and shop-soiled, it was found we were out of bounds—or "out of bounce"—so we decided to take another scrum, going in the direction of Whitehall and the Horse Guards. The game was a bit more open here, but it would have puzzled even M.W. to have made a satisfactory opening. We cut in and dummied several times, but they were a bit too many for us. We joined another game, which seemed to have as its objective the Admiralty Arch, so down went our heads and, tucking our tummies well in, we duly arrived. This was not a nice game either to watch or to play in. It was kept far too tight. T.M. and his wife got lost in the rough stuff about the fifteenth hole, but turned up in time to be shot as one party through the Arch to enter for the first time in our lives, Trafalgar Square. A seething mass of humanity disclosed itself to us surging one way, then another—human waves of men and women. The steps right to the Column were black with people. Even the lions took their loads. This sight must have been seen to be believed. In the whole of the area which I have described not one solitary car or bus was able to penetrate all night up till 3 in the morning. We ourselves were making for a tube station, as this was our only chance of getting home. Frankly, I could see us walking all night, as there seemed no earthly chance of ever getting out of the mass of people. Wherever one went you just got shot from one huge undulating mass into another. The crowd of people seemed to have enveloped us round about in every direction. It was all very well knowing in which direction a tube station was, the difficulty was to fight one's way in that particular direction. At last we found an underground passage-way and, like sheep running down a race to the abbatoirs below, not knowing where

or how we were going, only why, we were catapaulted down a long flight of stairs and were held up by an iron grille which closed in our faces. When this opened, we were vomited into a central chamber where everybody seemed to know what to do but us. Fortunately the ubiquitous policeman put us right and we actually caught the right train, changed at Oxford Circus and eventually landed at Lancaster Gate at 11.30 p.m. We really felt as if we had been to a circus ourselves, and in addition had done all the tricks. I am posting a paper or so, and you may see that I am not exaggerating one iota. The people simply took charge. In fact, for the past week, at night, no traffic (vehicular) is allowed down here. It is all turned back and sent in other directions. The whole of London is *en fete*. Even in the poorer parts of the East End, through which our train travelled up to London, every street is festooned and every home has its bit of bunting and is decorated. It is unbelievable, this spirit of love and loyalty among all classes and conditions, unless witnessed. These people, one could readily understand, would hang together as one man, either in their pleasures or in their sorrows. I know now how we won the war. These people would never admit defeat. To-day we strolled through Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens. To-morrow I settle down to seeing my banker and my wool experts.

During the whole time we were in that dense crowd we never saw a drunken man, and no disorder—no hooliganism. It was orderly, good-natured, and a wonderful example, and I was proud to be a Britisher that night. The King of England could have walked with us and suffered no indignity. It is probably the only country in the world where the Royal family are in perfect safety among their own people.

CHAPTER IV.

"MERRIE ENGLAND IN MAY."

Ko-Ko sings in "The Mikado":—

The flowers that bloom in the spring, tra, la,
Bring promise of merry sunshine.

WELL, so far, the promise is a very belated one, and instead of merry sunshine we are down in the Midlands, playing snowballs: the "throws" of winter! Ha! ha! Last Friday we travelled down into the country, 30 miles from London, to a place called Capel Ockley, a few miles from Dorking, Surrey, to see the wonderful spring flowers all over the fields. Well, we saw the snowslips and the cowdrops—I beg pardon, snowdrops and cowslips, and the bluebells, plenty of lovely grass, trees, deer and squirrels, but it was not summer, although quite homely and countrified. How the poor bluebells could be any other colour would puzzle me. If they weren't blue with the cold, they gave a pretty fair imitation of a colour scheme to match the outside dependent portion of one's anatomy. We were visiting a country house and sat round a great open fireplace, with roaring flames blazing from great yule logs, while all about you an icy blast whistled round your feet, through your hair, down the stairs, through the leadlights and doors,

making one glad frolicsome scurry for the shortest way up the chimney. Outside, the gale, northerly (not southerly here) from the Arctic howled and wailed around the corners of the building, banshee-like, shaking the chimney pots till they rattled.

And as Matthias the Burgomaster said in "The Bells": "It snows still, there will be no tracks". That sounds cheerful doesn't it? They tell us that it is the worst May for 64 years. It must have been awaiting our arrival, but why pick on us? So far, a Blenheim winter is much to be preferred to a London summer. When I think of our glorious sunny skies, the kindly warmth of our winter sunshine, I wonder what evil fortune brought me to such a land of mirk and misery. I have been in bed with an ache for a couple of days—caught a real chill, which probably makes me view things in a gloomy manner. You know there is an old saying in England: "Don't change your winter undies till May is out"; this doesn't mean the month of May but the mayflower in the hedgerows. So far, it has not poked its nose out, but it is getting ready, for I saw it the other day, though it does not give any indication yet of an early summer. You know our Maoris predict a hot dry summer by the early blooming of the flax bush.

Unfortunately, I was still wearing my summer garments and I got it properly. To-day I am all got up in Petone woollens armed like Hamlet's father, "Cap a pie". I could much more easily have had a holiday similar to this if I had volunteered to go with Bird to the South Pole in place of Dr. Potaka, getting paid, moreover, for my trip. I know now what Hamlet meant when he complained that he suffered "the gut's ache and the thousand natural ills that flesh is heir to".

T. says it's much better in London, doing the undergrounds; you *can* keep warm and dry there. He went to Lords to-day to see South Africa play M.C.C.; rained all day; no play. I am not allowed out yet. They have some good bats, and will, I think, shake up England.

Cheerio, the sun will shine some day soon, and then we will see an English summer.

MAY 21st, 1935.

Went up to Lords to-day and saw conclusion of match South Africa v. M.C.C. England batted from 2.30 till 4.30 and were all out for 144! South Africa had made 297. England followed on and lost three for about 30 at stumps. Well, I believe South Africa has some jolly decent bats, and so far as their bowling goes, I think England will find it difficult to force runs, they will earn all they get. Vincent is a delightful left-hander; bowl all day; easy action; beautiful length, and keeps a very awkward leg break, going away to the off. He actually got an l.b.w. bowling round the wicket. England is going to find him as hard as O'Reilly. Langton, a medium-pace right-hander, has a nice off-break and frequently uses a leg field to a ball going away to leg. Crisp is fast, and has good length; a beautifully built boy; great physique. We did not see Bell to-day; saw him in Wellington. To-day, the English batsmen mostly pottered and poked about, and seemed glad when they managed to stop them. The wicket was podgy, I believe; rain the day before—all day, but one might as well try to make a few runs by having a go, as to stay at home messing about to be slaughtered in the end by a ball you might have clouted for four if you had only the "gutz" to get at it. Ah well, it's easy to write and criticize, but I fear for England if she doesn't show more spirit and enterprise.

Apropos of our visit to Lords cricket ground. I must tell you of the riot I nearly caused by having my little

joke. Lords this year is affected by a plague of leather-jackets, the larvae of the daddy-long-legs. This behaves like our grass grub and as a result there are all over the field numerous bare patches, giving the playing area a very pie-bald appearance. Sitting in the stand, I happened to remark rather audibly that I supposed they played football here in the winter time—of course, I knew better. A very English public-school-boy kind of voice immediately behind me came to the rescue of England and English cricket, as it is played at Lords, with a vehement outburst: "Good God! No!"

I turned round to find myself eyed like Bateman's man who dropped his rifle. I should have sneaked home, and did not, but I hope I felt properly snubbed and crushed. Football at Lords! Ye gods!

HYDE PARK, W.2., LONDON.

All is well here. We have bought a "Terraplane" (1934) eight; 28 horse-power, and had it o.k.'d by the R.A.C. people; it will take the five of us. They seemed to think that two cars were unnecessary, and this is in good order; two spares; sunshine roof, and can do 80 miles per hour. Well, we are off in her next week, going from here to Gloucester, via Oxford, and working our way down through Bristol, Bath, Wells, along the coast of Devon and Cornwall, and back to London via the South Coast. We are taking 15 days to do this, as we want to be back for the Aldershot tattoo on June 22nd. We are going by charabanc to the Derby next Wednesday. I will try to describe this to you later on. We are gradually seeing most things, and are very fascinated by some of the shops. By the way, after three months the car people will buy the car back again. We expect after the tattoo at Aldershot on June 22nd to proceed up the East Coast, getting to Edinburgh in the middle of July. We went to "Lords" last Saturday and had lunch there. Also went to the zoo at Regent's Park yesterday, and saw all

kinds of birds, animals, reptiles, etc., including the usual rude little monkeys. In the reptile house we found a poor solitary tuatara lizard. We have been to see the Chelsea Flower Show, and think it one of the wonders of the world. We have never seen such blooms before, and the extent of the show is like London itself—vast.

UP THE THAMES.

We spent one never-to-be-forgotten day during a week-end motoring up the Thames Valley as far as Windsor and Eton, going out by the Great West Road through Staines and Egham. A drive through the great park with its beautiful walks and rolling downs is charming and here and there one finds groups of Highland cattle. From Windsor, the King's Road leads straight for six miles to Ascot. This drive is used by Royalty on the occasion of the Ascot Meeting and the Drive continues right into the straight, leading past the Grand Stands.

A delightful spot, Virginia Water, lies at the end of the great park. This is much frequented by London visitors and the walks round the lake, through the magnificent trees and bosky dells, proves most refreshing on a summer's day. Then home through Hampton Court and the Palace to Kingston, where the river steamers and house boats are to be seen in charming surroundings. Leaving here, we motored through Richmond Park, over 2,200 acres in extent, with red and fallow deer roaming around. This is a wonderful resort at week ends. Then on to Richmond, with its entrancing peep of the Thames from Richmond Hill. This is a beautiful spot all around here. From Richmond we made for Mortlake and Barnes, crossing back over the Thames by Hammersmith Bridge, making for Kensington and Notting Hill Gate to our caravanserai in Gloucester Terrace. A delightful day's outing, thanks to our good friends, Captain and Mrs. Humphreys.

THE DERBY.

"Are you going to the Derby?" Everyone you meet gets in first, if possible, with this all-important question. This is the day of days, eagerly looked forward to for many months by all classes and by all manner of peoples; not so much on account of that very famous and cherished horse-race, "The Derby", but because it is the *one day* where commoner and nobility intermingle, drawn by some mysterious bond which is not altogether horse-racing, but has something of the herd instinct in it; naturally, and beyond argument, the Britisher dearly loves a thoroughbred horse. The heroes of the turf are names in everybody's mouth for weeks beforehand, and intense interest is created by the large amount of space devoted to these horses and their doings in the daily newspapers.

Of course we were going to the Derby! This was one of the sights we must at all costs see. We arranged with one of those bus services who do all the worrying about admission, car parks, position on the course, luncheon, and take the whole responsibility of the day off your shoulders for 25/- per head. This does not include champagne, but it is wonderful how well we were catered for. An early start is necessary, and we were all aboard our bus at 9 a.m., ticketed like children at a Sunday-school picnic, so that we were easily identified by our conductor, and our labels showed our rights to all privileges of our particular party. The morning broke dismal and grey-skyed, with heavy showers of rain; what a disappointment! Still, clad appropriately, not to be deterred by London at its worst, and with a look like Napoleon tackling the trip to Moscow, we braved the elements and set out for Merry Epsom, a charabanc full of a sporty crowd prepared for anything which chanced along.

And how it rained! But even so, the journey down to Epsom was just a procession of vehicles of all sorts, sizes

and descriptions, all making steady progress with only one end in view. All London seemed on wheels, and to our great satisfaction, the weather seemed to be lifting. We were a cosmopolitan crew in our "chara."; we came from all the ends of the earth; but, as we had our own little party, we were, perhaps, as much a puzzle to our whilom friends as they were to us. At long last Epsom is reached, and we see the course, and the grandstands looming up on top of the Downs. Now, this is a strange course, as we in New Zealand know a racecourse. The race is run round the two sides and across the top of a long narrow gully. In shape, the course is like a large letter U inverted. The horses run anti-clockwise, and the first leg is from the start to a gradual run uphill to the top of a gully. From where we were situated, this is where we first saw the horses. Rounding the top of the ∩, the horses round the famous Tattenham Corner to enter the straight, which is more or less level to the finish, the slope of the course here being lower on the rails by a few feet than the outer edge. The course is much rougher than what we in New Zealand are used to. In fact, it reminds me somewhat of the kind of course one meets with at country meetings—and it is a country meeting; it is far more of a picnic than anything else; the horse-racing is just a part of the entertainment. Here is to be found all the fun of the fair; steam round-abouts, flying-boats, dart-throwing for objects of bijouterie, all manner of games of skill and of chance. Here one can have one's fortune told by strangely-garmented and ornamented gipsy women; wonderfully ornate, gilded and mystic-looking caravans serve as consulting rooms for these strange, wandering people. What there is of mumbo jumbo in these delineations is intermingled with more than a smattering of the art and science of cheiromancy.

Here strange tales of the past are revealed and revelation of the misty future are received by the often awed and

sometimes by the frankly sceptic with varying emotions. For weeks past these gipsy caravans have been travelling the roads from all parts of the country, making the pilgrimage to Epsom Downs for the Derby. They are a strange nomadic people and their history belongs to a distant past and is largely unknown.

Derby day is their great day, and, on the Downs that day, Egypt revives all her glories of the past.

We were fortunate in that the weather improved vastly, enabling me to get a number of good snapshots. The vast throng of people are ever so much more interesting than the actual races themselves. Some are engrossed in the problem of picking probable winners; others have a modest half-crown's worth on the popular fancy; others, again, merely stroll round seeing the sights and having a day out There is no lack of opportunity to back one's fancy. The bookmaker is there in his hundreds; he plies his business briskly, and on the blackboards he chalks his prices and the odds on the horses engaged. He not only writes, he talks, he chatters, he shouts. He sometimes uses a megaphone. He keeps his clerks busily engaged balancing his book, and entering the bets. Here you find Solloway in all his glory: George Wotton will accommodate you from 2/6 upwards; Kennedy, Harry Bradford, Griffin, Taff Brighton keep up a continual news report of the state of the odds; you cannot help having a modest flutter, the thing is so infectious it gets into your blood; you visualize yourself rolling home with pockets bulging with filthy lucre. But, alas, the bookie knows his business and anything you win is hardly earned or else sheer luck. Everybody knew, that unless Barhram fell down he must win, and it was even so, the horse not falling down, but winning from Tattenham Corner with ridiculous ease, the rest nowhere. This horse has never yet been beaten,

and it looks as if he will retire to the stud with never a loss. He is a beautiful thoroughbred, but so were all the others. What makes him a champion is probably a stout heart and the will to win.

We had a very good view of the race, being parked alongside the rails, about 100 yards from the finishing post. Passing our "chara," Barhram had a clear lead of six lengths, and was strolling home.

One of the strange sights seen here is the "Tick-Tack" men. These fellows from the ring inside the course perched on elevated platforms, or on top of buses, watch, through binoculars, pals on the grandstand near the totalisator who semaphore with their arms and white-gloved hands the state of the "tote." After one has a go, the other corresponding pal drops his glasses and vigorously semaphores back the state of his business. This is one of the most intriguing sights I saw at the Derby, and it seemed quite a finished performance.

We strolled everywhere, among the tents and the vast throng; we even met our Blenheim friends and their wives, who were, like us, doing it all and "giving it a go" once at least.

Like all good things, everything comes to an end, and Derby Day finished with our homeward journey towards London. Down the narrow leafy lanes, three abreast, we wended our way, cautiously, circumspectly, homewards. A great and wonderful experience, and something to add to our gradually increasing store of knowledge.

LONDON.

What do I think of London?

Well, how do you expect that question answered? I fear to approach that answer. London affects one in a multitude of diverse ways. Your answer depends on what particular appeal London is making to you at the moment. For London has many faces, many features, and you see only one at a

time, and the impression ultimately conveyed to one is so kaleidoscopic that it beggars description. Sometimes London frightens me. This city is an aggregation of all the cities I have ever seen hitherto, and then some. Eight million souls live, move about, and have their being within its confines. The immensity of it all, the people, their places of abode, their huge offices and workshops, their houses of amusement, their churches, their hospitals, their transport, their parks, their shops, their huge network of flats to be seen in every quarter of the city, their hotels, in whose labyrinths one may walk for miles, all this, to the colonial-born person is simply staggering, and I confess I am staggered at the vastness of it, with its seething mass of peoples and their comings and goings; the hale and hearty, the lame, the halt and the blind.

Have you ever watched a beehive in the summer-time when the bees are working? This London is a beehive, vast beyond the ordinary man's comprehension. Just stand in the vicinity of, say, Oxford Circus, but anywhere will do as well—it is all filled with human bees—and watch the crowds, here they go, there they go, some afoot, some a-wheel, some in buses, lumbering noisily hither and thither, some in taxis, some in their own chromium shining chariots. In and out of shop doors, in and out of hotels, in and out of picture palaces—see the busy throngs coming and going in a never-ending stream.

Where are they going, what are they so busily engaged in doing and why do they, day in and day out, perform this ceaseless scurrying to and fro?

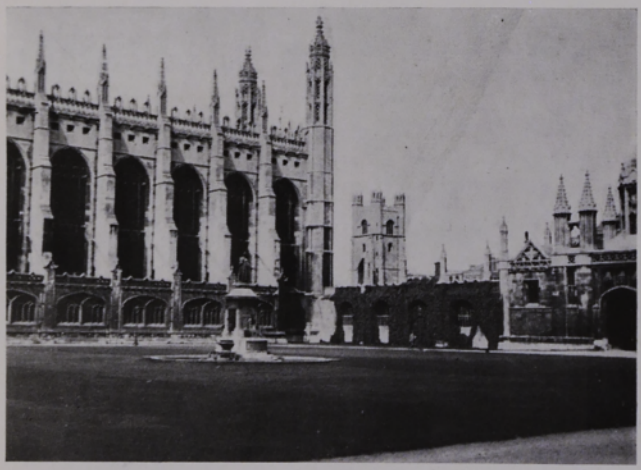
We know what the busy bee is doing with his comings and goings with the hive as his objective. We know that he is laying by his winter store, that he is providing for to-morrow. And after all, that is what this vast concourse of humans are about. They are providing for to-morrow. If we but knew each individual story, and could understand the

drive, the joys, the sorrows, that lie behind each particular endeavour; what poignant feelings would be stirred! The human interest, how it would touch us. Perhaps it is better for us not to know, but London, with its teeming millions, knows well the joy and laughter of glad young life, with its hopes, ambitions and successful achievement, and it knows the other side also, the sordidness of life, the greed, the cruelty, the sorrow of life coming to its close amid suffering, disease and poverty.

Yes, London sometimes appals me. And yet seen on a delightful summer's day London can be very beautiful. Even in such busy streets as Oxford Street, Piccadilly, Regent and Bond Streets or down the Strand. Yes, anywhere you choose to go, you can find beauty, you can see the beauty of carefully planned squares and streets, the beauty of architecture, and there are some magnificent buildings, both ancient and modern, in London. There is the beauty of the river and its bridges. There is the beauty of trees, shrubs and flowers in the parks and gardens. There is beauty everywhere if you are in the mood to see it. That is the wonder of London. Whatever your mood may be—she can provide for it at a moment's notice. No famed city of ancient days, no magic lamp of the East, could bring enchantments to compare with this marvellous modern city. She is both old and young. She is matron and maid. She can fill your heart with love and laughter or she can bring you to tears.

But I shall never know London. I have seen her sacred temples and stood in awe at what they contained. I have admired their beauty and have envisaged the loving hands which worked so earnestly long years ago to make them the lovely pieces of work they are. To visit St. Paul's and the Abbey at Westminster is to have your spiritual being purged and made clean again. That is, if you will allow the voice of these places to speak to you. From the dawn of England their voices speak to you and you come away to find that in some way you have changed—you have learned some-

Old Oak
Staircase,
The George Inn,
Cranbrook.



St. John's Chapel Quadrangle, Cambridge University.

thing, you have found a new outlook and London, England and the English mean more to you than you had ever dreamed before.

London, to the sojourner of a few weeks, impresses in different ways. To some I suppose the theatres appeal. You can go to a different show every night for weeks on end. Some do this. Others can inform you of all the road houses within so many miles of London, others again do a round of cabarets. Some go to the "dogs" at White City or Wembley and have a flutter with the ubiquitous "bookie," others glue their noses in musty tomes, or Egyptian mummies in the British Museum, others again visit the art galleries. I confess I love a beautiful picture myself. Some go to Lords or the Oval and watch the cricket, some play or watch polo matches at Ranelagh. And so it whirls round. London provides something for everybody. The women "do" the shops from morning till night—go into any of the huge emporiums in Oxford Street and see what I mean.

London has shown me a few of her many faces and yet I know I do not understand her. I never will.

Sometimes she frightens me with her noise, her appalling size, her never ceasing work and energy. After a day spent in the city she seems to get on your nerves, she tires you out, she is never still. You feel you want to get away from it all and yet—London calls you back. Something, an indescribable something pulls you back and you come.

To me it seems it must be, because London is not only the heart of England, but is, to the British person, no matter where in the world his interests lie, the very heart of the Empire. We learn this at our Mother's knee, and to every loyal son, some day or other the urge speaks with insistent voice and we come "Home."

CHAPTER V.

WE SET OUT AND GO WEST.

ONE cannot hope to go into great detail on this trip for obvious reasons, but if you care to take a map and a red pencil you can trace our journey fairly accurately. Well then—left London after lunch on Thursday, June 6th, after spending all Wednesday at the Derby. This day we have described already, and we seem to have suffered no ill effects from our day on the Downs.

We passed along the Thames Valley, which is very beautiful, getting glimpses of the Thames at various spots; Shepherd's Bush—Cheswick—Great North Road to Brentford — Hatton — Staines — Egham — Runnymede (Magna Charta) 1215—Windsor (Castle)—Bray (Vicar of Bray)—Maidenhead—Marlow—Medenham—Henley - on - Thames—Shiplake—Reading —Pangbourne — Streatly —Steventon — Abingdon—Oxford. We did 70 miles that afternoon, arrived at Oxford 6 p.m., and stayed the night there—a bad day, raining and blowing most of the day, but most wonderful woodland and park scenery, with glimpses of the river everywhere.

Left Oxford about 10.30 a.m.; still raining in heavy showers—not just rain, but storms. Follow the route to Bath and Bristol on your map; Eynsham—Northleach—

Andoversford — Cheltenham — Gloucester — Stroud — Nailsworth—Dunkirk—Old Sodbury—Cold Aston—Bath.

We stayed at Bath, and saw all over the old Roman Baths, and had a drink of soapy warm water in the Grand Pump room where Beau Nash had a haunt. I know now what is meant by the saying that "he drinks his 'bath' water," It is all very wonderful to realise that one is actually standing where Roman soldiers and their families regularly foregathered for their ablutions wayback in the dawn of early Christendom. The whole large bath is floored with leaden sheets just as it was when the Romans left it. From Bath to Bristol: we stayed our second night at "The Hydro," College Green, Bristol, where they have a complete Turkish and vapour bath installation; sinusoidal baths; galvanic; diathermy; ultra-violet; radiant heat; vibratory massage; large swimming pool and cubicles to take 60 men at one time. Here they have two resident physicians and attendants. The floor above is similarly fitted for females. All sorts of complaints are treated here—imaginary and otherwise. I suspect that the imaginary ones pay the best.

Next day, weather much improved; settled down nicely for Whitsun holidays. Off for Taunton.

We came down through the famous Cheddar Gorge—having lunch in the Gorge itself, and took photos. Stayed awhile in Cheddar; bought a cheese and moved on; going through Wells Cathedral, and seeing all we could see there; then stopped over at Glastonbury, and saw what Henry VIII. did to the Monastery. Next, on to Taunton (the scene of Judge Jeffrey's bloody assizes after Monmouth's rebellion), where we are staying over the Sunday in the hope that T.M. can drag himself away from London to join us here. Saw here a wonderful old Alms-house endowed over 300 years ago.

We arrived at Taunton about 5.30 p.m. Saturday, and will depart Monday for our tour round the coasts of Devon and Cornwall, making first for Minehead

The car is running splendidly, and so far behaving itself. She is a large bus with a long bonnet (eight cylinders in line), but she steers very easily. Some roads are extremely narrow in the main towns, and as they allow cars to draw up facing any old way, it sometimes is almost impossible to get through the traffic. You drive literally to inches or to fractions of inches. I have had wing indicators put on so that I can see whether I have room to squeeze through or not. In some ways they are very particular about traffic rules, but their cutting in and across your bows gives me the horrors. Bicyclists think nothing of sauntering right in front of you with no warning at all. Petrol is cheap, 1/4 a gallon. You should see them look at me when I ask for benzine.

The weather to-day is much better, and probably we are going to get some summer at last. June 9th to-day, and nobody, so far, is wearing summer garments.

"Trooping the Colour" on the King's birthday, June 3rd, was perhaps the most impressive sight I have ever witnessed. The whole large square in front of the Horse Guards—The Parade—was lined and filled with various regiments of Guards; four bands, and the Household Mounted Band. Each band of the regiments comprises about 80 to 100 men. That day one saw the majesty and pomp which surrounds the beating heart of loyal Britain.

We also saw that day, our Sovereign Lord, the King, a man like ourselves, subject to all the frailties and ills of human flesh, whose stern sense of duty and responsibility to his people took him from a sick bed, so that the vast concourse of his subjects should not suffer disappointment. A great King, and every inch of him a gentleman. No wonder they love him.

LYME REGIS—THE GLORIOUS WEST.

Last Sunday I wrote to you from Taunton, and since then we have been on our travels round Somerset, Devon

and Cornwall and back again into Devon, and have arrived at the above address in Dorset, on the South Coast. This is a beautiful little place in a steep hillside, with a most wonderful outlook over the sea and coast. Our bedroom window looks right out over the Channel. I will just mention a few of the places we have passed through and will post you a map showing our peregrinations so far; Dunster, Minehead, Porlock (a most wonderful steep hill with bends—far worse than the Kilmog or Paekakariki for grade—1 in 6, and in places 1 in 4), Lynton, Ilfracombe, Barnstaple (where we stayed the night and T.M. picked us up), Bideford, Clovelly, Bude, Boscastle, Tintagel, Wadebridge, Newquay, Perranporth (where we put up for the night), then on to Portreath, Hayle, St. Ives, Zennor, St. Just, Lands End, Penzance, Helston, Lizard, where we put up for another night. From there to Gweek, Falmouth, Truro, St. Anstell, Lostwithiel, Liskeard, down to Tor Point, where we were ferried over to Devonport and arrived at Plymouth, where we stopped over Thursday and Friday nights, having a good look round all the historic places, including a game on Drake's Bowling Green on the Hoe. We visited Dartmoor—a bleak, misty moor, where the great prison is. We did not visit Bodmin; we were travelling all round it, but as B was no longer there, we had no interest in it.

From Plymouth, on Saturday (rained all day), we passed through Ivybridge, Totnes to Paignton (missing out the coast line, including Salcombe, Kingsbridge, Dartmouth). At Paignton we called and had morning tea with some old Blenheim residents, one of whom P.L., used to be our maid, thirteen years ago.

Torbay was filled with warships, fourteen of them, including the Rodney and the Furious—a great sight. Torquay, Newton Abbott, Teignmouth, up to Exeter, thence to Lyme Regis, where Monmouth landed in 1685. The whole of this trip is rich in districts of great historic interest, especially

of the time of Monmouth's rebellion. Further West, in Cornwall, the whole place is tinctured with stories of King Arthur and Alfred the Great.

Quite a wonderfully instructive trip, and so very different from anything ever seen before. I simply cannot describe the English country-side in the South here—Rural England. I don't suppose there is anything like it elsewhere in the world. Such delicate soft green, such wonderful fairy avenues—the twisty roads and lanes—just possible to pass a car in—high stone walls on either side, often covered with grass and wildflowers—up and down, never straight for fifty yards—a drive through a country which could support cattle and sheep by the million, and it all seems to be unused —all parks and beauty and no use made of it. In all our journey so far we have not seen enough cattle and sheep to stock one good run in New Zealand.

And the rain!—it raineth every day. We have had about four days without rain in our five weeks here.

The car is running beautifully and all are well. Some of the towns and villages would make you grey-headed. I think that so far Penzance was the worst. It is the greatest test of driving I know to come down our trip from London. You drive through villages and pass cars with a margin of inches—not feet—and sometimes it is not inches—it's a squeeze through. You turn two corners of 45 degrees, about as wide as our motor drive, and find yourself facing about three cars in line coming down the hill about 1 in 6, or 1 in 8 grade, and when you start to reverse out, you find about half-a-dozen more cars have come up behind you. Eventually, by the exercise of patience and great courtesy you get untangled.

The British policeman is a gentleman. I can say no less and I need say no more. He is a very present help in time of trouble, and he knows his job. We are enjoying every minute of this, and the hotels we have stopped at are A1.

A.C. has gone out for a walk after dinner, 9 p.m. bright daylight, and the sun has not yet set, so I am writing a further screed just as the spirit moves me.

All this country might be described as one huge boarding establishment. It is really amazing as one passes through the villages and towns to see the placards outside the houses. Sometimes the whole street of a hamlet from one end to the other on both sides exhibits signs advising "Bed and Breakfast," "Cream Tea," "Bed, Breakfast, Garage." Everybody at this season is out to make a bit from the travelling public, and to us it is perfectly ludicrous. Apparently the settled population of England is living on the hiker, cyclist, motorist and foreign tourist. Small stores and shops literally infest these tourist resorts selling all kinds of souvenirs, knick knacks, pottery stuff, Cornish pebbles, and a good deal of it is trash. Postcards and photos of everywhere are on sale, and as you can get twelve decent snaps for one shilling, it is much cheaper, easier and more satisfactory than taking your own. I only take snaps of things I can't get elsewhere.

But there is a great charm about this England. She is slow, very much in a groove, and she lacks the eager bustle of the Dominions I have seen, but withal, she is very solid in her slowness, and appears to me very much what I would expect and would desire in a father and a mother. She gives one the impression of reliability, of strength—perhaps latent, but certainly to be brought into evidence if necessity arises. Above all, she seems to represent goodness and rightness. One cannot but be touched by the deep inward religious conviction of the people. In a land so richly dotted over with God's houses, where so much beauty and grandeur have been carried on since almost the dawn of Christianity, where the people have still the time to pause and think of their land, not only as a great and goodly heritage, but also as a gift from God, one begins to realise with awe the awakening in oneself of a new outlook, the outlook of these older people who have a past and a tradition that is unfortunately denied

to us who reside in the younger and newer countries. The people of England have their roots deep in the soil of this Motherland. They have built up a history which is to-day coursing through their bodies as part of their life blood. I am not so sure that hustle, speed, efficiency first and last and all the time is the correct outlook on life. Remember the fable of the hare and the tortoise. I would not have us quite so lethargic, but to hasten slowly—*festina lente*—is perhaps a good motto to take these days.

It seems to me to-day that we in New Zealand live too quickly. We tear here and there—we must fly to Wellington —boat too slow—we must get things done—all is bustle and rush. We strive to outdo—to outstrip—and few of us devote any part of the day to quiet meditation and a survey of our daily doings. The Englishman, on the other hand, being, as I said, part of the earth, moves more slowly. He is content and happy to make his day a more pleasant interlude—he does not hurry—he realises that he has to-morrow and the next day—that England has been here a long time and that his lines have fallen in pleasant places, and moreover, she was here 2000 years ago, and he only needs to look around to see evidences everywhere of this fact—and so he lives a good deal in his yesterdays, and doesn't bother much about to-day, but believes that whatever may befall, a great and glorious future is around the corner. He has faith in his past, faith in his present, and an abiding trust that his God of 2000 years will see him through all the to-morrows.

Cuckoos all day long here. Just seen bats flying outside our window, and saw a Robin Redbreast on the lawn here to-day.

THE SOUTH COAST.

Last Sunday I wrote from Lyme Regis, on the South Coast, and now we were back in London, having been away sixteen days altogether. I will enclose a map tracing our

further journeyings. We left Lyme Regis on Monday morning, the weather continuing very showery, but this did not interfere with our comfort.

We went through Bridport, and Dorchester (where there is a very old church), had morning tea there, and set out through Bere Regis for Bournemouth; this is one of the large blatant English watering-places, full of hotels and pavilions, multitudes of people, and everybody on the look-out for your money, either by way of sale and purchase or in tips. On to Boscombe, through Christchurch to Lymington, from which I made inland to run through the New Forest, passing through Brockenhurst, Lyndhurst, Fordingbridge, Codnam, to Salisbury.

The roads through the New Forest are simply bowers of beauty. The villages are most interesting, and are set in most wonderful surroundings. The photos of some of these spots will give you some idea. The drive through is down roads with green trees meeting overhead; a real fairy pathway, beautiful beyond description.

At Salisbury we "did" the Cathedral—old, venerable; a link with Britain's earliest days—then we passed on to Wilton and Amesbury: a long day's run, 114 miles. We stayed at "The George Hotel". (I enclose a few notes of this place and some photos of the wonderful old rooms; there are two views of different ends of the lounge. You can see how the beams are rudely cut and one, the main cross-piece, shows where it is spliced and an iron band clamped round. The bedroom is quite unique).

This inn dates very far back: it was originally the Pilgrim's hostelry attached to Amesbury Abbey, which was founded Circa 900 A.D. Formerly known by the name "St. George and the Dragon," it is to be found in Crown records in 1541, 1642, and 1699. Dickens mentions this inn in "Martin Chuzzlewit" under the name of the "Blue Dragon," and it was in those days an old coaching house on the route of the "Quicksilver" London to Exeter mail.

By the way, I forgot to give you two most interesting inscriptions which I found on stone slabs on the floor of St. Andrew's Church in Plymouth. This building dates back five or six hundred years, and abounds in old tablets and memorials. These, which are of great historic interest, lie side by side. Here they are:

"SIR MARTIN FROBISHER, BEINGE WOUNDED AT THE FORT BUILTE AGAINSTE BREST BY THE SPANYERDES, DECEASED AT PLYMOUTH THE 22ND NOVEMBER, 1594. WHOSE ENTRALLS WERE HEERE ENTERRED, BUT HIS CORPES WERE CARRIED HOME TO BE BURIED IN LONDON, 1594."

"ADMIRAL ROBERT BLAKE, DIED 17 AUGUST, 1637. BLAKE GROWN SICKLY, RETURNS HOME, AND IN SIGHT OF THIS PORT DYETH, WAS EMBALMED, HIS BOWELS BURIED HERE BY THE MAYOR'S SEAT DORE, HIS CORPS AT WESTMINISTER AMONG YE KINGS."

All over Britain, England's heroes lie at rest in hallowed ground.

STONEHENGE, ETC.

Next morn we drove to Stonehenge: as I am enclosing photos and a descriptive booklet, I need say no more here except that it passes our comprehension how these stones were carried, some for 140 miles, others for 20, and how they were set up. Some weigh 36 tons.

Then we drove over to Sling Camp, where our boys were trained on Salisbury Plains during the war, and where they cut in the chalk a large kiwi, on the hill above the camp; it is looked after well, and is as clear-cut as ever.

Next day we returned to Salisbury, where we went over the Castle, Cathedral ruins and the city of Old Sarum, alas, now only a heap of stones and a memory. Ten years ago nothing was uncovered of this; it was just a grassy mound. Antiquaries have since uncovered and found much of interest. The moats, outer and inner, are in their original state as laid down before the Romans left Britain; in fact, these earthworks are supposed to be, in part, early British. It was an important Roman post, and one can see radiating from the fortress no less than five Roman roads. Old Sarum city was situated between the outer and inner moats.

From there, on to Stockbridge, Winchester, where we went over the Cathedral; then on to Southampton, where we saw the "Aquitania." (We cut out Portsmouth, as I have absolutely no time for these accumulations of bricks and ferro-concrete, with all the noise, bustle, confusion, and traffic; I'm for the wide, open spaces). So through Fareham, Chichester, where we stayed the night (doing 97 miles) at the "Dolphin and Anchor."

Jim Daggar, of Marlborough College, was sleeping that night not 100 yards away from us, a master here at their College.

I never knew this till I got back to London and dined with his uncle, an old Dunedin acquaintance, at Frederick Moore's home. F.M. is a professor at the Royal Academy of Music. I had lunch also one day with him at Pagani's in Great Portland Street.

Next day, through Arundel, Worthing, Hove, Brighton, where we left the coast, and made inland for Lewes; Tonbridge Wells; Tonbridge down to Cranbrook, a delightful little English country village set among spinneys and amid rural England at her best. Here we found another old English inn, "The George." This was originally a Cloth Hall, and the whole district was peopled by Flemings, who came over for certain clay which they used for scouring wool. It was the centre at that time of the woollen industry.

Queen Elizabeth met the merchant princes, as they were then called, and slept in one of the rooms here, at the time she granted the charter to the Cranbrook School.

This hotel has, what is supposed to be one of the finest old English oak staircases in the country.

From Cranbrook through Tenterden; Appledore down to Rye, across the snout of Dungeness to New Romney; Dymchurch. (Read Russell Thorndyke's "Dr. Syn and Dr. Syn Returns"). Here, the sea-wall which extends for miles prevents the sea from invading the Romney Marshes, as at high tide the sea is much higher than the land inside. We

drove along the top of the wall at hightide, and saw this phenomenon for ourselves. These districts round here were famed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for smuggling; it still goes on, I understand. Here one finds a funny little railway running up and down the coast.

By the way, at Chichester, to digress, we walked round the old Roman wall which is still in parts in wonderful preservation.

On to Hythe, a school of musketry along the sea-front and sea-wall, where for many miles these strange rounded structures or forts called Martello Towers, are situated every 200 yards—relics of the threatened invasion of Napoleon Buonaparte. Then, on to Folkestone, and over the steep hill down to Dover.

Going up this hill about three p.m. we ran into an absolute blanket of fog—a great deal of traffic, and you could not safely see beyond your car bonnet. All drivers had lights on, and you could see the lights coming through the fog long before you could see the object carrying them. This fog in the Channel had very serious consequences, and I can tell you I would not have liked to have been at sea; it was bad enough on land that day.

From Dover, we turned inland and made straight for Canterbury, where, after a wet day's driving, we put up for the night at a jolly nice inn, "The Abbots Barton," situated in very pleasing grounds and garden.

It evidently was one time some private residence, which has been converted into an inn. I took a snap of the house and grounds. Next day (Friday) we were due back in London, so after going over the Cathedral—beautiful stained glass windows here; Black Prince buried here; we set out on our last leg for home and London, on a beautiful day, June 21st. We had lunch at a lovely spot—once part of the demesne of the Earl Darnley. You drop down off the main road about 200 yards, and open up a charming little lake

with a restaurant built out over it in a fine setting, amid trees, shrubs and lovely bushes of rhododendrons all out in flower, surrounding two exquisite sheets of rippling water with diving platforms, boats, punts. You sit right out over the water, and feed the pike, carp, etc., with bread and butter at threepence a piece, butter extra. The place is called "Laughing Water," and lies just beyond Rochester and Chatham, on the London road.

From here it was a good run in till we got to Westminster Bridge, where the traffic bothered me a lot, as I did not know where I was or where I was going. I was trying to make up to Hyde Park Corner, but as I had never been there before (on that road) I had continually to stop and be redirected. However, 'all's well that ends well," and I got them home to Conway Court all safe and sound, with never a mark on the car; and after a good bath and change, we settled down for our next stunt on Saturday night, June 22nd—the Aldershot Tattoo—having done close on 1,200 miles.

WE GO TO ALDERSHOT.

You will see I am writing from a new hostlery, Park Chambers, as our man had people coming from the West Indies, and we had to park here for a week prior to going on to Bonnie Scotland. Last night, Saturday, a party left Conway Court Hotel at 5.30 p.m., after a fish tea, in six cars, for Aldershot.

There were thirty in our party from Captain Humphrey's hotel, and we proceeded as far as possible in a body, keeping together, if we could, all the way to the Tattoo. The whole world seemed to be going there. Each car bears a large distinguishing sign on its radiator, and all the way your route is sign-posted, and at all intersections for forty miles, police, traffic cops, A.A. men, and R.A.C. men semaphore you on, or direct you. All kinds of cars; motor-cycles; vans; buses; huge things like houses on wheels; cyclists; tandem-cyclists are very common here, and you should see

the girls stripped down to it for a bike ride; they race along the bitumen as if they were on a race track. Anyhow, we got there (we had a chauffeur for the night) about 7.30, and waited in our car park, had "a spot" and some sandwiches, sausage rolls; the women all had champagne, and A.C. needed it. Doing "fifty" down the Great West Road sort of upsets A.C.

You see, with a car six inches away on your left doing "fifty" also; one eight feet in front also doing "fifty;" one or two just behind doing "fifty" and wanting to do "fifty-three," and one passing you on the driver's side about three inches away doing "sixty-five" and hooting like hell for you to keep over and let him through, is a bit exciting, and A.C. needs a reviver, both before and after. Coming home after one a.m. we filled her up three good glasses of Moet and Chandon, and she told me she had a nice run home, and quite enjoyed it. I believe she did; but if A.C. has to have a quart of champagne every time I go out on the Great West Road this trip is going to require more greasy cross-breds or another penny per pound. I might try A.C. out on beer, but she says beer doesn't agree with her—all nonsense!

The Tattoo beggars description; about 100,000 people sit round in a huge amphitheatre facing the scene of action; there are 5,000 performers and bands in the arena. In front of you is a huge level green sward as big as three Lancaster Parks, with a background of trees, and a representation of the Tower of London and an English village on both sides of it. Away to the left, right back among more trees, is a replica of Windsor Castle. The stage is set; the massed bands alone total 1,500 men. We were entertained by physical drill, evolutions of cavalry, mimic warfare (all branches of arms are used), galloping gun teams, infantry, machine-guns, tanks (the smoke and the gun-fire is tremendous), ambulances, all kinds of tableau representing Old England, fireworks, etc. It was all over at midnight. Then, more supper, thoughtfully provided by our host and hostess, and

we got away about 1.30 a.m. from the car parks, and arrived home about 3.30 and went to bed. We didn't rise till 10.30; had tea and toast. It was a great night, and it was as warm as possible—too hot, not a breath of wind, not a cloud in the sky.

The beauty of it all is that there is no dust on these roads. On our roads in New Zealand this stunt of fifty miles per hour would be impossible; you wouldn't be able to see.

Since arriving in England we have participated in putting up three new records:

(1) The coldest May in 64 years.

(2) The wettest June since 1874.

(3) The hottest night for 57 years.

Minimum night temperature at Kew 64 deg. To-day, at 3 p.m., temp. 84 deg. Any further records I will duly note. We don't really know what to expect next.

We are going to Lords on Saturday to see the second test, and are off to Scotland via the East Coast on Sunday morning. We have just been through a heat wave, and we dripped; I had no idea it could be so dreadful here. It isn't the great heat (only 85 deg.) but the humidity.

After Aldershot we spent the remainder of the week quietly in London, visiting the many places of interest, seeing the shops, and trying to get an idea of what London is; but even years would fail to give one a correct knowledge of even a small section of London.

Kew Gardens, some miles out (through Richmond) is a place no one should ever fail to visit, and we spent one beautiful day exploring the wonderful leafy walks and bosky dells. One can walk here for hours; there are more than three hundred acres to wander over; rockeries, flowerbeds, palm-houses, trees, shrubs of every description, a Chinese pagoda, and a wonderful Douglas fir flagpole are only some of the sights to be seen.

At one time these gardens were attached to the Kew Palace, a residence of George III. and his Queen.

On our way North we passed through many old and interesting towns, but as a complete description of all we have seen would fill many books if I were to attempt it, I fear that much of great historic interest must be left for you to discover for yourself some day. If you care you could not do better than take up Morton, and go with him through England.

Cambridge is a place no one can afford to miss; the various University Colleges, chapels and quadrangles can only be visited and seen with a feeling that you stand with the great and glorious past in the history of learning in Great Britain.

All the way North one realises the vicissitudes and stormy periods through which all this country has passed. Here also one finds such wonders of man's skill in the great cathedrals of Ely, Peterborough, Lincoln, York, Ripon, Durham. Each of these edifices would take a book to itself. Boston (from which town Boston in America takes its name) possesses a very old church, the curious steeple of which is called "Boston Stump," and the stairway to the top comprises 365 steps. In the church itself there are 52 windows. This steeple is a prominent landmark for miles distant.

We seem to have been into all the old cathedrals and churches wherever we have been. The history of England is to be found within their walls, and they certainly form a sacred link with past pomps and glories, and also with our illustrious kings, queens, prelates, soldiers, sailors, and public men.

LINCOLN CATHEDRAL.

Of all the cathedrals of England, I think that of Lincoln is the most impressive. Set as it is, on the top of a hill, it is a glorious piece of architecture, and is very finely conceived; it is perhaps the finest piece of Gothic work to be found anywhere.

Castle Grounds Inside Wall, Lincoln Old Norman Tower on Wall.

Fountains Abbey, Yorkshire.

An old Roman stronghold, Lincoln abounds in things of interest, and a stroll round the castle grounds inside the wall, with its grand old Norman tower, is well worth while.

An ancient Roman Gateway in the Roman wall is still standing for everybody to photograph. This, the North Gate, was built 45 years B.C.

Two beauty spots lie not far from Ripon, and provide a most restful day's outing; one is the famed Fountain's Abbey and Hall; the other, Rievaulx Abbey. As usual, the setting of these old monasteries is perfectly beautiful; trust these old monks to seek out a haven of rest and perfection. I shall not easily forget Fountain's, and the picture which opens out to one as the narrow rock-girt valley is entered. Probably to-day, as a tumbled mass of ruined arches, pillars, and masonry it may look more beautiful than in its heyday, but one can easily imagine the magnificient monastery and church nestling in the silent hills, surrounded by its forests of oaks, yews, and elms, and watered by a winding, babbling stream; once a busy hive of work; now all is silent but not, fortunately, neglected. The ancient abbeys and castles are now cared for by the State, and further destruction, either by vandal or by time, is now prevented. The Abbey was dissolved in 1539, and in 1610 one, Stephen Proctor obtained permission, and from the Abbey buildings he selected what dressed stone he required, and built himself, nearby in the grounds, a stately home, now known as Fountains Hall. This beautiful building as time passed fell into disrepair, but in 1930 the whole place, inside and out, was restored by Mr. Clare Vyner at a cost of £35,000. It was our privilege to be shown over this Hall. Some priceless relics, tapestry and oak are to be seen here, and so far as possible the restoration keeps to the original design and furnishings. The sanitary arrangements have been brought up to date, and the electric light installed. The gentleman who acted as cicerone had held rank as major during the later war, and had been attached to a New Zealand regiment as liason

officer. He was favourably impressed with, and had nothing but the highest praise for our New Zealand lads. Stupidly, through trusting to my memory, I am grieved to say I have quite forgotten his name.

The route we followed from Bawtry (which has a close association, as Boston has, with the Pilgrim Fathers) through Doncaster, Pontefract, Tadcaster, to York is full of interest all the way. As the Duke of York said, "The history of York is the history of England." Here one not only finds a most beautiful cathedral—York Minster with a wealth of story between its walls, but Roman ruins and associations are to be met everywhere. York was a walled city; the ancient Eboracum; it was situated too near those predatory Scots to be left unprotected, and a goodly part of the old walls and gates are still standing. When you walk down a street called "The Shambles" you are passing through what is probably the oldest known street in England. Overhead, the houses all but shut out the sun, and neighbours across the street could shake hands through their bedroom windows. Walking in the centre of the cobbled street one may, with outstretched arms, touch passers-by on the narrow pavements. There are no less than six butcher's shops in this small street. The Petergate; the Stonegate are well worth a walk through, and the various bars or gates are links with a fairly distant past.

Harrogate, as you know, is one of the best-known spas in England, and the whole town seems to exist by the virtue of the afflicted people who come, to be doctored, washed outside and inside, and otherwise humoured. These people, many of whom are the rankest neurasthenics, are a most valuable asset.

Knaresborough, a few miles from Harrogate, remains in my memory as a small town prettily situated on a romantic-looking river called the Nidd.

It was in a cave on the banks of the Nidd that Eugene Aram (so widely known through the dramatic poem of

Hood's, beloved by the late Sir Henry Irving), and his fellow murderer Housmann, hid the body of Daniel Clark, where it was subsequently discovered, and led to his arrest, trial, and sentence years afterwards. Perhaps Knaresborough is better known through Mother Shipton, the seeress, who lived here some hundreds of years ago.

From Ripon, on through Thirsk and Helmsley, out to the coast and Scarborough; this seaside resort was singled out by the German Fleet for a short bombardment during the late war. There is a rather splendid marine drive and an esplanade here, and during the summer months the town is very full.

Whitby is beautifully situated on high promontories right on the coast; there are really two towns separated by the estuary of the river Esk, and from either side on the cliffs overlooking the harbour there is a magnificent outlook. On the southern bank, with a commanding view, are the ruins of Whitby Abbey. Some inartistic person has erected close alongside a dreadful series of corrugated iron sheds, the effect being enough to give one a mental pain; it is hard to understand how this act of vandalism was allowed.

To New Zealanders, Whitby is notable as being the town in which, as a boy, Captain James Cook worked in a draper's shop. He ran away to sea, and found a career which brought him fame and honours. An imposing statue stands on the North Cliff, looking out to sea, commemorating his name. Whitby is the place where a black, coal-like substance is found, called Whitby jet; a brisk trade among tourists is done by artisans who carve, cut and polish this material into articles of jewellery.

Inland once more, through great industrial centres, Stockton-on-Tees being the chief till we reached Durham, and its beautifully situated cathedral, high up on a rocky prominence, above the river. Here lies, after a century of weary wandering, the body of St. Cuthbert, Bishop of Lindis-

farne. It was in this town I found by way down the steepest street I have ever driven a car; they warned me about it, but considered that if my brakes held I would be all right. Third gear is a wonderful saving of brake bands; some people seem to forget this.

Newcastle-on-Tyne was celebrating the Royal Show, and one couldn't find a vacant bed for miles around, and so we pushed on to Ponteland and Kirkley Hall, sleeping that night at Otterburn Hall, near the scene of Sir William Percy's famous battle.

We are now just on the border line between Scotland and England, and will go across this morning. Yesterday, we came from Whitby, out on the coast, and travelled up through Durham—Newcastle. I will post you a map of our itinerary, so that you will be able to follow. At Ponteland we stopped over at Kirkley Hall, the residence of Lord Kirkley, my father's cousin, who was Sir William Joseph Noble. He was most kind, and has asked us back to stay before we leave for New Zealand. He has a lovely place here, and has only one daughter alive, the other one is dead, and his only son was killed at the war. He has also lost his wife. He rang for whisky; he is not a prohibitionist, but quite tolerant, and when he found out from our companions that it was the anniversary of our wedding he insisted on turning on champagne.

While there he had just unpacked a large oil-painting of my great-grandfather, and his grandfather, Robert Noble, the founder of the family of the Nobles. I think he was born in 1817. Lord Kirkley was raised to the peerage through services rendered in South Africa at reparation work after the late war.

The strange thing to-day is this; we arrived on this road by the merest chance, and are staying at the pub at Otterburn through the suggestion of Lord Kirkley. Continuing this road, the first town in Scotland I strike is

Jedburgh, where my grandfather Adams was born; that's a strange coincidence, isn't it? You would almost think I had worked it so.

We have seen some wonderfully fertile country through Cambridgeshire—Lincolnshire; in fact, we have never in New Zealand seen anything to approach the cropping and potato fields. The farming in these parts is a lesson, and the whole country at this season is one huge delight; what it is in winter may be another story.

There is going on in England a wonderful building revival. In every town and village, and in places just outside the cities huge streets of new homes are going up; it seems to me it is being overdone, but there are, without exaggeration, outside the town areas, literally miles of streets of new buildings; in fact, there are in places, whole villages of newly-planned up-to-date dwellings. One town, Welwyn, the garden city, is entirely new. It is impossible for me, in letter writing, to keep pace with the places and districts I pass through, or even what I have seen and remembered. It would take weeks of writing and would fill a book. Everything to us is so new, although so old, and our days are occupied at gazing at fresh wonders and things of interest, and in trying to assimilate them and retain them in our memory. Must stop now, as we are off to Bonnie Scotland, and will cross the Border in about an hour's time.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SCOTTISH BORDER.

WE left Otterburn in the morning, after having spent a very interesting hour going over the Otterburn Woollen Mills and seeing the marvellous weaving of Scottish tartans, inspecting the materials manufactured there, and carrying off a few samples to astonish the natives in New Zealand.

The road over the Cheviot Hills is a first-class highway, but the hills themselves uninteresting, bare and heather-clad; the heather is not yet out, however. Most of this country is moorland, and a New Zealand farmer would probably describe the country as poor and rough.

At Carter Bar, where the boundary line is crossed, there are sign-posts erected and a white line across the road. On one side is painted the word "England" and on the other "Scotland."

We pulled up at Carter Bar for a spell, and looked long and wistfully at this small white line. Beyond this line lay the country of my fathers, and I may be pardoned if I admit that strange feelings took charge of me as I realized that I had at last "COME HOME." "Land of my fathers," as Scott called it; without exaggeration it speaks to you, and you pause to listen. What it said to me is my secret, but if ever

you stand on the dividing line at Carter's Bar, you also will hear the voice, and its message will travel on with you all your remaining days.

After coming over the border from Otterburn, the first town we entered was Jedburgh, my grandfather's birthplace. Very appropriate this, but not of deliberate intent. We have been in all the surrounding towns, and made our headquarters at the Douglas Hotel in Galashiels. From there we visited Hawick, Selkirk, Melrose, Abbotsford, Ettrick, Innerleithen, St. Roman's Well, St. Mary's Loch and Tibbie Shiels Inn. I have seen the St. Ronan's Bowling Club, a splendid green, but I have no time to play bowls.

I will not tell you of all the spots I have visited, but what has struck us all is the beautiful countryside. The trees and fields just now are wonderful; a golden summer. I think the country round about Melrose and Galashiels is perhaps the most fertile I have seen anywhere, and the Eildon Hills and surrounding valleys through which the Tweed wanders are:

"A thing of beauty, and a joy forever."

COUSIN TOM'S CABIN, HELENSBURGH.

I am writing this from A.C.'s cousin's house overlooking the Clyde, directly across from Greenock which lies five miles away. We left Galashiels last Sunday after seeing the Sir Walter Scott country, giving a morning to Abbotsford, and remained that night at Berwick-on-Tweed; this is a walled city, and the ramparts, grass-covered now, can be walked right round. These walls date from Elizabeth's time: quite so!

Leaving here we skirted the coast through Eyemouth, Cockburnspath to a delightful little watering place right on the coast, Dunbar, with quite a wealth of interest of historic import.

Then on to Tantallon Castle in which ruins we spent a good part of the morning finding the old stories of the guide quite entertaining. The Bass Rock stands off here a mile or two and the shipping from the Forth going south passes inshore of the island. Still keeping along the coast we drove through Berwick, Gullane with its wonderful golf links. Prestonpans the scene of a Scottish victory at the expense of the English in 1745, now a straggling village, and so through Musselburgh till we entered the environs of the gem of Scottish cities, Edinburgh.

And we called it another day well spent.

EDINBURGH.

To-night I have climbed up on the Braid hills, and I have seen a wonderful panorama. To the north lies the town itself, with that magnificent pile, the Castle, rising over all like a huge, grey battleship. Away beyond lie the Firth of Forth and the mountains of Fife in the fading light. The prominent Calton Hill, with its many historic monuments, stands out clearly, and thirty miles away, at the very mouth of the Forth, can be seen quite distinctly the Berwick Law, which I drove past only three days ago, while prominent in the middle distance stands that mass of granite rock, Salisbury Crag, with the historic Arthur's Seat just off to the right. Below me lies the city; a soft haze blends everything with a perfect harmony, and one realizes that so far as cities go this is as nearly the perfect city as man will ever make.

Away to my left beyond the Forth, which is about due west, lies Stirlingshire and the Ochil hills, bathed in the last rays of the setting sun, a soft glamorous golden land which seems in its misty farness to be enticing you to fresh delights. Behind me lie like a crescent, the green Pentland hills. Truly, this is a city of great delight.

It is futile for me to try to depict Prince's Street. All

I may say is that I agree with those who say that it is magnificent; the setting is so perfect; the castle and rock, the green sunken gardens, the magnificent buildings, the great breadth of street, the uninterrupted view from end to end with the Calton Hill monuments to set off the eastern end, all conspire to make this street something quite unique, and very probably not comparable with any other in the world.

It is when one strolls about these gardens and streets that one begins to realize that we owe something to these great and splendid men whose memory lives on in the hearts of the people, perpetuated in stone and brass. It gives you the feeling that as a Scot you could not let these people down. You feel you have a tradition to uphold, and that the proud name of Scotland is in your very own hands.

We had a pretty good look round Edinburgh, seeing all over the celebrated Castle, Holyrood House Palace, St. Giles Cathedral, and the Scottish National Gallery. We also put in an hour or so in the old Scottish House of Parliament, and the room above, which is set aside for the writers to the Signet; most interesting and historic of all. The Gardens here are splendidly laid out, and the City is certainly the finest I have ever seen.

Of all the wonders of Edinburgh none can compare in beauty and in silent reverence with the Scottish National War Memorial in the Castle.

Here, the warm beating heart of Scotland shows its great love for those brave souls who gave their lives for King and Country; it is a magnificent conception, and will record for all time the glory of Scottish manhood and womanhood.

In the Prince's Street Gardens is another Memorial erected by American friends to Scottish lads who fell in the Great War. The remarkable thing about this shrine, which is altogether most striking, is the great beauty of the sculp-

tured face of the Scottish soldier: it is not only that it is physically beautiful, but the sculptor has stamped the face with a most wonderful spiritual beauty; one feels impelled to return again to see new wonders in this inspired work of art. We left Edinburgh on Friday and travelled to Glasgow, passing Queensferry, the Forth Bridge, and going over Linlithgow Castle, the birthplace of Mary, Queen of Scots; then, through Falkirk—all most interesting. Glasgow did not impress us; we were unfortunate in our environment, and the coincidence of our visit with Fair Week, and so yesterday we left there, and visited Stirling and Bannockburn the birthplace of my mother, and made enquiry there concerning her relatives, but all I could learn was of an elderly lady who had kept a draper's shop and who died a month ago leaving £5,000: see what I missed—truly 'the early bird catches the worm!' The view from the ramparts of Stirling Castle is extensive and magnificent. Immediately below lies the King's Knot where jousting took place in the early days, when knights were bold.

Away to the left is the far famed field of Bannockburn distant only some 3 or 4 miles.

In front of you lie the distant peaks of the Highland Mountains looking soft and hazily blue in the afternoon sun. To your right you look over the Carse of Stirling with the Forth twisting and turning lazily through the verdant and prosperous looking plain.

Right across you view the old Bridge of Forth somewhere near 500 years old, the ruins of Cambuskkenneth Abbey lying to the south. I believe that coal was first found in Scotland here. Northward across the valley lies Abbey Craig, a wooded knoll, surmounted by the tower of the Wallace Memorial 200 feet high.

The Castle itself is full of historical interest, the Palace, the Chapel Royal and the old Parliament House having much to entertain and instruct.

As is usual with these old Scottish Castles this one also has its tales of dark deeds of cruelty and treachery. It was here that Earl Douglas was stabbed to death when on a visit under a letter of safe conduct by James II in 1452.

But let us forget these treacherous times. We are in Scotland, and if I try to describe our impressions, I will fail lamentably. It is a bonny country, and nothing I have ever seen can compare with the beauty of the landscape and the verdure of the countryside in these wonderful Lowlands. We move about from place to place with ever-increasing delight and astonishment, and with it all there is an accompanying spirit of awe and reverence. The person of Scottish blood who comes to these parts and does not feel that the centuries and his ancestors are walking by his side, gently whispering the stories and myths of long ago, is lacking in his intellectual make-up. Instinctively one feels the storied past. There would be something missing if this age-old land were not very evident to the senses, and it is impossible to rove over this countryside remembering all the revered names of the years gone by without a realization that you yourself are a part of it all, and that in every sense of the word it is one's Homeland.

THE CLYDE.

We came back to Helensburgh by Loch Lomond and as this is Glasgow's holiday week, the whole country side is full of charabancs and trippers. 'Doon the watter' the excursion boats are full, and the people of Glasgow drew £1,000,000 out of the Savings Banks last Friday in anticipation of this week's holiday—all Glasgow is shut down.

Our cousin's husband, T.M., who lives in Helensburgh, has his office in Glasgow and goes up by train every morning; he is something in shipping, and is apparently well-to-do; he has a beautiful old home, acres of ground round it, and drives a

Morris Oxford 16; his daughter studies medicine in London, and his son is still at college, and a good athlete, captain of his XI and of the XV also. I don't know exactly how long we stay with them, but afterwards we go north to the Caledonian Canal and Inverness. They are delightful people.

We have still eight weeks left in Great Britain—to September 14th. Time flies; but we have certainly crammed into our stay here a lot of country, and we have not wasted our opportunities. I believe I could name a dozen abbeys and cathedrals where St. Cuthbert isn't buried, and as for Mary Queen of Scots, Bruce, Wallace, and Tom Innes, I bump against their exploits at every corner. Every castle has its murder and mystery, and to see their dungeons gives one the very creeps! They were certainly 'cruel deevils' in those days. Uncle Ted reckons that Te Rauparaha was a gentleman compared with some of these Highland gentry.

We had a very lovely trip to-day (Sunday). After lunch we caught a paddle steamer, and had a run round the Kyles of Bute. These Sounds or Lochs are very like Picton, only more immense, and have lovely little towns nestling under the hills everywhere along the waterfront.

They are much more interesting than our Sounds, and are patronized by the people of all the towns around. The lochs are full of yachts, motor-boats, steamers, and life is very busy. We did not get home till nearly eight o'clock, and we all thoroughly enjoyed ourselves.

ON THE CLYDE—WE GO TO BURNS' LAND.

We are still with our cousins and are, I believe, remaining here until Monday. They say they don't want us to go yet and I am afraid we don't seem very anxious to run away. It is very delightful here, and the situation of the town is splendid.

We are on a gradually sloping hillside, like the lower slopes of the Wither Hills, and this house is about half-a-

mile from town, so we get a beautiful panoramic view of the Clyde and Greenock, Gourock, and the hills of Ayrshire across the water. We have been into Glasgow a few times and one could easily holiday here for many weeks. One of our runs from here was down to the Erskine ferry across the Clyde through Renfrew, Kilmarnock, Monkton, down to Ayr and Alloway, the birthplace of Robert Burns (not Tommy Burns) the Scottish national poet, whom perchance you may have heard of, whose parents invented 'Haggis' which has become the National Dish; that is why it is eaten at every Burns's anniversary. There is a continuous pilgrimage to Alloway, where the old thatched cottage still is preserved and is furnished much in the same state as when the poet was born in it.

One sees the kitchen china and old furniture, the pots and pans, spinning-wheels, ornaments, and even the bed where the poet was born is left in its original situation. It is all very interesting and touching. There is a large book here in which visitors sign their names. Across the lawn is a building which houses a wonderful museum of all things pertaining to Burns; dozens of drawings, paintings by celebrated artists of the poet himself and of his relations, and celebrities with whom he was intimately associated during his lifetime.

There exists a great number of manuscripts, poems and letters in Burns's own handwriting, and there is a wonderful bookcase full of dozens of editions of the poet's works from the very earliest published, onwards; many of them illustrated by celebrated black-and-white artists; snuff-boxes, razors, pens, medals, medallions, furniture owned by Burns and used by him; in fact a priceless collection of Burnsiana.

People are streaming into this place all the time, and it is a revelation to see how interested everyone seems in everything pertaining to the name of Burns.

We walked down and saw the Auld Brig of Doon, and the Burns Memorial on the banks of the Doon, also the

haunted kirk of Alloway famous in the poem 'Tam O'Shanter.' We drove back to Ayr, where Burns subsequently lived, and visited the Tam O'Shanter Inn, and saw in the upstairs rooms the old haunt of Burns with the original furniture, drinking vessels, greybeards, tables, chairs, etc., and I sat in the very chair the poet used to sit in. Here we saw Rob Roy's cradle and many mementoes of Tam O'Shanter and Soutar Johnny. The old table is just filled up with carved names accumulating for many years past. I expected to find Tom Innes' old bowls here but they have evidently been mislaid. It is really astonishing the hold that the memory of Burns and all things Burnsian has on these people in Scotland. However, I must admit that how any New Zealand born Scot can read and enjoy Burns, beats me. Although I know a great deal of the language, and have a fair idea of the vocabulary, when I tried to read Tam O'Shanter I could only do so by constant reference to a glossary. Most New Zealand Scottish children simply could not understand it at all. Of course all his poetry is not so broad or so full of dialect and idioms. What is known as the Doric.

Although born in a Scottish city and brought up in an atmosphere of rigid Presbyterianism and Burns Societies, I fear I have never been Scottish enough to appreciate either his poetry or his language. I have always had a good acquaintance with the Lowland Scottish tongue, but, while recognizing the beauties of some of Burns's writings, and his artistry of expression, I am very conscious of the fact that his broad Doric has been often meaningless to me.

And yet, to a great extent, this failure to assess properly the Scottish love for Burns the man, Burns the National Poet, and Burns the singer of sweet songs, has been turned into an understanding.

But the awakening only took place by getting to the very heart of things, by walking the streets of Ayr and Alloway,

by seeing the towns, the villages, and the country-side he loved so well, by realizing his struggles, his sufferings, his strength of purpose, and his fallings from grace, by visiting the cottage of his birth and early life, by entering the house of his latter days in which he died, in Dumfries, and finally by viewing the monuments erected by loving Scots to his memory, and by inspecting the vast number of manuscripts, paintings, and relics which have been gathered together in that wonderfully complete museum in Alloway.

Everywhere in this part of the country relics of Burns are cherished with loving care. Even the 'Tam O'Shanter' Inn he frequented, and the 'Hole in the Wa' ' in Dumfries, have a wonderful collection of relics of Burns and Burns's times.

When one is privileged, as I have been, to make this pilgrimage, it is brought home very forcibly what one has hitherto not understood, and that is, the place that Burns occupies in the hearts and minds of the Scottish people.

And what is the secret of this love for, and worship of, Burns?

We know that these have a very certain place in all Scottish communities, and it is worth while endeavouring to analyse those factors which have made the name of Burns revered, honoured and loved wherever Scottish people foregather.

In the first place we must remember the lowly origin of the poet. His parents were small farmers; they were of the soil; they were poor in this world's goods, the house in which he was born is just a long mud hut, divided into partitions, in one of which the cattle were housed. If we think for a moment, we remember that many of the world's great ones have had a very similar origin. He grew up in a quite small village, and his companions were like himself, just village urchins. He was decidedly of the people, and during his whole lifetime he never forgot his origin or the

friendships of his early days, and it is noticeable, that, in all his writings, he could not conceal his love for the people of his own class and station in life; and that is one reason why he is Scotland's bard to-day.

In his time a great part of the population of Scotland was poor; they lived a hard, strenuous life, and they found in Robert Burns a poet who spake for them, sang for them, and put heart into them. He pointed out that one man was as good as another man provided he played the game, and he showed them that birth and station in life was purely a matter of accident.

When he wrote the lines—'The rank is but the guinea stamp'—he meant that even in those of the poorest and lowliest origin it was still quite possible to be made of pure gold.

It has to be remembered too, that he was 30 years of age at the time of the French Revolution, when the aristocracy of France, by their misdemeanours and overbearing conduct, fell before the wrath and fury of the populace.

There is no doubt that he was greatly influenced in his championship of the people by those happenings. Burns was for the people. He hated sham and injustice, and turned a withering scorn on those that sat in high places, and who acted as if they were of different clay, compared with other human beings.

Burns gained the love of his countrymen because he spoke to them of things they could understand, and moreover he spoke to them in their own vernacular: no "high falutin'" language for him. He sang to them in the words their mothers used, and they understood and loved him. It seems a great pity that so much of the Doric to-day is being forgotten, for somehow or other Scottish people are gradually becoming more cultured and more Anglicized, and there is danger that in the days to come much of Burns will be unintelligible to them.

On the Lawn at Abbotsford.

Tantallon Castle Courtyard, Near Dunbar.

He spoke of simple things to his people. He roamed the fields and forests, and found beauty and music everywhere. He sang about daisies and to wee mice, and even such commonplace subjects as these were made interesting and full of sweetness and pathos. For instance—

"Wee, modest, crimson tipped flower
Thou's met me in an evil hour
For I maun crush among the stour
Thy slender stem
To spare thee now is past my power
Thou bonny gem."

I think that an individual who could feel so moved at the destruction of a little inanimate common field daisy as to pen such a beautiful epitaph, must have been a wonderful character. There is here not only great beauty of simple language, but great beauty also of mind and heart.

A man such as this is good to know.

Or again—this touching tribute, on turning up a mouse's nest with his plough—

"That wee bit heap o' leaves and stibble.
Hast cost thee mony a weary nibble!
Now thou's turn'd out for a' thy trouble
But house or hauld
To thole thy winter's sleety dribble
And cranreuch cauld!
But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane
In proving foresight may be vain.
The best laid schemes o' mice and men
Gang aft agley."
And lea'e us nought but grief and pain
For promised joy.

Commonplace everyday simple events and scenes, Burns turned, in his homely language into things of beauty.

Only a genius, one rarely gifted, can perform these miracles. And he sang of love. The Scottish people are

great lovers, and Burns touched a tender note in their hearts with his love affairs and his love lyrics. And then—he was a man—a frail human being like ourselves, full of faults and failings from grace; but he never spared himself; he admitted his failings, and rent himself in an agony of despair. He certainly was very human, and I put it to you that we love a person who acts like a human being, whom we know just like ourselves, and who admits the brotherhood of all around him. One who knows his faults, and, while realizing his limitations, still strives to eliminate them, facing the uphill task bravely and steadfastly—that was Burns.

And I think he is loved and remembered because of his mistakes and errors. It is impossible not to have sympathy with, or sorrow, for, the tragedy he made of his life.

He was gracious toward women, and he was a great lover, but probably women spoiled him for he was a handsome fellow. Sir Walter Scott tells us he never saw such another eye in a human head, although he knew all the distinguished men of his time—it glowed so. He had many lovers among women, but Burns's love affairs caused him many worries and sorrows. Yet, at the same time, his love entanglements have given us, through his poetry, an insight into his very soul, and in reading his love-songs and laments one cannot but admire the man for his very humanity and honesty, and for the beautiful words with which he clothed his thoughts.

As a farmer he was a failure: there is little poetry in the hard slogging of farming, and I suppose he never really found it a congenial occupation. Besides his failure as a farmer he was apt to look upon himself as a failure in other ways.

He frequently grieved over his lack of education, failing to see that the whole secret of his appeal to his people lay in this circumstance.

Whatever the combination of causes may have been, boon companions, evil associations and liquor, gradually began to take hold of him; yet still he wrote some of his best work. His latter days in Dumfries were nothing but a pitiful tragedy: broken in health, oft-times in dire want, he practically worried himself into his grave.

He died on July 21st, 1796, aged only 37 years, still a young man, but undoubtedly the greatest humanitarian of his time.

In viewing his rare gifts we must marvel at the man who, in his homely peasant way, made such an appeal to his countrymen. No other writer of his time has ever obtained such a hold on the affection of the world at large.

To visit Alloway is to realize the affection, the esteem and the grip he still has, not only on his own people, but on people from overseas. It is a wonderful tribute.

And such is the bond of love still existing between him and Scottish folk the world over that he is known far and wide as "Bobbie Burns." Do you ever hear of Alf Tennyson, Jack Whittier, Sandy Pope, or Geordie Byron? No! Of course not. And there is a whole wealth of meaning in this homely appellation—"Bobbie Burns," which perhaps only a Scotsman can correctly appreciate.

This, then, is the man that Scotland loves and honours, in spite of failure, in spite of many shortcomings, in spite of the handicap, as some might see it, of his birth, education and upbringing, Burns has left behind him a revered name and a beloved memory.

And no man can accomplish more than that.

From Ayr we came back round the coast of the Firth of Clyde having a splendid view of the mountains of Arran, Ailsa Craig, the Cumbraes, and Bute. We passed through Prestwick, Troon, Irvine, Saltcoats, Ardrossan, Largs, Mill-

port, Fairlie, Wemyss Bay, Inverkip, Gourock, Greenock, Port Glasgow, and home back across the Ferry to Dumbarton and Helensburgh, a drive of 143 miles, and every mile full of interest and enjoyment.

Everywhere you go you see golf-links, and such links!—greens like billiard-tables, and no chance of a lost ball; fairways like well-cut lawns. Everybody here, high and low, rich and poor, young and old carries at least a golf club, if it is not a kit, beside which E.R.'s is an undersized pup.

After the race for money, at which the hotel-keeper here is a pastmaster in the game, the ruling passion is golf. No young man here, between 20 and 35 apparently ever works at any trade or business; they are to be seen at any hour of the day up till 10.30 p.m. when it begins to get a bit dull-like, and the light not so good 400 yards off, either going to or coming from the links. They never tire, and it may be said of them that they are the same to-day, yesterday, and, apparently, for evermore. Another strange sport, played by the unemployed of Glasgow and elsewhere, is fooling about with a football. Wherever you see these dole chaps you will see some of them with a soccer football, hands probably in pockets, aimlessly caressing it with their pedal extremities, and performing all sorts of strange tricks and antics like dancing puppets, before sending it off to a pal, who dexterously catches or traps it with his feet, performs more weird tricks, which appear to the uninitiated like a religious rite, often tapping it so that it bounces up head high, when, with a vigorous leap of the whole body in the air, a sudden stiffening of the vertebral column he makes impact with the vertex of his skull on the ball, and sends it bouncing off to another devotee who proceeds to go through the whole gamut of rites and ritual as before. This goes on until the next meal is ready for them. The play is known as 'Fitba,' and, next to golf, is the ruling passion.

The next Test (cricket) starts on Saturday, and poor old England has the 'wind up.' They have shuffled and changed their team each time, and yet it doesn't work. They have brought Tate back, and I don't wonder; he is still about the most reliable bowler in England, but South Africa will be hard to beat for the ashes. Cameron is a delight to watch; he does hit them.

IN THE HIGHLANDS.

Since last I wrote we have been nearly all over Scotland. We have seen the various parts around the Firth of Clyde and last week we did the trip from the Clyde up North; the run up Loch Lomond, and up through Glencoe to Fort William and the Caledonian Canal, and the various lochs as far as Inverness, were wondrous.

It was very stormy with heavy rain when we left Helensburgh, and right up Loch Lomond past Luss, Tarbert, and Ardlui was intermittently fine and wet in spells. We did not go out towards the coast, but made up for the Glencoe region which I was anxious to see. I think the poet who wrote—

'Hail Caledonia! stern and wild.'

must have been located in Glencoe when he set that bit down; it is a most inhospitable looking country, and this is summer-time; mostly heather and moorland with gaunt, bare, rocky hillsides; many of them quite unscalable, except to goats and the like. All I could say on seeing this part was—

'Oh, the poor Macdonalds!'

What it must be in winter time is beyond me. The whole of this estate is up for sale by auction, and I believe some effort is being made to save it for the Scottish people.

Round Loch Leven, a long narrow arm of the sea, at the head of which is the township of Kinlochleven (where

large aluminium works are built, run by hydro-electric power) we motored, and then up the shore of Loch Linnhe to Fort William.

We did not see the Loch Ness monster; it was Glasgow fair week, and it was evidently participating in the holiday, but I believe it was seen two days later—it always is. However, I got a picture of Urquhart Castle on the shore of Loch Ness where the monster is often seen, or so we hear.

After reaching Inverness we did not go any further north, but slipped across to the East, making for Aberdeen by way of Nairn, Elgin, Fochaber, Huntly, Mossat, and Alford, there is some very fine farming land and wonderful crops all through here. We visited Stonehaven and Dunnottar Castle, then up country to Banchory and Torphins, and back to Aberdeen; this was a great day. We arrived at Rossie's about 4 p.m., had afternoon tea, and set out to see Aberdeen, and the countryside. We had a delightful run down the coast to Stonehaven, and got some good pictures of Dunnottar Castle; then off we set for Banchory where we dined at the Torn-na-coille hotel, after which we found our way over the hills to Torphins to visit Rossie's sisters. We arrived back at the "Royal" after ten, seeing Rossie safely into a tramcar.

Next day we passed through Banchory, Ballater, Balmoral, Braemar, and Blairgowrie; using up all the B's in the countryside we eventually made Perth. The Dee Valley, or Deeside as they prefer to call it, is a fairyland of wonder and delight, and the heath all round the mountains and moors from Ballater through Braemar to Glenshee has to be seen to be believed—"a purple blaze" conveys, in words, a poor description.

I think in all our travels this beauty of the heather-clad hills and moors of the Highlands has impressed us most.

Glencoe was vast and stark, and conveyed to one the ruggedness and sternness of the Highlands, but the softness of the heather-clad moors brought quite another aspect of Scotland into one's mind.

We crossed the Grampians through the Cairnwell pass, 2200 feet above sea level, in Glenshee, the scenery here being very bleak and wild—all moorland. The Devil's Elbow, at the height of the pass, requires very careful driving and is a very well-known danger spot. In winter time this road is feet deep in snow. It is one of General Wade's roads.

Once again, the country from Blairgowrie to Perth was a sheer delight; the tree-clad hills, the glens and dells, the stately homes of the privileged—privileged in that circumstance which has put them down amid such charming surroundings—the long avenues of glorious trees arching across the roads so that one drives down a tunnel of green beauty, sunlit with dancing beams, make up a series of pictures which no artist could possibly convey to canvas, no photograph do but scant justice to, and which must live on in the memory as one of the beautiful things which this pilgrimage through life occasionally grants to mortals. There! That's just how Scotland affects me, and I am not forgetting the beauties of the New Forest, and of England either, each has its own charm—we will never forget Scotland.

On the Lansdowne estate which we passed through there is a marvellous beech hedge nearly 100 feet in height, planted 200 years ago by Lady Nairn.

We came to the Firth of Tay and the mighty Bridge; the remains of the old bridge which was blown down over 50 years ago are still to be seen, after which we climbed over the hills to St. Andrews, where everybody carries a golf bag and clubs, and wears plus-fours.

Across the hills again, we made for Leven, from which hills we had a most glorious view of the Firth of Forth, picking out quite plainly in the evening light—the Berwick

Law, Bass Rock, Isle of May, Arthur's Seat, Salisbury Craig, and the great mass of the Castle and Rock looming up like a lion couchant above the reek, which was Edinburgh; this was over 20 miles away, and the Forth, dotted with shipping of all sizes, shone like a silver pool. It reminded me of that Old Testament story of poor old Moses, who was taken up into a high mountain, Pisgah I think it was, and was shown the glories of the promised land; what Moses saw that day was nothing compared with the glories we saw that night across the Firth of Forth!

We passed by Loch Leven where poor Mary, Queen of Scots, was once incarcerated on an island, through Kinross, to Alloa (where my mother lived as a small girl)—a well-built, prosperous, tidy town with a population of some 14,000; then through the Bridge of Allen—getting a splendid close-up view of the William Wallace memorial on Abbey Craig on the way. We passed Stirling about a mile away, give it a miss in baulk, as we had previously "done" this place, and also "been done" for a fountain pen, which is another story, as Kipling would say.

Next, we travelled to Callander, Loch Vennacher, The Trossachs, Loch Katrine, and over a new pass to Aberfoyle, thence home (via Drymen and Balloch) back to Helensburgh.

We have been "doon the watter" and visited Rothesay, Dunoon, Kirn, Loch Long and Loch Goil. Loch Lomond and the Gare Loch we have been round several times. We have sailed the Kyles of Bute as far as Tighna-Bruaich, and if the weather is decent tomorrow we purpose running down as far as Brodick in the Isle of Arran.

While in Glasgow I paid a visit to Thos. Taylor's bowl factory at the invitation of Douglas Taylor the present proprietor and a personal friend of Tom Milne's. I saw

the whole process from the original log of lignum vitae to the finished engraved article. Taylor told me he didn't play bowls as whenever he appeared on a green he was pestered for opinions about bowls and discussions on bias, crown, weight and shape, that his life was just a misery. So now he makes bowls, but doesn't go near a green. He gets away "doon the watter" in his yacht.

CHAPTER VII.

BACK TO LONDON VIA THE WEST.

WHEN you receive this letter we will just about be commencing our homeward journey, as we leave Tilbury Docks on September 14th. We returned yesterday to London, after our motor tour round Scotland and England, taking in a little piece of Wales. My last letter to you was from Jean's house in Helensburgh, and gave you all our trippings-about up till the time we left there last Monday. If you will follow the thin red line on the map enclosed, you will be able to trace our wanderings.

Once again, we set our faces South, up the Clyde, first of all, through Glasgow, then down through Hamilton, Lanark, Crawford, crossing the moors here, and over the Dalveen Pass—pretty rough, rugged country, one hill (Green Louther) being 2,400 feet high, and that's fairly high for Scotland. On through Thornhill, down the Valley of the Nith to Dumfries. Here is the house in which Burns lived and died, and here he was buried in the churchyard of St. Michael's parish church. Well, like all good tourists, we visited his home, his memorial in the churchyard, and sat in his pew in the church. There is a fine monument of Burns here, but he has got his back to the Kirk, just as in

Dunedin. Many visitors to Scotland perform this visit as a holy pilgrimage, and without exaggeration, one can see by their demeanour and the look of reverential awe in their faces, that they consider their visit much as the Mohammedan when he makes the pilgrimage to Mecca, his holy city. The same feeling applies to Abbotsford and Stratford-on-Avon; one moves about the houses of the dead great ones in silence, and with due reverence.

From Dumfries we ran out to see "Sweetheart Abbey" about 10 miles south, a ruined abbey, still very beautiful, and with quite a romantic history. The Lady Devorgilla, who was Countess of Galloway, built it in 1260 in memory of her husband. At the Reformation in Scotland, dear old John Knox saw that it was properly dealt with—according to his viewpoint. England and Scotland have suffered sorely by acts of pure vandalism, of which this is an example, all done in the name of religion.

To-day, this country is peopled by millions of young folk, who care naught for religion as it used to be taught, who worship their God in the sunshine of the highways and byways of England, on the glorious shores and waterways, and are known generically as the "New Pagans"; a cleaner, healthier people, with a better understanding of life in all its meanings; a freedom between the sexes which is a delight to witness, with an absence of that restraint and Mother Grundyism which filled our narrow minds with suspicion and evil thoughts.

If you can only get the city-dweller at week-ends, away from his shackling environment; the dirt, and the sordidness of the tenement house, you will soon evolve a better outlook, a higher moral standard, a sturdier people, more fitted to take their place, to carry on, and to become the parents of the future population of this land.

So this new method of spending the week-end is doing something for this land which centuries of religious teach-

ing, with its concomitant religious bickerings and strife has certainly failed to do; and I venture to say that God, as I know Him, looks down and smiles benignantly.

Well, we have got away from the itinerary somehow. All this started with John Knox, on whom you must place the blame. Back again through Dumfries and down South along the Nith estuary to Caerlaverock Castle—another old ruin, with a history—then along the coast to Annan on the Solway Firth, and so to Gretna Green and the celebrated blacksmith's shop—we missed Ecclefechan where Carlyle was born. This place, Gretna, is exploited for all its worth, and I thought the whole show meretricious to a degree. However, everyone who is near here goes to see it as a matter of course, and we were not going to be an exception. We believe in trying everything once.

That night we slept at Carlyle—a Border city with its Castles and interesting history.

Our next objective was the far-famed English Lake District, and it is useless for me to attempt an adequate description of this charming spot. Photos may do something in giving one an idea, yet even that but poorly.

There is a peace and restfulness about these English Lakes that I have not found anywhere else in our travels; that, combined with the natural beauty of mountain, dell, and lake, with the soft summer haze filtering through the glorious English forest compels us to give this part of England the much-prized red ticket.

And, now that I have written this, I can visualize a heresy hunt by the Scottish Society of Marlborough; my ignominious expulsion, after a charge of "Lese Majeste". In extenuation of my crime I would like to plead that if one wants grandeur, ruggedness, a countryside which shows the austerity that matches its people, a beauty of a different kind, then Scotland provides this. In other words, now that I have got myself into a proper mess, there should be, and

can be, no comparison between the English lakes and the Scottish lochs; each has its own particular glory, and makes its appeal according to one's mood and fancy of the moment. Where were we?

Bassenthwaite, Keswick, Derwentwater, Grasmere, Windermere, Rydal, Bowness will long live in our memories. Then, on to Morecambe and Heysham, big watering places with all the crowds inseparable from these resorts.

By the way, it should be known that in Morecambe they still take their guests around in large drags or expresses drawn by two horses, and landaus are still used on the seafront by the old ladies; (Most other towns use motor-propelled vehicles, but horse-drawn conveyances are more leisurely, and their employment might be a good tip for our next "Come to Blenheim" week.

BLACKPOOL BY GOOM!

Next, we went through Lancaster down to Blackpool where we disembarked and tied up for the evening; and what an evening!

After dinner, we strolled along the esplanade and piers for what seemed miles; thousands of people, all ages, all sizes, and all kinds of dialects, Lancashire, Yorkshire, ordinary English, and good old New Zealand.

Everybody here talks at the top of one's voice and when in groups all talk in unison; well, not exactly, as each is saying something different in a different key and a different dialect. Perhaps that is why they speak "fortissimo" also "allegro vivace." Thousands of people and more thousands of kids! This dole business seems to give "poppa" more time at home, and you see the result of the dole—trailing buckets, spades, celluloid dolls, sucking ice-bars, chocolate sticks, getting lost, howling for "maw," being found, getting well-smacked for being found, being dragged this way and that, shouted at, glowered at, and, eventually, being carried

to a charabanc or train to sleep off or ", ick up" on the road home; the combined effects of lemonade, ice-cream and sausage-rolls liberally besprinkled with the sands of the sea-shore.

The average Englishman dearly loves a crowd; the more the merrier, and these watering-places provide everything he seems to desire. There are more ways of spending money in Blackpool than anywhere else we have visited; you can visit side-shows galore. There is everything here from the fasting Vicar of Stiffkey (who announces that he is "fasting unto death,") to the "Woman with the Ostrich Neck 3-feet long". I had a yarn to the Vicar, who has a grievance against his Archbishop who unfrocked him, and this is the Vicar's way of bringing the Archbishop to his senses; it costs 2d. to see him and nothing extra to yarn to him. He indignantly repudiated the idea that he was mental, "Oh, no, nothing of the kind!" he answered me as I moved along to allow the other rubber-necks to have a look. Two days ago the police arrested him on a charge of "attempted suicide".

You can buy herbal pills that would quickly cure R.P.F. of his arthritis and doggyphobia. The free lectures on health by these quacks are wonderful; they never pause for a word; they show a delightfully entertaining knowledge of one's anatomy and physiology, and are perfectly free in their description of one's bodily functions; an ointment, a salve, a liniment, or a herbal decoction, and all the glories of life are open to you; in fact, you can buy anything to cure anything or to rub anything out.

One curious fact intrigues; these health specialists, during their lectures in the open air, fondle a huge live python, which entwines itself around their bodies. Is this a reference to the staff and serpent the symbol of Aesculapius the Greek God of healing? Otherwise, I cannot understand the serpent. It certainly is weird to watch, and fills the bill, in that it attracts a crowd.

The sun sank right into the ocean precisely at 9.15 p.m. In Edinburgh, a few weeks ago, I watched the sun from the Braid Hills disappear at 9.45 p.m.—a whole half-hour less already.

One of the hotel porters told me that on Saturday 250,000 excursionists came to Blackpool. If each spent only 1/-, look what it means to Blackpool; and, in a lesser degree, this goes on every day throughout the summer season.

On the evening we were there, 500 persons came by one train from a town 50 miles away at 1/9 return fare—100 miles for 1s 9d! Can you beat that? Next morning, after a broken night's rest (I had asked for a front room overlooking the sea) we strolled round the town and watched the crowds, fascinated by it all, everything being so different from anything we had seen before—very, very interesting and educative, but, I would not like to spend a holiday at Blackpool.

I forgot to tell you that the tide at Blackpool goes out about half-a-mile, leaving a huge expanse of sandy beach, which is a wonderful playground for all, and is enjoyed by everyone, with the exception of the poor, patient little donkeys.

A short run that afternoon; lunch on the road as usual. Our lunch is generally taken by the roadside in a shady spot, and consists of a bottle of beer, a bottle of lemonade (which mix well), pies, sandwiches, tomatoes, and generally a banana. About four p.m. we usually stop at a small town or cake shop on the road for that most refreshing stimulant and reviver—a good cup of tea. We passed through Southport, Bootle, Liverpool, and stoked up with tea there, preparatory to finding the route to the Liverpool-Birkenhead tunnel under the Mersey, known as the "Queensway". This is all floodlit and there are two traffic zones either way

for fast and slow traffic. We came through on the slow zone and were asked not to get below 20 miles per hour and not to leave the zone. We whizzed through safely and arrived at Birkenhead.

CHESTER.

We turned our noses for Chester, where we remained that evening. This is probably the most unique city in Britain; in any case, we found it so.

We went up into town (we were living outside the wall), and here you must remember that Chester is completely walled—an old Roman wall, surrounding an old Roman city. Well, we took a bus from our hotel down by the railway station, and got into the centre of the city by East gate. There we went up a flight of steps and mounted the wall. While hesitating what to do, and where to go, and what we ought to try and see, a fellow overhearing our talk volunteered some information. It all ended in his accompanying us right round the city wall, $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles, he acting as our guide, and pointing out all the interesting places; we had a glorious evening, and do know something about the Walls of Chester city.

We also viewed another most interesting find—the remains of an old Roman amphitheatre just outside the wall. They have laid bare, within recent years, about a quarter of the foundations, and, to complete the circle, they will have to remove a school and a convent; (this is to be done) and Chester will then be able to show the remains of a complete Roman amphitheatre, something quite unique in Britain.

This chap had been in the Jutland sea battle, and his father was killed on the *Queen Mary* in that action.

We saw the Chester infirmary of 3,000 beds where he lost his mother a year ago, and we also saw the Queen's school which she visits once a year. We walked till darkness set in, when I gave him a 5/- tip, and he seemed most grateful.

St. Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh.

Feeding Seagulls, Rothesay.

Next morning we parked the car, and strolled through the streets of Chester; several of these have double rows of shops, that is to say, you have a roadway on either side with rows of shops, the roofs of which are another footpath accessible by means of stairways, and other rows of shops to these roof-footpaths above and behind the lower row. And above these second rows of shops are the dwelling portions, often jutting out right over the streets. In the photos you will see clearly the stairways giving access to the second rows. This is, I believe, the only city in Europe that has this feature. We would not have missed Chester for a great deal.

WALES.

We set out from here via Holywell for the North Coast of Wales, passing Hawarden, the residence of the late William Ewart Gladstone en route, and the trip through Colwyn Bay looking from the Cliffs across to Llandudno was again something quite new.

We crossed the Conway Bridge which is flanked by Conway Castle, and through the new tunnel called Penmaenbach, and on to Bangor, and the bridge over the Menai Strait to Anglesey, then down to Carnarvon, where after having refreshed ourselves with tea, we set out inland over the Llanberis Pass up the Conway River for some more beautiful lake and mountain scenery till we reached that far-famed beauty-spot Bettws-y-coed. We kept on, and picking up the road which ran down the valley of the Dee which flows into the Mersey, we reached Llangollen about 7 p.m.

I have never seen such traffic as was on these roads that day; there was a continuous stream both ways, all the way from Chester, all going for their lives. "Nothing under 50" seems to be the slogan here, and anyone so unfortunate as to show some consideration for other road-users is simply

imposed upon. "Cutting-in" is rampant, and failure to give way in passing is more honoured in the breach than in observance. Some seem to want the whole centre of the road, and either won't budge or are afraid to pull to their side in case they strike the curb. Of course, August Bank holiday was approaching, and for the next few days the roads were alive with bikes, tandems, motor-bikes, and motors of every size, use and vintage. This week-end there were 32 persons killed on the roads, and 51 seriously injured —all sacrificed to speed.

You remember me telling you that we had participated in about four records. Well, here's another one to add; Record figures for rail, road, and air travel this Bank-holiday week-end. I can consider myself lucky; we have done 4,205 miles round Britain and, so far, have not had a puncture, or had an accident of any description; probably been near once or twice, but a watchful Providence who looks after drunks, children, and imbeciles, has also kept an eye lifting for me.

There are many interesting things about Llangollen, among which is a quaint old carved house, full of carved oak, the home of two dear old Irish ladies over a century ago; there is nothing else like this in Britain, and the photo will show what I mean. On the lawn in front of the house is a perfect circle of Druidic stones. Inside the house we found an engraving of Jennie Jones, probably your mother's great grandmother. I tried to get a picture of this, but with what success I know not as yet.

Many well known celebrities were honoured guests at this home, including the Duke of Wellington, who presented some of the oak seen here. Llangollen is on the direct coach road from London to Holyhead, the point of departure for Ireland.

STRATFORD-ON-AVON.

Our next stopping-place was Stratford-on-Avon—the birthplace of Shakespeare, and where he lived and died. We came down through Shrewsbury, Kidderminster, and Worcester, but did not remain over in any of these towns. Of course, we visited all the historic spots; Shakespeare's Birthplace; (It doesn't matter much where you are born) the various museums, and the places of historic interest; Ann Hathaway's Cottage (where Shakespeare did all his courting), and saw things much as they were in his time, the house and furnishings being practically the same. We went all over the splendid memorial theatre inside and out. It is the last word in theatrical construction, and there is not a pillar in the auditorium. All the seats are staggered, and well inclined from the stage backwards. Every seat in the theatre has an uninterrupted view and the acoustics are perfect; no reverberation, as the back of the theatre is hung with silk brocade tapestry to deaden all sound. The stage is made on the sliding principle, so that it is possible to have a number of sets ready—simply draw the curtains, and slide them on, all ready for the next scene. We were right behind the stage, and away up in the flies, and above the dome of the auditorium which is hung from above by steel bracings. On top of the stage 100 feet up, 120 steps, is a flat roof, and, if fire occurs, the fire-screen is lowered on the stage, and the stage acts as a huge chimney, being raised above the roof level on a glassed-in square; and, at a certain temperature the supports of the glassed sides give way and they fall down as flaps, allowing the smoke and flame to go straight up the convertible chimney-like structure, so that the fire would never get into the theatre itself. There is a glorious view from the roof.

An art gallery and museum are housed in a near-by building, and we saw there oil-paintings of many of the great actors and actresses of the past. Of all, I think

those of Forbes Robertson and Genevieve Ward were perhaps most striking and beautiful. Here we saw a pair of Shakespeare's gloves and a prayer ring. There is very little actually left which is authentically Shakespeare's but these two are. There are many links with past stage glories here; death-masks of Bourchier, Irving, Ellen Terry and others; the tonsure which Sir Henry Irving wore as A'Becket in Tennyson's play of that name, and the missal he carried on the night he died are preserved, and bring back the extraordinary coincidence of the last words he uttered in the play, "Into Thy Hands, O Lord—into Thy Hands," falling unconscious on the stage at that moment and dying a little later at his hotel to which he had been removed.

A peculiar happening is related about Irving's death; he was making a farewell tour of the North of England, and the playbill at Leeds missed out the word, (inadvertently I believe) "Tour", the playbill reading—

"SIR HENRY IRVING'S FAREWELL . . . "

which it was, as events turned out.

To any one who has taken an interest in things theatrical, as I have, this place is a veritable treasure-house of memories, and I was loth to tear myself away from Stratford-on-Avon. There are wonderful timbered houses here, as in Chester, and it is marvellous how well preserved they are. The actual school in which Shakespeare was a pupil is still used as a school, and we went through some of the classrooms. Everything here is Shakespeare; the whole city lives and exists by virtue of his fame and memory, just as Ayr and Alloway are likewise identified with Robert Burns.

The memorial theatre is right on the bank of the Avon, and the adjoining land is laid out in walks to conform to the general design. An excellent statue of William Shakespeare stands well away in an open space surrounded by beautiful bronzes representing Falstaff, Prince Henry, Hamlet, and Lady Macbeth—symbolizing Comedy, History,

Philosophy, and Tragedy. In one glass case in an upper room of Shakespeare's birthplace we saw folios of his works of 1623, and also original editions of certain plays; here also is an authentic ring of Shakespeare's. The garden is unique in that it contains all the flowers, trees, and plants mentioned in Shakespeare's works.

Of Nash's house and New Place Museum I can say little here except that here I saw an early Saxon male skull and jawbone, with the convexity of the lower margin of the jawbone, such as one sees in a Maori jawbone, and not as the body is doubly curved in a European of to-day.

We passed next day through Coventry, and worked up to Rugby to visit a relative of Miss L.'s whom, luckily, we found at home. That night we stopped at Buckingham, a more restful little place. We arrived just as market day was finishing up. These quaint markets are full of interest to a New Zealander. The traffic through Stratford-on-Avon the night before never ceased, it carried on all night; one could have believed that a war was on, and that troops were being transported throughout the night.

Next day (Sunday) we spent a few hours at Whipsnade, the big zoo 30 miles out of London, where animals are kept in their natural state so far as possible. More crowds of people, all rushing hither and thither; no wonder some people get hyperpiesia.

We arrived back here about 3 p.m., had a nice bath, and have now settled down for hospital work until we leave. There will be no more letters unless London calls.

We have arranged to go to Norway and Sweden for a trip before finally leaving for home. We leave here August 24th and go to Bergen, Oslo, Stockholm, Gothenburg, with intervening spots. We will be away about three weeks, and arrive back only a few days before sailing for New Zealand.

Heard the orators in Hyde Park last night (Sunday)—it's wonderful. They are allowed to say anything they like. One chap, who sheltered under a red flag, was an out-and-out communist; he fairly shrieked sedition, but the police look on and smile.

We have had a real heat-wave here, and everything is drying up, and the leaves beginning to fall; the grass in the parks is quite brown. Everyone is well here. Our travelling companions are still at Basingstoke.

WE GO TO THE OVAL.

Yesterday we spent the day at the Oval for the Fifth Test. England in order to try for a win which she must have or lose the series, took the field with a battery of fast bowlers—Read, Bowes, Nicholls. Although he won the toss, Wyatt put S.A. in to bat with the idea of shocking them out.

The English bowlers bowled splendidly; they were on the spot all day, and worked like demons, but South Africa, who were "sitting pretty" with one win in hand, were content to play for safety. Read, especially, worked like a slave; he has wonderful pace, takes a long run, and fairly hurls himself in the air as he takes his last jump at the bowling crease. It's like a steel spring becoming uncoiled. He was bowling even faster at six o'clock than he was in the morning. He bowled 28 overs. When he puts down a short pitched ball it flies over the batsman's head, and often wings them. Australia won't like this lad; he is quite fair, and does not obviously try to get the batsman on the body; he is so fast, and throws himself into it so, that it is quite impossible for him always to keep a good length, but they do fly; he is distinctly a find for England, but I don't think he can possibly last; something must go or snap, especially on hard ground. No human being could keep this up in Australia; well, we will see. I believe he is coming to New Zealand, but I am not sure.

South Africa played for time, and at close of play had 297 runs on for six wickets. If they can only bat till lunch-time tomorrow England cannot possibly win. There is only one chance for England. Get S.A. out tomorrow in an hour, then go for the runs, all out (which they can't do without great risk of losing their own wickets) and then collapse S.A. in their second venture—getting them all out before lunch on Tuesday, and running off the necessary runs before close of play. I should bet a lot that it can't be done, unless the weather and the wicket help S.A. should make 400 in their first attempt; can England do any better? I don't think so.

Cricket is funny: England went all out for a shock attack, and before bringing Robbins on (a slow spinner) Wyatt saw over 100 runs on the board; then, after South Africa had withstood all the battery of "fast stuff", Robbins got two wickets with soft, easy-looking spin balls before you could say Jack Robinson. By the way, I had been "advising" Robbins for half-an-hour before he was put on. I know now who ought to be captaining England, not perhaps as a player captain, but in the same capacity as Roper Barrett leads in the Davis Cup team. I suppose England will never know her opportunity or her great miss.

Do you know that we tried to get covered seats for this game a week beforehand and could not manage it. Nevertheless, we sat it out on the ground on cushions among the perspiring mob, taking our lunch—beer, lemonade, and pies; we have reduced catering to a very simple art; and never moving except at the fall of a wicket, when all stood up to take the kinks out of legs, arms, backs, and situpons. It was a glorious day's cricket, a brave fight on both sides, and it was worth it all.

Hot baths to take away the muscular stiffness was the order at our place last night, and to-day we rest.

By the way, went to the Radio Exhibition at Olympia the other morning with the party: immense! Radio has made wonderful strides, and I was anxious to see the Postal Officials who have found a way to eliminate interference. They have a room fitted to demonstrate; all you do is to cover the room completely—floor, ceiling, walls, doors, window-frames, etc., with metallic paint. The windows have a fine wire mesh (about 4-inch squares) in the window-glass; that is, the mesh is in the glass itself; it's made especially, and doesn't interfere with the light. Now this makes the room (when the door is shut) a metal box as it were, and no interference whatever will affect your set—tram wires, X-ray, diathermy, vacuum-cleaners, Morse, nothing. Of course, after metallising your room, say, with aluminium paint, you can put anything else on your walls, etc. you fancy, paper, wood, any form of decoration, provided the metallic circuit is present.

CHAPTER VIII.

NORWAY AND SWEDEN.

WE left London at midday yesterday, and arrived at Newcastle at 5.15 p.m. by the *Norseman* express averaging 60 miles an hour, with only two stops. The train (L.N.E.R.) was as steady as a rock, and is remarkable for the smoothness of the journey.

We embarked at the Newcastle Tyne Commission Quay about 6 p.m. on the *M.V. Venus* (8,000 tons), a new motor ship, the fastest motor vessel in the world—does 20 knots from Newcastle to Bergen. We sailed at 8 p.m. and arrived here at 5 p.m. this evening, just 21 hours. She is beautifully fitted, and our cabin was very swell, and quite a room. There is a special contrivance for blowing fresh air into the cabins, one at the side above each bed; those can be turned in any direction to blow a draught where you desire it, and you can switch on cold air, temperate air, hot air, just as required. Of course, you can shut them off if you don't want ventilation. There are bedside lamps of course; the lavatories and baths are very luxurious, and full of gadgets. She has a very large lounge, beautifully panelled in a darkish, satiny wood, and all the furniture, piano, and fittings are of the same wood; all the chairs are armchairs, beautifully upholstered. The dining room is on the next lower

deck, and is the same size. Unfortunately she is top-heavy, and although the sea all the way across was like a lake she rolled all the time. In a cross sea I think she would be a dirty, nasty beast; but she can travel.

I forgot to tell you that the first-class on the *Norseman* is wonderfully "comfy". The carriages all open sideways on to a corridor, and seat six in each compartment; as we were only three for a long way, we had heaps of room; restaurant car attached and good meals served. But you cannot see England from a railway carriage window, although these are exceptionally large; everything goes past so quickly that it is only occasionally you can read even the names of the stations.

We passed the Customs here once again on the strength of our honest New Zealand faces—never opened a box. I just said, "Nothing to declare," and the officer looked up at me and immediately chalked the goods.

Of course, we all had to pass through the Passport Officers as well, both leaving England and entering Norway.

This "Hotel Rosenkrantz" is a nice clean hotel, and we have a front bedroom overlooking the harbour (right up on top); there are two large windows in front, and one on the side, so we have a great outlook. We had a stroll round the town before supper (late dinner), and were very much taken with Bergen; fine wide streets and open spaces. There are delightful parks, and the most beautiful flowers; beds of begonias—most delicate colourings, all growing in the open air. The shops are large, well-built, and seem well-stocked, and full of strange (and, to us), wonderful things. It is easy for us to know the prices, as £1 (English) is equivalent to 19.85 kroners, which makes the kroner practically a shilling; so if you see a pair of shoes marked 15.50k. you know it means practically 15s 6d, or near enough.

We strolled for an hour, and we never saw a dog; we could not understand the why and the wherefore, and, so on

asking at the hotel we were informed that there are dogs in Bergen, but as the dog-tax is £2 10s a year, they are not many. There would not be so many dogs at midnight hour baying the moon with hideous howls in Blenheim if this enactment were put through.

Unlike London, this is a clean city; certainly it smells of fish, but that is their industry, and is only faintly noticeable, but in London the presence of dog, or his immediate past presence, howls with noisome, slippery stench from the footpath for ever and ever, amen—most disgusting and embarrassing.

We had a very nice supper here at the hotel, assimilated with the aid of a trio of musicians—violin, 'cello, piano; who played delightfully to us Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsodies and Grieg's music—a real treat, and (after a surfeit of crooners and jazz "tripe" which is all you hear in any English restaurant) is was most enjoyable, and I was a gratified listener.

A.C. has gone to bed and is reading; she got a bit upset last night, as the powerful engines of the "Venus" keep up a constant vibration, like a man with ague—most unpleasant. The beds in the hotels have no blankets, just a large linen case filled with the softest down—that is the covering. The snag here is that, if too hot you cannot throw off a blanket. Its all or nothing. The room is O.K., really a large bed-sitting room with reading lamps, writing desk, and all facilities; armchairs, and a small couch; bedroom chairs all upholstered in leather; hot and cold water and large wardrobes. All windows have double glass with a space between. It is mighty cold here in winter.

We are here all day to-morrow and will have a look round; will possibly get some photos.

The run up the fiord was great; Bergen is an hour's run from the sea, up a wide (in parts) fiord, with rocky shores, and very rocky mountains or hills; little or no grass;

only scrubby pine-trees and heather; much rougher country even than Scottish Highlands and Wales, but very interesting, and quite unique.

The fiords, so far as we have seen, are like our own Sounds, and yet again, most unlike; they are alike in that both have water and hills, and winding arms of sea, but there the resemblance ends; you could never mistake one for the other.

BERGEN.

This is the Norwegian city which, like Melrose and Alloway, in Scotland, and Stratford-on-Avon, in England, is a shrine to which pilgrims come, in Bergen to honour Edvard Grieg, for it was in Bergen that this great Norwegian composer was born, lived and died.

Here may still be visited Grieg's cottage on the hill above Bergen, and a very beautiful statue is erected to his memory in the Public Square.

Here, also, amid a most picturesque setting, is a memorial in bronze of Ole Bull, with his beloved fiddle, to whom Norway owes so much in the development of the national love in music, and the national interpretation of dramatic art. Norway is rich in revered names, and who has not heard of Ibsen, Bjornson (father and son), Heiberg, as novelists, dramatists, and producers, these men have done much in placing Norway in the forefront of literary excellence. In painting and in sculptor also, Norway has produced sons whose work depicts vividly the true and strange beauties of this wonderful land. I need only mention Edward Munch, in painting, and Gustav Vigeland, the sculptor, to bring immediately into the circle of the truly great the work of these two men.

Bergen is viewed best of all by a trip up the funicular railway to Flöien. A small cable car, the motive power of which is naturally an electric winding machine, carries you up the mountain-side 1,000 feet to the curio shop and

restaurant at the top of Flöibanen. This distance travelled is one kilometre, and the grade is one in two; there is even a small tunnel about one-third of the way up. Fortunately, nothing came adrift, and the panorama seen from the top was well worth the trip. Far below could be seen the crowds of people gathered in the fish market, and in the fruit, flower, and vegetable market also. These markets are most interesting sights, and a stroll round gives one a very good idea of these peoples' methods of buying, selling, and marketing their various kinds of produce. For instance, no housewife will buy a dead fish, it must be kept alive and kicking to effect a sale.

Supper at this tavern is from seven till 11 p.m. A.C. says the food is very rich; well cooked, but lots of butter and oil. I am looking from the window right down on the city, and across its harbour to the other side; and all the coloured lights of the various trade signs, and the boats in the still waters of the Vaagen—a long narrow arm of the Sound like a pocket.

To-morrow we are off to Nordheimsund.

THE FIORDS.

If I do not get to work and set down some of our impressions and experiences of Norway of the last few days I fear I will get hopelessly muddled and be unable to trace for you the route taken and the general characteristics and the configuration of the country.

To put a description of this part of Norway, which we have seen in a nutshell, one might be facetious and hazard the opinion that Norway is crinkled like a prune. One spends the time climbing up steep mountain sides and diving precipitately down the other sides. Very often the far side is occupied by water and then one sets sail in small steamers. If this land were ironed out it would occupy about half Europe. So far we have not seen sufficient land to play a

game of cricket on. The mountains here run down quite steeply to the water's edge, much like our own Sounds in Marlborough, but the country is ever so much more steep and high. The only grassy spots are in the bottoms of the small valleys, which are extremely narrow, or an isolated patch of grassland popping out here and there amid the scrub and rock.

The country is so broken up that no farmer invests in a hay-cutting machine. The sickle and the good old-fashioned scythe are the only weapons of offense. Everybody works—this is the hay season—and what very tiny areas they have in crop are now being harvested. Nowhere have we seen more than perhaps two acres in crops in one paddock. Mostly the areas are more like half an acre. I think they are mostly oat and barley crops. It is impossible to get their hay dried on the ground, so they string the cut grass on wire fences erected for the purpose and twist another wire around the bundles to keep them in place. It takes from two to six days to dry it in favourable weather.

The women here work out in the fields like men. The crops are not put up in the field in stooks, but are twined round a pole stuck in the ground about seven or eight feet in height. This allows the wind to blow through the grain and the sun to get its warm rays into the bundle.

Farming here, as we have seen it, must provide a very scant living, and how they exist is a puzzle to me. Cattle and sheep are practically non-existent. Goats are not so plentiful as one would expect. But we did not come to Norway to discuss agriculture and economic problems. We came here to see what scenery Norway had to offer, and during the past few days we have moved from one wonder to another. Of course, we are being taken through the wonder spots, and naturally we are seeing the pick of their scenic beauties and marvels. We left Bergen at 9 a.m. on Tuesday bound for Nordheimsund by car.

I thought I had seen some road-making in New Zealand and in the Blue Mountains of N.S.W., but believe me, these motor roads in Norway are beyond description. Stupendous engineering difficulties have been surmounted on this section of the journey. Going through and down the side of a steep canyon, or ravine, the road, in many places, is tunnelled for chains through the solid rock. In other places, concrete on the outside edge makes what would otherwise be a horrid hiatus in the road quite safe. They frequently build a concrete safety fence about two feet high, which gives a certain sense of security and prevents a possible sudden drop into eternity or further. All driving here is on the opposite side of the road to which we are used in New Zealand, and it does not tend to reassure one. These roads to Nordheimsund must have cost a mint of money, and are a marvel of engineering ingenuity and skill, but they are certainly hair-raising. Every care is taken by the drivers, and there is no rushing these roads; second and third gear down hill is the absolute rule; brakes would not last the journey.

At Nordheimsund we had lunch at Sanden's Hotel before embarking on the motor-vessel down Hardanger Fiord; a beautiful day and a great trip down to Ulvik, arriving there at 9 p.m. on Tuesday, after a day full of new experiences, fairly tired after quite a long journey (from 9 a.m. till 9 p.m. with only two and a-half hours' rest at Nordheimsund). We put up at the Brankeness Hotel at Ulvik and had very good accommodation; a beautiful outlook from our room right across the fiord. In fact, we are being treated well in all the hotels. We spent the morning prowling round Ulvik seeing all the choice spots, and spending our good kroners in the little village shops. We left there at 3 p.m. by car for Voss, a great tourist centre, where we had afternoon tea about 5 p.m., before setting out further for Stalheim, in the mountains, over wonderful corkscrewy roads providing

hair-raising thrills—towering cliffs, not only straight up and down, but towering in places and overhanging your head, hundreds of feet high; waterfalls everywhere, leaping down in gigantic drops from ledge to ledge from the very tops of the cliffs. There is no lack of water-power in this country, but there seems so little to use it for. However, we saw some very fine hydro-electric plants, the water being piped down in places almost perpendicularly from the tops of the cliffs. It amazes me how they ever fixed some of these huge cylinders in place, and how they get them to stop there. It is a land of engineering wonders. Not only their engineers but the inhabitants generally have surmounted great difficulties which would have disheartened a less determined and pertinacious race of people; they are like the Scottish in that respect; they are undaunted by difficulties.

We arrived at Stalheim about 7 p.m. in time for dinner. This is a huge hotel built after the style of our own Hermitage and Chateau Tongariro—a great tourist resort for skiers and mountain climbers.

One approaches the hotel up a long incline, and we wondered whatever such a huge building could be possibly doing in such an isolated and mountainous spot.

There is, however, in summer, a large tourist traffic to be catered for in these parts, and in winter time it is a centre for all forms of winter sport. The hotel is grandly situated, and the wonder is hidden from you until you walk out on the terrace in front of the hotel. There is a concrete balustrade, at the edge of this grassy slope, over which you gaze into a canyon, which lies before you, straight down, without a sign of a rock or a tree until your eye strikes the bottom of the gorge, 250 metres below—some drop.

From the bottom you can see a thin white ribbon winding down the gorge straight out in front of you; this is the road; and you marvel how the road gets down the side of the canyon, for this is the road you travel next day! It does

St. Michael's Parish Church, Dumfries.

The Old Bridge Over the Dee at Llangollen, Wales.

get down, and so do you, in third gear, the grade is one in four, and it is a succession of zigzags down the side of the mountain. Most of the road is cut out of the solid rock, and what is wanting, is buttressed up with concrete, and a concrete wall about three feet high protects you on the outer edge all the way down. The turns are very steep, and it takes the car all it can do to turn on the lock. Once in the bed of the gorge or ravine you realize how pigmy a thing is man. Giant, solid-rock crests rise from the bed of the canyon almost straight up; and when I say "rock" I mean that. It is as bare as certain Blenheim scalps, and is just thousands of feet of bald granite. The rounded knob 6,000 feet high in front of the hotel rises sheer from the ravine, and is called Jordalsmit.

The run down to Gudvangen, where we once more took steamer down another fiord, Sognefiord—absorbed about an hour, leaving Stalheim at 9 a.m. This fiord is characterized by a tremendous depth of water (4,000ft. in places), by huge towering cliffs of grey granite, by waterfalls in their score, leaping from the very tops into the sounds below and by its great extent. It runs over eighty miles into the heart of Norway, and in places is two miles wide. These fiords are truely magnificent and surpass all I have ever heard or thought of them. I wonder how our own South Island Otago fiords compare with them. After about five hours we arrived at Balholm at the hotel, and once more look out from our bedroom window across the fiord, while at our backs are huge snowclad mountains.

I might mention that the water at the head of these fiords is potable—quite fresh in fact—it is so far from the open sea, and there is such a tremendous quantity of fresh water running in from waterfalls and rivers, that although the tides are present, little or no mixing with the salt water takes place.

The reason we see so few animals, cows, sheep, goats, is that in summer time girls take them up on to the tops of the

mountains and remain there with them; so from the fiords you cannot see them; all you can see are small houses perched away up in what looks like inaccessible spots, and you wonder at people living there; however, they are only summer shacks for the cowherds or goatherds.

There is a glacier here—the largest in Europe—but as I have a touch of lumbago we are not bothering the ice to-day; anyhow, ice is much the same North, South, East or West, and I like it best when it tinkles in a crystal goblet.

Off to Flam to-day, another fiord trip of five hours' duration.

BY ROAD AND RAIL ACROSS NORWAY.

We left Balholm, on Sognefiord, on Saturday afternoon, about 3.30 p.m., for the Fritheim Hotel and Flam, and arrived by steamer about 8 p.m.; there we stayed the night prior to our trip up the Flam Valley, and the ascent of the Flaamsdal up to Myrdal, where one joins the railway running between Bergen and Oslo.

It is 20 kilometres from Fretheim Hotel to Myrdal, and the trip takes four hours. The reason is this: You are driven up the valley in a little narrow gig, drawn by a diminutive cream-coloured pony; and the gamest little horses I have ever seen are these self-same ponies.

The Flam Valley is just a narrow rift, or gully, winding away up among the mountains, with precipitous, overhanging cliffs and mountain sides all the way up.

You are frequently just hanging to a road cut out of the cliff-side, by the skin of your teeth. The roaring waterfalls pour and tumble down the cliff-sides, making a noisome torrent rushing down the valley. It is all a wonderful and beautiful sight. The driver of the gig sits behind his passengers, but more frequently than not he is walking alongside.

At the end of this valley you can come to a wall of rock, and are shown on the skyline a flagpole marking a large

tourist hotel, and close alongside, a long shed almost on top of the cliff; this is the railway line and marks a snow shed. You marvel how on earth you are going to get up there, but you do; that is the great joke of this trip.

A series of zigzags, twenty or more in number, cut out of the cliff-side, meander up the mountain. Between Flam and Myrdal you rise 860 metres. Zigzag hill is 400 metres long, and during the ascent you rise 1,550 feet; this is not far short of one in one. The road is only the width of the gig and a few feet to allow for a measure of safety; it's quite all right for mountain climbers, goats, and young people, but for fat, elderly sedents it's no good at all.

The pony had to take me up, as, unfortunately, for two days past I had a nasty, sharp attack of lumbago, or a first cousin to it, and at times I was in considerable pain on movement. Everybody complained of sternal pains after this climb, and, although I started off brave as a lion, I had to call "enough" after about four zigs.

The view down the valley we had just come up from Myrdal is most imposing, and the feat of getting up seems to be an impossible one. Photos give some idea, but it looks easy compared with the actual climb. Before I ever go to Switzerland to climb Mount Blanc and the Matterhorn, I will put in six months' intensive training on the "Ned"; can you see me?

Nearly all our tourist party are "Amurricans", by the way, and our closest associates have been a family of Butterbrodts (pronounced Booterbrodt, meaning, of course, butter and bread). We have been persuading them to visit New Zealand. One should never need to go hungry with a name like that. The trip is unique and well worth while, but an aeroplane would be easier and quicker. However, at 12.20 along came the express train for Oslo, drawn by two huge

locomotives. The carriages here are second and third-class, and the second-class is better than our first—larger coaches and better fitted and most comfortable. The train rides smoothly, and the windows are exceptionally large.

This line runs right up to the tops of the mountains, and although summertime, we were running alongside snow and huge glaciers, Magnificent mountain-top scenery is to be had all along the line, and we passed chains of mountain lakes which, of course, in winter are simply solid ice.

At one point the line is running 4,100 feet above sea level, and huge glaciers lie on either side of the railway. The track runs through innumerable tunnels, and snow-sheds many chains long are passed through for quite a few miles; these are to keep the snowdrifts from obstructing the line, and in the winter time huge snow ploughs are hitched on in front of the engines. The timber in these snow-sheds is most massive, and the strength of the structures is enormous, showing what a tremendous weight of snow has to be contended with.

As the train runs down from the mountain chain the whole country gradually changes. On the top there is no vegetation, but lower down one runs into pine trees, and ultimately the country becomes quite habitable and is capable of supporting families. It is interesting to watch the gradual transition from the stern, wild, inhospitable mountain tops to the smiling, more open valleys and undulating country as one approaches Oslo.

It was quite dark when we got there—about 8 p.m.—after a trip full of new scenes and wonders.

Oslo is quite a large city, of nearly 300,000 inhabitants, and beautifully situated away up at the top of a huge sound. It is about 70 kilometres from the open sea, but it is nevertheless a large port.

We had an interesting experience here. Monday, September 2nd, was the opening day of the Oslo University

session. Our room in the Savoy overlooked a huge plaza, or square, in which all the students congregated at 9 a.m., male and female, hundreds of them. The lads wore dinner suits, with a dark cap—loose on top gathered into a button and hanging from there a black cord and a huge black tassel, which they wear hung and resting on the right shoulder. The girls wear a white coat and skirt, with similar black cap and tassel. They formed up and marched through the streets to a large quadrangle in front of the University building, where the rector addressed them. Subsequently, the whole town was full of students all day, and from our sleepless rowdy night, I know it was full of students till daylight did appear.

Good luck to them You are only a student once in a lifetime, and why seek responsibilities before it is necessary to take up the burden?

We had an enjoyable afternoon's sightseeing per medium of a conducted tour, and saw all that we could see in the time; it is all very beautiful. The houses are well built, with exquisite gardens and grounds, and evidently it is quite prosperous.

There are some lovely drives here, with glorious views, and it is a city with a very choice setting.

ON TO SWEDEN.

We left Oslo on Tuesday by the express train for Stockholm. There is quite a good agricultural country to be seen in this part of Sweden, approximating more nearly to our own in many parts, being somewhat like Otago and Southland. A good area is down in oats, but although the harvest seemed a good one, the quality of the grain does not come up to ours, and the growth is much shorter in the stalk; neither is the head so full.

Nevertheless, there are some very nice holdings, and the Swedish farmer seems very efficient, and his farms are

excellent models of neatness, and his work on the fields and about the outbuildings is quite orderly, and creates a very favourable impression. The towns seen en route are prosperous looking and busy. Timber milling is a main industry, and immense areas of the numerous lakes are filled with floating logs, brought down the rivers to the mills. Practically all the homes, farmhouses, and buildings are of wood. It is only in the large business sections and places of importance that stone and brick are used. For the small residences and in the country generally you see wood used, as in New Zealand. In fact, if it were not for the prevalence of pine trees, and the somewhat unusual shape of the houses, you might easily think you were passing through New Zealand country.

Sweden, as we have seen it, is agricultural and pastoral, and here, as in the eastern part of Norway, farming is much as we ourselves know it; but I am quite sure the New Zealand farmer is on a much better wicket.

There is only one thing that keeps the New Zealand farmer with his nose to the grindstone, and it is not the land or the climate.

Between the two capitals one comes across quite a succession of lakes and inland waterways, and Sweden is gradually electrifying her railways. As a matter of fact, it seemed to me that at least half the journey was performed by electric motors. Everywhere you can see fresh standards being set up to carry further live wires, and it won't be very long before the steam engine in Sweden will only be seen in museums.

The railway service, in both Norway and Sweden, is really first-class—and I have been right across Scandinavia from West to East and ought to be able to speak. Engineering difficulties have been surmounted bravely, and the running is easy, fast, and smooth. The restaurant cars are clean, and the food nicely served up, and every effort is made to help the poor ignorant foreigner. Right through we have

been struck with the good manners and unfailing courtesy, not only of the officials of these countries, but the ordinary citizen seems to think it is a privilege to have strangers round about, and goes out of his way or her way to be polite and helpful.

By the time we have got down to Gothenburg (or Goteborg, as they call it), we will have travelled by train in Norway and Sweden about 1,600 kilometres (about 1,000 miles).

Stockholm is an important city with close on half a million inhabitants in the town and suburbs. It seems to be cut in two parts by water, and there are innumerable islands everywhere; as a result it is extremely beautiful.

There are many public buildings of splendid and solid architecture and its new Lutheran Church, Engelbrekts Kyrkan, is somewhat quite out of the ordinary in church architecture. It is built of a brick facing on Swedish granite, and the whole fabric is supported on eight large pillars, from which the arches of the roof spring. Inside it is wonderfully plain, and is unlike anything in the church line seen elsewhere. It is beautiful in its simplicity of style and structure. It has no foundations; the pillars are placed directly on the solid rock.

Their Town Hall, or City Hall, built right on the edge of the water, is another wonderful structure. The gold hall, or banqueting hall, is, I should think, one of the wonders of Europe; it is entirely decorated on the walls with small discs about the size of a sixpence, some golden in colour, and others of various colours of glass, all stuck into the wall by hand; there are 20 millions of these, and it took twenty experts four years to place them—the effect is just marvellous. I think the hall is forty metres long and twelve metres in height, but I really cannot remember all I am told about these places, and cannot refer to any book, as they are all in what is double Dutch to me. The shops here are much ahead of those in Oslo.

The King's Palace, Parliament Buildings, Opera House, Law Courts, Concert Hall, Stadium (where the Olympic Games were held in 1911), Technical College and various churches are all splendidly built and impressive buildings, and are significant signs of the solid worth and civic pride of the residents.

Their Council (town) consists of 100 aldermen, and the Council Chambers where they deliberate is both spacious and tastefully, yet substantially, furnished. There are rows of desks, and each alderman's name is engraved on a brass plate in front of his desk. The room set aside for the executive council is also most expensively finished in chosen woods.

The impression one gets from visiting this Council Hall is that these people are important people—that, although we hear little of them, they must wield a pretty weighty influence in world affairs; in fact, Scandinavia, with its shipping and its various industries, must prove a very considerable factor in Europe's internal economy.

One carpet—a Persian one—in this Council Hall was bought in London and alone cost 20,000 kroners (£1,000). Some of the tapestries are also worth almost untold wealth. Many of the wall decorations in this building were done by Prince Eustace, the King's brother; he spent four years on one subject alone. There is a wonderful clock here, with a procession of gilded figures. At certain hours the story of St. George and the Dragon is represented. Why, I could not quite catch.

The meals here are a puzzle. As the waitresses are almost devoid of any English, it is no use asking what things are; we get all sorts of mixtures. At lunch time we have to go to a large table laden with food dishes, and select our food there; this is known as "Smorgasbord." As there are no labels on the dishes, and everything is quite differently cooked and dished up from what we are used to, one gets the most awful conglomerations and combinations of food-

stuffs. Just have a look at the menu enclosed and think yourself out a decent feed; "a rose by any other name would smell as sweet" and a "lamb steak with French beans" hides itself under "Lammstik in legymer." By the way, mustard hides under the name "senap;" we use the Latin word "sinapis" for mustard in medicine.

We haven't seen a newspaper for about a fortnight; that's what comes of travelling in foreign countries. But we thought we would be safer here than travelling through Mussolini's country. I would hate to be interned in Italy making roads for Il. Duce, and living on macaroni spaghetti and "funiculi funicula."

SWEDEN.

At the present moment we are half-way across the North Sea from Gothenburg (or Goteburg) to London. We left Stockholm on Friday at 8.45 on our run down to Goteburg, somewhere about 300 miles. We had seats in the observation car, so we were "sitting pretty" so far as being able to see the country. The run is mostly through farming lands, and, as I said before, I am quite satisfied that the Swede is a good farmer. The whole line between Stockholm and Gothenburg is electrified, so you have no smoke to contend with, and at the end of your journey you arrive comparatively clean. The whole railway systems of both Norway and Sweden are excellent, and we have thoroughly enjoyed all our trips on these trains. Many towns have been passed through, and all show evidence of strength and solidity. We have been very favourably impressed with the general air of prosperity to be observed on all sides in these countries. We arrived in Gothenburg about 3 p.m. after a six hours' journey, and very shortly after had a good stroll round the business area, ending up with tea and toast in a very nice cafe. Next morning we took an observation bus, and had a good two hours' run round the environs and prominent points of interest.

GOTHENBURG.

Gothenburg has 300,000 inhabitants in round figures. (I have not been informed of the vital statistics of yesterday, so that is as near as I can get). It has splendid public buildings, several public hospitals, each devoted to a particular branch of medicine, and all are situated on hills surrounding the city.

There is a large park here, through which you can drive, and from which some very fine views of the city are obtained. One thing about the city struck us very forcibly, and that was the provision that has been made for open spaces; this is a feature that should be copied where possible. In these spaces on certain days, markets are held, and we saw in several towns most beautiful exhibitions of flowers in the flower markets. These squares certainly are of great value in many ways, one of which is the manner in which the surrounding buildings are enabled to show themselves to advantage. Art galleries, museums, theatres, concert halls seem to be an integral part of these cities; and their educational buildings, schools, colleges, technical schools, and universities are all pointed out by the guides with very evident pride. Sweden, like Norway, takes an immense pride in her educational institutions, and certainly, I could not help my mind reverting to Dunedin and the old Scottish love and desire for schools and the education of the young. It appears to be a Nordic characteristic, and, I think, to a large extent, this strong feature of Nordic life accounts for the position these races hold in the world to-day; and I am very pleased that my footsteps were taken into these northern lands, rather than into the south of Europe, where Latin peoples predominate. There is something solid and lasting about these northern peoples; the physical characteristics of their countries are typical of the people who live in them; they look, both of them, as if they might endure for ever.

Gothenburg is situated very happily as a seaport, and she is rapidly becoming each year a place of greater importance. Steamers leave here for all parts, and there are lines running direct to America, weekly, as well as to all Baltic ports, the Mediterranean, and a special trade has been carefully built up with Britain.

A feature that must strike any visitor to Sweden is their most admirable system of control which they have instituted for the consumption of alcoholic refreshments. There are no bars in their hotels as we know them. You can obtain any form of poison from the humble beer to champagne; but you must sit down in the hotel, and have a meal with it.

If you want to drink, you must also eat, and as there is a limit to the cubic capacity of most gastric organs there is little likehood of imbibing an excess of liquor; this is strictly observed, and, as a matter of fact, there are no hotel bars in the Swedish establishment, and hence there is no necessity of regulation of the traffic by opening up at certain hours as they do in London. Both Sweden and England have this in common—the absence of drunken people in the streets. One never sees, as one does in England and New Zealand, parties of sweet young things sitting around in hotel lounges for hours together sipping cocktails. This, I think, is the most pernicious practice which to-day permeates the public and private habits of our younger generation. I am no spoil sport, I hope, but I have been struck by the number of fatal accidents (motoring) which have occurred in England during my short sojourn here, in which the newspaper report states, "they were driving home from a cocktail party." It is a shame, and the unfortunate fact remains that they do not realize that the cocktail is, perhaps, the most potent and quick-acting of all our drinks. It is the essential oils present which get the deadly work in. But, after all, it is probably only a passing phase, and I don't

think I was sent into the world to reform it. I've too many faults of my own which require attention—the old story of the beam and the mote.

In Sweden the men nearly all smoke thin cigars—not pipes or cigarettes—and the women also, after dinner, think nothing of lighting up a long thin cigar.

Another social item: Swedish girls don't henna their hair; and what platinum blondes there are, are products of nature. Greta Garbos are here by the hundreds, and the girls don't enamel their finger nails or pluck their eyebrows. They are much more natural-looking than the girls in London; in fact, I don't believe there could be found a girl in London who was not a costly product of the hairdresser's and manicurist's art. Body odour had disappeared in London, and its place has been taken by strange and pungent perfumes—the products of Paris and Peking. It would be nice to smell the delicate odour, once again of Lifebouy soap; why not give nature a chance?

They are very athletic people these Swedes and Norsemen. Every town of size has its stadium, and the one at Gothenburg is beautifully situated in a hollow, just below their Botanical Gardens; it seats 20,000 people, and all big football matches take place there. Soccer is their game, as it is in England and Scotland. Soccer is played all over the Continent, and, as a matter of honest fact, scarcely anybody takes the slightest interest in Rugby. The daily papers are full of football, but it is all Soccer; it is followed here just as horse racing is followed up in Australia and New Zealand. Here, in England, I doubt if very many people know that the All Blacks have arrived, or even who they are. It seems lesè majestè to mention this, perhaps, but one may as well be honest about it. The advent of the All Blacks to the English football fan is a matter of little, or no moment,

and he probably hasn't yet heard of it—but mention Hotspurs, Arsenal, Chatham, or Aston Villa, and he knows it all. Soccer is the game of the millions, Rugby of the thousands.

Of course, Soccer here is practically all "pro." Players are bought and sold like slaves in the slave market; each player of note has his price in the secretary's office, and if you have enough money you may buy him. I hope New Zealand will always keep their Rugby game purely amateur. We have had our fights in the past for this phase of the game, and I think to-day the Rugby game is freer from the money element than it was a few years ago. Money too often means "dirt" in many forms of sport. I've seen too much of it in my day, and you ought to hear about dirty tactics in English Soccer at the present time; they have even had conferences about it! You see, if you have a man you have just paid £5,000 for, and he gets "woodened out" in the first game or so—deliberately—it hurts, not only the man, but the pockets of the club. Yet, there it is, so much money bet on every game, so much at stake, and so much bitterness; ergo, so many "accidents." No! Keep Rugby out of this bottomless pit at all costs.

Well, well, this is a deuce of a strange letter—Sweden, beer, cocktails, farming, football, etc. We arrive in London to-morrow morning, and commence packing up, squaring up, tearing up, and tearing round, preparatory to leaving England.

CHAPTER IX.

HOMEWARD BOUND.

HAVING cleaned up all our various odds and ends in London and transacted the last of our shopping, we sailed on Saturday, from Tilbury. There was a fresh breeze blowing, and when we turned into the Channel we gradually steamed into a gale. By Sunday night, rounding Ushant, we were doing a merry dance into the famed Bay of Biscay; we didn't mind the roll or the pitch, but when we started the corkscrew dive act, with the reverse service, we were quite satisfied that what we had heard about this Bay was quite correct. Most people were down to it; A.C. and A.R. were cot cases, but the "tough guys" survived. I missed Sunday night's dinner, but T. never turned a hair. Monday was a rough day, but by Tuesday we were out of the Bay and down past Finisterre, while the weather became beautifully fine, with everybody up and about. This is a full ship, but we are quite comfortable.

GIBRALTAR.

We were on deck at 6 a.m. this morning, as we were anxious to see the boat enter the famous Strait of Gibraltar. The morning broke fine, a perfectly calm sea—a summer morning if ever there was one. It was a never-to-be-for-

gotten experience to realize that this Strait was the gateway to the West for the nations of the Mediterranean littoral for the past 3000 years. We felt like the Ancient Phoenicians beating up from Cornwall laden with tin, the only difference being that we had left most of our tin in Cornwall. Shaving, bathing, and breakfasting being over by 7 a.m. we were ready to go ashore by tender for our two hours' motor drive all round and about Gibraltar.

(By the way, five hefty battleships arrived here inside The Mole last night, the "Hood" and "Renown" being two of them, also "Orion,"' "Achilles," and a lot of "F" destroyers; this in view of Mussolini's ultimatum, which he is supposed to deliver to-day).

I am not going to attempt to describe all we did, but we saw such a lot of interesting features. The bull ring in the Spanish quarter holds 10,000 people. The water catchment area is very wonderful; on the eastern side of the Rock they have concreted a huge space (38 acres) just like the roof of a house; this is the sole supply of drinking water for Gibraltar. As it has not rained here since May they are just hoping for a good downpour. The reservoirs are in the heart of the Rock itself. They have a good racecourse at the foot of the Rock, Spanish side.

They were preparing a matting wicket on Europa Point this morning, and the cricket field, as smooth as Lancaster Park, had not one blade of grass on it. As it was a glorious day, the view across the Strait to the African shore, and over to Algeciras, on the other side of the Bay, was simply magnificent. The water was a beautiful deep sapphire blue, while the distant mountains, both of Africa and of Spain, were very alluring in the morning haze.

The history of this strategic spot is anybody's for the reading up, and although in these days of giant artillery and gunfire, the defences would probably soon crumble, as a naval base and as a grim sentinel of Britain it has a moral force as well as a physical one.

The shopping area is much as one finds it in similar towns situated in trade and tourist routes the world over, and we did our little bit of bargaining over a glass of iced lager. We took a few photos of interesting sights and embarked on the tender at 11 a.m., laden with the spoils of Egypt, and bunches of the most delicious grapes we have ever tasted. Sharp at 11.30 we steamed away towards Toulon, over a Mediterranean behaving as lake-like as could possibly be, 'neath cloudless skies.

TOULON.

Yesterday, being Friday, we once more arose "cum larko" as Caesar had it, the occasion being the arrival of the good ship "Orsova" at the French naval base, Toulon. This is a splendid harbour, and well land-locked, with gaunt, miniature mountains at the back of the town, rocky, and bare, and of a limestone formation looking like the heads of a colony of bald-headed eagles.

This harbour fairly bristles with defence; on every hand one observes suspiciously domed grassy knolls, each is a concealed fort, with an elevating steel cupola, under which the guns nestle. Talking of "nestle" reminds me of milk, but I can assure you this place does not deal in the milk of human kindness, whatever other kind of milk the innumerable goats provide. Behind the moles we found, after our entry into the inner harbour, some 50 French warships of all sizes and dimensions, from aircraft carriers to submarines.

It looks as if somebody was waiting to see which way the Italian cat jumps. Seaplanes are continually in the air, and, after seeing our own Gibraltar and the French naval base here, I am prepared to back France and England in any little bare knuckle fight they get dragged into. We don't want to fight, but we have got a nasty dirty left, with a hefty right cross to follow, if anyone is really asking for it.

Bergen—Norway, Fruit and Vegetable Market.

Sogne Fiord, Balholm.

After the usual morning preliminaries we caught the first tender for the Quai Cronstadt, and went ashore for orders before 10 a.m. We hired private cars, two of them as we were a party of ten, and about 11 a.m. set out for Nice. We took the inland route in the morning, and passed through hundreds of acres of vineyards. On both sides of the road and away up on the foothills (which are terraced as is done in China and Italy to make use of every available inch of ground) for miles and miles one sees nothing but grape vines. They cultivate the grape here on small bushes, much as we grow raspberries, but on bushes slightly lower in stature, and the luscious purple bunches, sometimes the greenish variety, abound on every side, making one's mouth water in the anticipation of cracking anon a bottle or two of the various alcoholic improvements of the grape-juice, so bounteously provided by the good people of these parts. Where there are no grapes there are olive plantations, while the manufacture of olive oil is another of their staple industries.

The road is very beautiful (bitumenized all the way), and is made more so by the marvellous avenues of plane trees, which trees are planted about 15 to 20 feet apart, and form a green bower by arching right across and over the road, providing a wonderful leafy tunnel, and most grateful shade from the hot sun, for it was one of those perfect Riviera days read of in books—not a cloud in the sky, not a breath of wind, and a cerulean blue sea, unruffled by even a fitful zephyr, leading surely to the Garden of the Hesperides. No, this is not William Locke.

We rested awhile 'neath the tum-tum tree at a prettily situated estaminet by the wayside; it looked so enticing with its multi-coloured umbrellas, tangerine cane chairs and glass-topped tables, all set out on the footpath, that here, we thought, the juice of the grape would be at its very best, and we rememberd dear old Omar with his glass of wine, his book of verse, and thou. And so we tarried a space.

We lunched at the Hotel du Pavillon, Cannes, in the open, sheltered by a rustic rush-roofed structure in the midst of a wonderful semi-tropical garden blooming with all the blooms that bloom in the spring, tra, la, and in any other old season, whose names I never knew, and anyhow, have quite forgotten, but the said blooms are nevertheless mightly beautiful, while date-palms and orange-trees festooned the stage, the picture being completed by a back cloth, which surpassed even Charlie Forrest's best effort in the "'Gondoliers."

The nearest approach to the Mediterranean I can get is a packet of Reckitt's blue; so now, if you shut your eyes after reading all this, you may get a vivid representation of where we ate our midday meal, correctly "dejeuner."

We had a delightful omelette, followed by salad, the most tender, delicious lamb cutlets, with potatoes in jackets, also chips; and a most luscious melon, with baskets of various fruits and grapes completed a well-served and well-cooked meal. It was washed down with various libations according to the individual taste.

Schweppes dry ginger tastes the same here as it does in any other part. Our lunch cost us in English money 6s 8d, or, in French, 25 francs. Then, after taking a few "snaps" and inspecting the sanitary arrangements and the plumbing of this large and imposing restaurant and hotel, and finding everything "O.K." (this, I find, is quite good French, and is evidently adopted, as in other countries, into the Lingua Franca of this one) we embarked in the cars once more and set off through Juan-les-Pins and Antibes for our destination at Nice, 200 kilometres from Toulon.

The towns, and the buildings included in them, on the Riviera are so different from anything hitherto seen on our travels that it is difficult to place a correct picture before you by mere, written words.

In the first place, probably the first thing that strikes one is the harmonious blending of the colour schemes of the

general architecture with the natural surroundings; and, again, the buildings show an artistry and care which is entirely lacking in seaside resorts seen elsewhere. In England, especially, there is a monotonous regularity of structure and of colour which borders almost at times on the horrible. The sea-fronts of many English watering-places with their bulky, blatant caravanserai all conceived in the same stony womb, gigantic abortions of cement and steel, dumb children brought into the world after a lengthy labour, looking for all the world like Tweedledum and Tweedledee or as peas in a pod, the resultant effort being nothing more or less than a ghastly series of atrocities which offend the artistic eye and give one a mental pain.

There are worse monuments in England than those sculptured by Mr. Epstein, and that's hard to believe.

It seems we have got a long way from the Riviera, but my pen is very wayward and has never learned to run on rails. The whole of this coast is indescribably beautiful. All the way through the Corniche Riviera, the small villages, the coast line, the glistening little bays, the rocky headlines, and the strangely contoured hills are a dream of loveliness.

We have seen nothing so near being heaven-like, nothing which would come closer to one's desire for a few years of the autumn of one's life to be spent amid such peace, such calm, such content. You may say I am rhapsodising, but it really does, on the day we saw it, make one think of "the peace which passeth all understanding."

There are no slums here; there seems no sordidness; no unhappiness; the children seem well fed, well clothed and all happy; happiness seems to be the main feature of these people's lives. Their streets are clean (there are few dogs), they have large, open spaces everywhere; they know the value of beautiful green trees; they live in lovely houses; even the small places are clean and neat. The women dress well, and carry themselves as if they are God's crea-

tures, not mincing marionettes. The men are bearded and brown, and, although Latins and not Nordic, are anything but effete.

What men I saw on the beaches were virile, alert, quick, active men—and the young women! I think I have a recollection of seeing a picture somewhere of "Aphrodite arising out of the sea"—we saw dozens of Aphrodites yesterday, but motor-cars like time and tide, wait for no man.

We saw a very splendid war memorial in Nice: it is on a rocky point, and is built into the face of a cliff fronting the road; it is well conceived and perfectly executed, most striking in every way, and is built in the form of a huge shrine, the top of which reaches almost to the brow of the cliff, which is, I should guess, 60-80 feet high.

We did a little shopping here; I tried to get a pair of shorts in a big store here, but after several waist measurements in centimetres and pulling down nearly all their stock, they had to give it best—44 inches in centimetres was too much for them.

We returned via the coast road through Antibes, Juan-les-Pins, Cannes, San Raphael, Frejus, and St. Tropez, and arrived back in Toulon about 9.30 after 400 kilometres of rapid transit, but withal a glorious day's outing, the whole day costing the two of us exactly £4 4s. (English); that's not bad for a 250 mile run, with meals, drinks, and everything else; it would have cost us a lot more by recognized methods.

San Raphael is a pretty little town on the Corniche littoral where we stopped for a spell, and sat out on the Piazza drinking Cognac Courvoisier with iced soda; this was the "real McKay" under a perfectly good French name: "Courvoisier"—a name to conjure with if you can't always gargle it.

Well, I've written about all I remember of it. The evening was as delightful as the day had been; the

lights and shades, the shadows of departing day, the changing colours as the daylight faded into the oblivion of night, will not readily be forgotten, as some poet has it:

"O'er sea, o'er sky, and over all
Came Peace . . . "

Well, if he hasn't got it, it's there now. We are glad we took this opportunity which presented itself; we have seen one of the glories of this old world, and we feel better for it!

We tumbled into bed a bit shop-soiled about 11 p.m.--not a bad day's work. To-day we are resting and getting ready for "The Last Days of Pompeii," on the morrow, by Bulwer Lytton and Noble-Adams.

NAPLES.

"Veni, Vidi, Victimi," which being interpreted means, that we have put our feet ashore on the land of the Caesars, have seen the departed glories of ancient cities, and in the process have been taken down, or victimised, in more or less degree, according to the persuasiveness of the seller and the gullability of the buyer. I hope J. Caesar will pardon my rather free use of his so well-known cablegram to Rome, and the slight alteration found necessary to the original message.

We rose at 5.30 a.m. and got up on deck to find ourselves some 15 miles from land, and right dead ahead the smoking summit of Vesuvius. It was another glorious morning, almost windless and a sea as calm as the proverbial millpond. The sun rising behind the mountains in the direction of Amalfi soon brought into relief and sharpened all the serried lines of mountains and hills behind the beautiful expanse of the famed Bay of Naples.

Every moment brought into focus some new point of interest, ships a-sailing, fishing-boats pushing off to the fishing-grounds, rocky islets, cliffgirt, terraced by centuries of workers from summit to cliff edge.

Scattered everywhere along the shores of the Bay are isolated villages, some along the sea margin, others perched on what seem inaccessible rocky precipices, others nestling in valleys showing green amid the arid, bare-looking mountains. All these towns and villages being perfectly white against the dark background have a wonderful effect when seen across the blue, dancing water, picked out by brilliant sunshine.

Much has been written about the Bay of Naples, and the approach by sea on such a morning as it was our privilege to strike was certainly most alluring and satisfying. There is a decided charm and a fascination about these old world beauties which probably is enhanced by the realization of the actuality, after a lifetime of anticipation.

Yet, after all, there are other beautiful harbours and cities beside these of the Mediterranean; think of the ones we have in New Zealand seen under the correct conditions, and then tell me if there is anything more charming than Auckland from Rangitoto Channel, Wellington from Point Jerningham, or Dunedin from the Bay, Sydney, looking back from the ferry boats on the run down to Manly, is as beautiful a sight as one could wish to see; and I am told that Rio de Janeiro is unsurpassed by anything in the world.

Nevertheless, there is a glamour about these old Mediterranean ports with their age-old stories which places them easily first in interest among all the places we have seen; you cannot help once again living in the past, for Ulysses, Helen of Troy, Hannibal, St. Paul, Alexander the Great, Ptolemy, the Caesars, the Borgias, Cleopatra, etc., etc., are names which leap to your lips; while in your mind's eye you picture the journeyings hither and thither up and down this sea; the trading from port to port; the sea fights; the rise and fall of nations and of peoples.

This inland sea has borne on its bosom the fleets and mercantile marine of the world from the earliest days right

on up till to-day; just cast your mind back over the ages to such names as these; Greece, Constantinople, Byzantium, Alexandra, Tyre, Carthage, Rome, Venice, Genoa, Malaga, etc. Civilization probably began on these shores, and if things go wrong now and another Armageddon is the culmination of the present crisis, civilization, as we know it, may end in these very waters which saw its birth.

Naples is not a naval base, and there was little in the way of naval strength to be seen here, only a few destroyers; but in other ways evidences were to be seen of Italy's fevered preparation for war; thousands of men are arriving here, and huge transports are lying at the Quay-side.

Right alongside us was the *Piemonti* laden on every deck with mules, and all day they were still lowering them in slings into the holds. On deck the mules were packed so closely that their haunches were rubbing together; the poor brutes will have to stand like this in their boxes for at least a week; I suppose they will have a tarpaulin shelter placed over them, but those on the upper deck had no protection from the broiling sun while standing in port.

All day long the quays were lined by companies of men all accoutred and with impedimenta stacked in front of each enough to weigh down an ox. I can't see any fun in being a private soldier, although these chaps looked cheerful enough. Great pontoons of ammunition lay between the *Orsova* and the *Piemonti* and I wondered what might occur if anyone dropped the anchor suddenly on one of them.

The general opinion here is that all will end in smoke and that this vast preparation is a huge bluff put up to create an impression, and that there will be no war, at least war as we knew it 20 years ago; let us devoutly hope so, but I don't like the idea of Hitler and Mussolini combining forces, and that is what might easily be brewing in Europe to-day. It would be a nasty draught to swallow; Italian vermouth with German lager, and take a lot of digesting.

As our time at this port was limited to a few hours it was impossible to get more than a fleeting impression of the town proper; we were in the hands of "Cook's" and were making a run through to Pompeii by motor, 16 miles away, over a beautifully laid out new road, called "Autostrada," of quite modern construction, bitumenized and broad, and, for the greater part, elevated above the surrounding country, providing a most excellent view; this road runs along the seaward side of Vesuvius, round towards the back of the mountain from where Naples lies.

On the Naples side is to be seen very distinctly the funicular railway which runs straight up the mountain-side right to the cone at the top. From the Pompeiian side one discerns the zigzag motor-road winding its way precariously upwards. A mile or so from Pompeii we tarried at a very "posh" hotel and restaurant where there is an exhibition of carver's work in coral, seashell, and tortoise-shell.

There is some rather fine work done here, especially in the cutting and engraving of cameos. One necklace of coral was valued at £1,500, and the chappie said that if I was game to write a cheque for it he was sport enough to let me have the necklace. Unfortunately, I had no cheque-book with me—or fortunately, perhaps; I understand there is a crime known at "uttering a valueless cheque."

There are some "bee-utifool tings" here, that necklace is supposed to be the most beautiful coral necklace in the world, and, so far, no woman, apparently, has been found beautiful enough to wear it.

On the basis of 60 lira to the £1 we, however, were able to buy a few trinkets, the lira being worth 4d.

It was a very hot day; fortunately I was clad in linen (no purple), but before going very far I was glad to slip off my coat and place a white silk handkerchief in my Panama to protect my neck, as there is little or no shade to be found in the practically roofless series of ruins.

Contrary to general belief, it was not Vesuvius, which is active to-day, that was responsible for the destruction of Herculaneum and Pompeii, but the peak known as Somma, which is now as dead as the Dodo.

Herculaneum was buried under lava, and it is practically impossible to resurrect and dig it out, as the material is too hard. Pompeii was engulfed in red hot ashes, and cinders, so it is possible to excavate here quite easily as the material is very similar to the formation in the banks found round Taupo; it is fairly soft and easily disintegrates. Pompeii was covered to a depth of some 20 feet or more, and fresh excavations are being made as time goes on. The streets, theatres, forums, baths, temples, and dwelling-houses are laid bare much as they were two thousand years ago. We walked through some three miles or more, and were given an idea of what a Roman city of those days was like.

On thing strikes a visitor, and that is, the old Roman believed in public baths; they are elaborate in their detail and their scope. Bathing and exercise, with recreation such as the gladiatorial shows and theatres, were an intimate part of these people's lives. Even a form of bowls was played in Pompeii; I saw the same game being played everywhere in the South of France; they play on any open space, and the bowls are of stone, about half as large again as a cricket ball; they are thrown as well as bowled, no bias and no prepared surface is required, it is something like the game of quoits.

Life went on in Pompeii much as it does to-day; one sees the baker's shops, the mills for grinding corn, the doctor's surgery, the apothecary's shop, the butcher's shop with stone block, the wine shops and the wine amphorae, also shops of a kind you don't usually see in New Zealand. Halls of justice and temples of worship complete the picture.

It seems strange to see in the houses inscriptions, frescoes, all the *lares et penates* which make a home, just as they

were that dreadful night so many years ago; at the corner of one street there had probably been a Masonic lodge, for on the wall was a placque bearing the various insignia so well known to that ancient brotherhood—the square, the gavel, the compasses, the rule, all were there.

In the museum within the walls one sees all manner of relics; loaves of bread untouched, blackened to cinders of charcoal; even the moulding around the edges of the bread is perfectly shown. Linen garments are here folded in heaps like piles of table napkins, all charred to mere bundles of charcoal. Here we see the surgeon's instruments, and the chemist's measures and scales; in fact, almost everything pertaining to the civil life of the population. The bodies, or casts of them in cement, cleverly filled into the cavities made by the actual body in the cinder mass, are here shown in all the contorted positions adopted in the horrible death-throes caused by the suffocation with the boiling steam and sulphurous gases. The like death must have been suffered by those poor people who were overwhelmed by the Tarawera eruption some 50 years ago in New Zealand.

We spent a most interesting morning, and hot, dusty, and tired we were glad to step once more through the Marine gate down the hill to a hotel where, to the strains of Funiculi Funicula (it was Sunday) and a small orchestra, we all slaked our thirst in Italian lager. (I may remark here, in case anyone should think we have drunk too copiously of alcoholic refreshment in our peregrinations, that in these parts it is quite unsafe to drink water: it is considered more advisable to risk a mild degree of alcoholic intoxication rather than risk a possible tummy-ache, or a dose of typhoid. Anyhow, lager off the ice tastes a whole lot better).

If you want to know all about Pompeii, read Pliny's account of the eruption, or take up Bulwer Lytton's "Last Days of Pompeii," either will repay you.

We got back to the ship about 1 p.m. to see more mules being hoisted aboard the *Piemonti* and more troops parading on the Quay: she sails at 6 p.m.

There is a very large slum area in Naples, and the town doesn't look clean, and doesn't smell clean. However, there are some very fine city squares with elegant statuary, but their electric tramcars are the worst I have ever seen.

Off once more, about 2.30 p.m., we passed the famed island of Capri with its Blue Grotto, which has come into prominence again of recent years through Axel Muenthe's "Story of San Michele," and the last we saw of the Bay of Naples was just what we saw at first, with Vesuvius smoking and belching away as it has done for so many hundreds of years. And so, another eventful day in my life is passed, and another page turned down: I hope it has not been unprofitable.

We are ten days out, all are well, and we are quite glad to be homeward bound.

PORT SAID.

At the present moment I am sitting in our cabin on the Orsova clad only in a pair of khaki shorts, a short-sleeved shirt, and a pair of rope-soled sandals.

For we are in the Gulf of Aden, having come down through the canal since 3.30 yesterday afternoon. Once again, after the lapse of several thousand years, this part of the world looms largely in public interest. Round about here was the scene of the Israelites' flight out of Egypt, their pursuit by Pharaoh's hosts, the passage across the Bitter Lake, dry shod, the destruction of the Egyptian army, and in the Sinai desert on our port bow looms Mount Sinai.

Here Moses received the tables of stone containing the Commandments, with all the "thou shalt nots" which form the basis of most of our moral code to-day. There is really nothing more interesting than a perusal once again of that wonderful journey made by the Israelites of old through

the desert on their way to the Promised Land. One begins to realise what a wonderful old chap Moses was, and it must astound the legal fraternity to see how all our legal enactments have their foundation in the Mosaic Law given to us so many centuries ago.

After having a good look at Mount Sinai through the glasses I must say I have a great respect for Moses. The mountain is about 7,500 feet high and is built on the same lines and specifications as the Remarkables at Lake Wakatipu. Moses put up a remarkable feat of climbing, and as we are told that he remained on top for forty days and forty nights during which time the thunders and lightnings crashed continuously, the summit being hidden from the common herd, it was a truly remarkable feat of endurance.

In my library at home is a book by Professor Sayce, of Oxford, on some excavations in Mesopotamia. Here I have read of one Hammurabi, who lived in Arcadia in the time of the Summerian Kings, and who also had a similar code of laws a thousand years or so before Moses.

So there's nothing new under the sun and every story has been told somewhere before.

It is quite a jump from Moses to Mussolini, but once again these parts are probably causing more eyes to be glued upon them, than any other spot on the globe. It remains to be seen what will happen.

In the meantime it is proposed to cancel all sailings of passenger ships through the Mediterranean and Suez Canal and to divert them round the Cape of Good Hope owing to the increased insurance premiums. Probably we may be the last ship through here, but it does not seem to be worrying anybody on board, though possibly we shall wake up tomorrow night and start reciting that well known poem, "The Wreck of the Hesperus." "Oh father, I hear the sound of guns, oh pray, what may it be?" Well, if we hear it, the answer will be dead easy.

The Italian boy to the war has gone;
In the ranks of death you'll find him;
His Lewis gun he has girded on
And his wild Duce stays behind him.

By the way there was a large British battleship lying at Port Said yesterday. I don't know what she was or what her business was, but it was nice to see her there—very comforting and safe.

I am no prophet, and I can't hazard an opinion as to whose hordes will next cross the Red Sea. It may be Mussolini's hoping for the seas to divide and allow them to cross dry shod, and it may be the poor Abyssinians, but whichever way it goes it will be worth seeing and, as I said before, history always repeats itself.

We arrived at Port Said yesterday morning about 9.30 and coaling operations commenced at once. Huge barges draw up to the ship on either side, filled to the gunwale with coal and gangs of Egyptian labourers.

Everything inboard, in the way of carpets, hangings, etc., is hidden away, and all decks have canvas covers lowered; all portholes are closed; everything in the shape of clothes is secreted in drawers and wardrobes; and the dirty job commences. A constant stream of coal heavers walk up a plank carrying full baskets, which they empty into the bunker doors and descend by another plank, while others keep on filling up the emptied baskets. And so a constant never-ending stream of coal carriers soon make short work of many tons of coal. It is just like watching bees carrying honey into the hive.

One can hardly see the lighters and the men while work is going on for the pall of coal dust which envelopes everything. All round the ship from the time of our arrival, men and mere boys remain in the water diving for pennies for quite an hour at a time. I did not throw any pennies in as I had a fear that the swimmers might not see them

and so they would, unnoticed, sink to the bottom of the harbour. I would have loved to have thrown one or two pennies but I do hate waste. These are times when Scottish upbringing, the habits of thrift and caution, are memories which bring their own reward.

As soon as possible we left the ship, crossing to the shore on a series of pontoons roped together. Then began our experiences at Port Said.

Now, Barabbas was a robber. Yes, quite so. And if the Jewish people had allowed the law to take its course, instead of interfering and persuading Pilate to allow him to go free, Port Said would, perhaps, have been a "better 'ole" than it is. Barabbas is represented here by scores of unregenerate descendants—a pestiferous crowd of hucksters and mountebanks of all sizes and all descriptions.

These itinerant hawkers lie in wait for the shore-coming tourists, in their battalions. They are willing to guide you anywhere, or sell you anything. They form up on every side of you and make one's entry into the city a kind of triumphant procession, the triumph being, however, all on their side. There is one admirable trait in their character. They are indomitable, and they do not know the meaning of the word "impossible." Every shop door vomits forth gesticulating, vociferating natives, who endeavour, by cajolments and a recitation of their varied stocks, to entice the unsuspecting innocent into the emporiums.

You may want to buy, or you may not, but your own previously considered plans, if you happened to be a customer, are driven clean out of your head by the frantic bedlam and perfect babel of sound which surrounds you.

We shook off most of our heterogeneous mob by taking refuge at an open air restaurant, the enemy being kept more or less on the street by the gyppo policeman while we sat impotent and done to a frazzle, endeavouring to remember if what we were drinking was really whisky and soda or

something strange and foreign. Here we were run to earth by a clever conjurer who, in asking me to kiss 'em good-bye, relieved me of two good florins and left me with two poor little day-old chickens. (And I never eat anything with feathers).

We had our photos *"took,"* our palms read (we should have had our heads read). We bought silver necklaces offered at 15s. for 1s. 6d. We brought down the price of Turkish delight and dates (good for the stomach) from 2s. per box to 6d.

But after an hour or so of this sort of thing I suddenly had the idea to be deaf and dumb. So I merely pointed to my mouth and ears and tried to look sillier than usual.

That was a useful and happy thought, and I began to be left alone.

There are one or two quite good shops here. One in particular—that of Simon Arzt—would not feel out of place if it were set down in London in Oxford Street. Here one can buy from a varied assortment of goods at most reasonable prices and up on top is a delightful tea room with a fine outlook over the harbour.

We retired in good order, still pursued by a relentless enemy, right up to the gangway of the ship and even the ship was stormed by boarding parties.

It really was humorous to see the ship's passengers arriving a constant stream from away down the quayside. It looked like the inhabitants of a stricken city fleeing from an invader, clutching to their bosoms their cherished household goods, only in this case it was the invader fleeing from the city with his hard-won trophies. It was a relief to get aboard once more.

The native quarter of Port Said is extremely dirty, the squalor is indescribable, and it smells unto high heaven. They have, however, a splendid sandy beach much like Tahuna in Nelson; situated on the far side of the breakwater.

There are some quite fine buildings here, the police and the canal administration buildings being outstanding. A fine statue of de Lesseps, the French engineer, is erected on the mole and is most striking to the incoming visitor.

To show what kind of salesmen the gyppos are, one store here is said to have sold 300 pith helmets or topees to the passengers of the Orsova. I don't know how true this may be, but Ted and I look quite decent in ours. ("Dr. Livingstone I presume?").

SUEZ CANAL.

We started off down the canal at 3.30 p.m. This trip is quite uninteresting—so different from the Panama voyage. There are no locks in the passage and the highest ground encountered rises only to a little over 60 feet. It was along side the banks of this canal that the Turks attacked and attempted a crossing in the Great War, February, 1915. Some of our boys will doubtless remember the camp at Moascar, the headquarters of the British troops. A little further down, in the smaller of the Bitter Lakes, the Turks mined and sank a vessel in the fairway.

At night time each vessel proceeding along the canal is provided with a powerful searchlight and both sides right ahead are brilliantly lit. The canal was opened in 1869, thus accomplishing a project that had been in the minds of many men for centuries. As far back as the time of Rameses II, a canal joining up the Nile with the Red Sea was under way, and the work was completed under Darius of Persia in 487 B.C. An enlarged and extended canal built by Ptolemy in 285 B.C. enabled ships to pass from sea to sea via the Nile.

The canal makes a difference of several thousand miles in the journey from one hemisphere to another, and the actual length of the canal from Port Said to Suez is 87½ miles. Its average width is from 100 to 160 metres, but the deep channel is only about 45 to 60 metres (say 150-200

Wayside Refreshment Estaminet, Riviera, South France.

Troops Embarking for the Front, Naples.

feet). It takes from 12 to 15 hours to pass through the canal and the cost to a boat like the Orsova is somewhere about £3,000.

The extraordinary alertness of Disraeli in 1875 enabled Great Britain to purchase for £4,000,000 the Khedive of Egypt's shares in the Canal Company, thus becoming one of the largest shareholders. Disraeli did this on his own initiative, not waiting for the conformation of his Cabinet. It was a shrewd stroke for Britain, as these shares to-day are worth ten times the money expended. The total cost of the construction of this canal was £57,000,000. It certainly was one of the great engineering feats of the Nineteenth Century, and will remain a wonder until everything goes by air; a lasting monument to that celebrated Frenchman of great vision and faith, Ferdinand de Lesseps.

Success in life often depends on more than one's own unaided efforts. So many factors must be taken into account over which the individual may have little or no control; on the contrary, if the balance be weighed down against you by opposing elements you may sink into the obscurity of an unknown grave, and die dispirited and broken-hearted.

At Suez one may see a statue to the memory of a Lieutenant Waghorn who opened the overland mail route to India in 1837. The statue was erected by de Lesseps to mark the lifelong efforts of Waghorn to interest the British people in a canal scheme. He got neither help nor sympathy and died in poverty in 1858. It seems strange nowadays to realise that the British authorities were opposed to the canal project for many years and would have nothing to do with it.

From Port Said to Aden takes four days' sail, during which you do nothing; you can't. The least movement sets the sweat glands working overtime and one is merely a sticky mess. I just wonder if it can be hotter anywhere else in this world and the next. It is not only hot (95 deg. one

day) but the humidity is so high. Fortunately the weather otherwise has been delightful and we are lucky in the choice of our cabin—plenty of air and plenty of room, and the cold (?) salt water shower works overtime at our place.

Unexpectedly, we put into Aden to land a marine officer who had received a wireless to join his ship there, as it had been recalled from Australia. So we went to Aden, a God forsaken spot. It reminds one of Gibraltar, being a high bare rock surmounted by nasty precipitous crags. Vegetation is conspicuous by its absence, and life here in barracks must be a sheer purgatory. There were nine warships in the anchorage, and we seem to have a good "possie" at both ends of this inland sea—Gibraltar and Aden.

After leaving here we got a glimpse next day of Italian Somaliland. This is a dreadful bit of country to look at—a coast of rocky headlands and sandy beaches. Inland, so far as one can see there is nothing but arid desert sands and burnt up country. It looks as if it never rained here. A few date palms and a low scrub are all that one can make out. If anything or anybody lives here it is not apparent, and it is difficult to believe that life could exist in such surroundings. From Port Said to Aden we never saw an acre one would offer a shilling for.

Even the Cawthron Institute would give this land best. A soil expert is not required in these parts; there isn't any soil. We were lucky indeed that we did not strike a mongoose—or is it a monsoon? If I remember rightly, I read an article in the *Express* some time ago telling us that, of course, we would not know or probably had never heard of, a monsoon. Well, I still have not experienced one, and as the conditions aboard ship are most unpleasant, portholes being shut, making the distress from the moist heat almost unbearable, we have much to be thankful for.

I noticed that the "All Blacks" were beaten by Swansea. Every dog has his day, and New Zealand Rugby will come

into its own again when the wheel turns round a bit more. I feel sure that forward play in New Zealand has gone back of late years. Whether it is the new formation or not is an arguable point, but the fact remains that the beautiful solid set scrums with the slight thrust and the lightning hooking of the ball, the five-eighths away before the scrum breaks is a thing of the past. I know that we old chaps are supposed to live in the past, but we have seen it, and you have seen it also in your day which was only ten years ago or so.

New Zealand forwards have not mastered the new scrum formation, and until it can be used to its best advantage we must occasionally lose a match. My own opinion is that it is a clumsy scrum, not a neat tidy pack at all, and there is not much scope for unity of effort. In the 2, 3, 2, scrum now discarded, the lock man made the scrum, there was one general, one controlling brain, and there lay the secret of success; it was a beautiful wedge with the weight concentrated all in one place towards the centre or apex of the wedge. I would rather see New Zealand play 14 men and pack the scrum, than play 15 and use the new English style; I fancy we would be still almost unbeatable; however, that's only my view.

Crossing from Aden to Colombo through the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea took six days: six hot days they were. It is quite true that this part of the world is probably more trying to the white man than any other spot on this globe; it isn't that the thermometer is so high, but the degree of humidity is excessive, one cannot move without simply pouring sweat. Some people don't like this word, but it is good Anglo-Saxon, and I have lost 7lbs. of "sweat" during the last week. One takes a cold salt shower bath, and find after it that it is impossible to dry one's self—you continue to drip.

Most of the women on board seem to be wearing a pair of brassieres, some not that, and a pair of abbreviated pants. (By the way, in some mysterious way there is a method adopted whereby the brassiere has no back—a small cord round the neck supports all that is necessary. I do not know what material the cord is made of, but it must be tested to a high breaking strain, for a lot depends on its reliability).

There is a delightful freedom about life on shipboard, however, and even at dinner the only alteration one notices is that the women put on a skirt, why, I don't know, but that is all the appreciable difference: I often sit at dinner and refresh my anatomical memory by counting the vertebral spines, dorsal and lumber, mentally assigning the correct position of the kidneys and lower limits of the pleural cavity. It is all very useful and instructive. (As the old Jew in Aberdeen said to little Isaac, aged six or seven years, when advising him to go out and play with wee Angus McPherson —"You should always try to learn something from your play"). On the other hand, if I dared go down to dinner in shirt sleeves without a jacket of some sort on, I would get a polite hint from the Captain, per medium of the head waiter, to "please retire" and conform to the usages of polite society. Isn't it a funny world? What is sauce for the goose has to be the whole pudding for the gander—meanwhile I continue to refresh me of my regional anatomy.

My first experience of an urgent operation at sea occured on Friday: the surgeon called me in to consult on the advisability of operation in an appendix case; as we agreed on its acuteness everything was got ready, and in an hour's time the deed was done. I was asked to give the anaesthetic, and I am glad to say everything passed off quite happily for all concerned. (I would like to say that every facility was afforded, all dressings, swabs, and instruments being sterilized in drums, as in other places. I had a steward whose

sole duty was to attend to my wants, and we had a trained sister on the staff as well as a trained assistant, or orderly. Another nurse also helped, so we had everything we required in the way of assistance).

I had a call the other night (about 12 midnight) for a consultation in another case which looked like and simulated an acute abdomen, but, fortunately, we held off here, and were rewarded by seeing the patient settle down to a diaphragamatic pleurisy.

There is a fair amount of work on board: you see we are fairly full, between 800 and 900 people on board, so that, by the law of averages, we must have some sickness. Anyhow, the young surgeon is a good competent chap.

CEYLON.

Made landfall somewhere about 5 a.m., and shortly after we arose and got out on deck awaiting an early breakfast, and to get our passports checked by the police who came aboard about 7 a.m.

Colombo is a large city of some 300,000 inhabitants, mostly Cingalese, but with a smaller number of Hindus, Malays, and Afghans. A fine harbour is obtained by the use of moles, or breakwaters, providing safe anchorage for a large number of vessels. This port has splendid facilities, and is thoroughly well equipped.

We had no sooner dropped anchor than the enterprising native came alongside in all manner of small craft, and, coming aboard, took up all strategic positions with a view to waylaying the poor tourist so soon as he ventured forth from his cabin. In the hall, at the foot of the forward lounge on which our suite opens, I was besieged by an importunate crowd immediately on making my appearance. I wondered what it was all about, but soon understood that these were merchant tailors who desired to measure me for various garments to be finished and delivered all correct

before sailing. A.C. broke through to the upper deck in a style worthy of M..... at his best, leaving me at the foot of the stairs trying to form myself into a hollow square, surrounded by yelling chocolate-coloured dervishes. I retreated in good order to my cabin, but found myself inside with one most enterprising, smiling, chocolate-coloured son of Adam who lost no time in satisfying himself as to my girth and height, "and did I like them with three buttons or four buttons, or would I prefer them with a zip fastener?" As he "made" for the ship's doctor I felt I was fairly safe in proceeding with him, and certainly "they" look all right.

We had made up our minds that we would not engage in any of the organized trips arranged by Cook's, as it involves considerable motor journeys, and allows no time for sightseeing around the town, or any chance of doing some shopping. As our womenfolk were anxious to have some dresses made, and to select various gifts for friends, we decided to make a round of the shops and see Colombo first.

I was fortunate in getting into touch with a Cingalese on deck, named Perera (a Portuguese name, by the way) who contracted to take our party of five for the whole day, to be entirely at our commands and who would act as guide, driving us to Point Lavinia and showing us all the places of interest for 5/- per head, namely 25/- for a car and guide all day: think of it, if that isn't cheap tell me! Moreover, he proved to be a pearl of great price; he was a perfect gem of a chap, courteous, obliging, and never spared himself in his description of buildings, and in giving us the history of the growth of Colombo from the very early days of European occupation.

There are very fine buildings in the European area of the city; fine public edifices, banks, shipping offices, and hotels. Their shops are very excellent and silk goods and clothing generally most reasonable.

What struck me about the native shop assistants was their keenness for a sale, their willingness to show their goods, and their obvious interest and desire to please.

Nothing was too much trouble, and their ability at once to give you the price in English currency was quite remarkable. The same thing struck me about the assistants in Curacao and at Willemstad, which I mentioned in a previous letter: there is no "that's all we've got, take it or leave it"; no dark looks if you don't buy; they will say, "Just wait a few minutes, I know what you want, we will get it for you." Assistants scurry off, and shortly, the desired garment or whatnot is admiringly placed before you; no wonder these people sell their stuff; and, moreover, they are very honest.

I'll just give you an example: I was measured for a pair of shorts in the forenoon, and, after ascertaining the price, was asked to deposit 2/- as an act of good faith, which I did. I had to pick them up at 5 p.m. on our return from sight seeing; and, on doing so, the boss man told me I was getting them far too cheaply as they should have cost me half as much again for a tailor-made job. However a bargain was a bargain, and I planked down the price; so, after promising to recommend his firm to all my friends in New Zealand, shaking hands all round to cement the *entente cordiale*. I was bowed out of the shop much like, I imagine, the Duke of Gloucester is farewelled. I had only got 20 yards down the road when I heard an excited clamour and running footsteps; I turned round, and was greeted by the assistant I saw earlier in the morning. "How much you pay?" he gasped. I told him. He grinned, took my arm, and began to walk me back again to the shop. "You forget, you paid 2/- deposit this morning; you come back, you pay too much!" So, back I was marched, and I was presented with a two shilling piece, the whole crowd grinning at the

"damfool" white man who couldn't remember. Well, that's honesty, isn't it? I don't suppose with all the excitement of the day I would ever have thought of it.

We had lunch in the grill room of the Grand Oriental Hotel, and we had the best piece of grilled steak there we have struck on our travels. Only once before on the *Ruahine* did we get such a succulent tasty sweet tender steak; this was Australian beef in Colombo. Needless to say we enjoyed this lunch, after a bit more shopping, during which I found a palatial chemist's shop. The chap who attended to me was a Scottish laddie, who told me one soon got acclimatized and used to the heat. I didn't tell you it was a hot day; it generally is, and it was.

You should see how I came a-shore—topee, shorts, stockings, shoes, shirt, walking-stick—that's all! One fine stunt the shops have here, and I commend it to my New Zealand friends as a bright idea: a young lad appears before you with a tray of glasses and delightful limefruit syrup and soda with tinkling ice, for the refreshment of the hot and bothered customer. On a day when the temperature in the shade is about 85 deg. F. it is a merciful and kind act which invariably brings its own reward. I found that most of these shops have all their own refrigerators, and apparently it is not a new custom.

We had a delightful drive out to Mount Lavinia where there is a very fine hotel right on the sea coast. Here we saw boys climbing coconut trees, and we drank the fresh milk; it is rather delightful, fresh from the tree. We bought curios and other things here, and, after a short rest, came back to town by a different route. There is a dense population of natives all along here, and perhaps it was our most interesting experience to see them in their native environment. The shops, villages, and the routine of native life make up a living picture which will live long in our memories. In my youthful days I used to sing about the

"Spicy breezes blowing soft o'er Ceylon's isle."

but all breezes here are not spicy; some of the combinations of odors would make the delicate stomach of the European turn almost inside out, but the hibiscus smells "lovely," and covers a multitude of sins.

On our way back we visited a Buddhist temple, and were taken all over it; first of all we removed our shoes, or rather had them removed by a lay brother; (fortunately, none of us had holes in our stockings) deposited our hats, and entered the holy temple. This place is full of wonderful carvings and images of Buddha Gautama in the various stages of his development and life history.

Some of the figures of Buddha are 27 feet in length. A number of representations have dozens of figures, priests, gods, teachers, etc., in their composition, and all are wonderfully coloured; this work is all done by local artists. Attached to the temple is a monastery—I suppose it is—of Buddhist monks clad in bright orange robes made like a Roman toga.

I got a copy of the principal laws of the Lord Buddha written on palm-leaf, and in the original Sanskrit. Palm-leaf, they say, will last forever. The translation into English shows that you couldn't go very far wrong if you observed the teachings of these laws: in this feature it is like all other religions, and probably as good as any other. It is much older than our Christian religion in any case, and Buddha also, like our Christ, was born of a virgin by a miraculous conception; anyhow, that's the story, and apparently they intend sticking to it.

A translation of these laws is as follows:—

1. Destroy Not Any Life.
2. Take Not That Which Is Not Given.
3. Refrain From Unlawful Sexual Intercourse.
4. Scrupulously Avoid Any Kind of Untruth.
5. Drink Not Intoxicating Liquors.
6. To Cease From All Sin.
7. To Get Virtue.
8. To Cleanse One's Own Heart.

This is the religion of the Buddhas.

We were impressed by the large public park named Victoria Park intersected and surrounded by splendid tree-lined avenues, also by the sight of a gigantic Banyan tree (about 300 years old). The feature of this tree is that the branches hang down all round like the extended ribs of an umbrella, and root themselves into the soil giving a most extraordinary effect.

Another interesting area was the "Pettah" a typical Eastern bazaar with row upon row of quite small shops housing every conceivable article of trade. The population in this native quarter is most dense.

Slave Island—so called because on this spot the Dutch kept their slaves—is now the main habitat of the Malay and Afghan population.

The European residential area is situated in and around the old Cinnamon Gardens, and still called by that name, although spices are no longer a staple product. Here there are some very comfortable and delightful bungalow homes.

Great provision is made everywhere for the playing of games, and tennis courts and cricket-grounds abound. The Ceylonese, both native and European, is very keen on cricket, and a match All Ceylon v. an Indian touring team was in progress on the day we were there.

On every hand one sees soccer football grounds, and the Police Barracks (a splendid set of buildings) have attached a most wonderful sports area, including cricket and football grounds.

The Royal College is the chief educational institution, and the people are justly proud of it. A new Town Hall on the edge of Victoria Park is worth looking at, and other interesting buildings about here are the Museum and Public Hospital.

A well-equipped racecourse, and the Ridgeway golf-links are adjuncts to the residential area at Cinnamon Gardens.

Altogether we spent a very interesting afternoon, and wound up about 5 p.m. back to town to finish our fitting on and squaring-up.

Of course we got into rickshaws and had our photos "took." (By the way, the rickshaw boys are rather wonderful; they can keep up a steady run for several miles, and apparently think nothing of it).

We caught the tender at 6 p.m., and were jolly glad to get back aboard the "lugger." A good shower-bath helped things a lot, and we began to cool down a bit. Everyone is satisfied with the day, some went far afield, others, like ourselves, stayed around Colombo, but next day (Sunday) saw a tired lot of passengers.

We ran into weather on Sunday, and tomorrow (Thursday) we call at the Cocos Islands to drop a barrel of foodstuffs for the cable men. The past four days have been hot, moist, and pretty rough: a regular monsoon was waiting for us, and now we know a bit more about something else. A.C. and self are behaving like big, bold sailors, but A.R. and R. are well and truly down to it.

INDIAN OCEAN.

Our fourth Sunday on board: A.C. has gone to church, and I have come down to our room, being on my own. We are eight days from Colombo, and on Friday morning we arrive at Fremantle. It was a bit bumpy in the Indian Ocean, but yesterday and today are glorious days; the thermometer has dropped to 70, and it is more like what we are used to.

We got a strong S.E. trade wind all the way down from Ceylon, and at times "she" did a bit of bucking into it.

We called at the Cocos Islands, (famous perhaps as the place where the *Sydney* smashed up the *Emden*. They are a group of coral atolls absolutely covered with cocoa-nut palms; copra is the only product.

The Eastern Extension people have a cable station here, and we slowed down while three whale-boats came out in a stiff breeze, and picked up a barrel of fresh provisions, and exchanged mails; the mails were shot over one of their boats by a rocket line. The lagoon inside the reef is most extraordinary; I have never seen such a colour in the water, and I don't exactly know what occasions it; if you think of the wonderful blues and greens to be seen in a peacock's tail you can visualize the colour of this lagoon—marvellous, is the only word I can find to describe its beauty. It is rarely that any of the big boats call here, so we were decidedly lucky to get a sight of these islands. De Vere Stacpool mentions this Blue Lagoon in one of his South Sea tales.

Another week and we will land in Melbourne, and I won't be sorry when we are back in New Zealand; not that we have not enjoyed every minute, we have had a great trip, seen a thousand and one things, and Maxwell Road and home are beginning to call. I think we realize the truth of the old Scots' saying—

"East, West, Hame's best!"

AUSTRALIA.

In the Great Australian Bight off Adelaide: we came ashore at Fremantle, and went for a run up to Perth, and we all enjoyed our day on dry land; it was a decided change after 10 days at sea.

Perth is a very fine city, clean, and charmingly situated, with wide streets, delightful parklands overlooking the city and the Swan River. There are splendid public buildings here, the Post Office is most impressive—altogether a very desirable place.

There was a fair amount of shipping at Fremantle—13 miles from Perth—which has an artificial harbour, but commodious, and very successful. The *H.M.A.S. Canberra* was in port, as well as several large liners.

The weather has turned very cold in the Australian Bight, but, so far, has not been rough as it can be, up till to-day it has been very calm.

Will arrive Adelaide 10 a.m. We have been pitching all night, but not tents! Two hours late as a result—got a south-easter.

We arrived two hours after schedule at Adelaide. The port is some twelve miles from the city, but we were motored up by some very old Nelson friends who kindly came down to meet us. Many years had elapsed since last seeing these good people, and reminiscences were the order of the day. We lunched delightfully at their home, and, after boat-fare with its frozen foods, the change to fresh salads with luscious strawberries-and-cream to follow was indeed a treat.

Adelaide is now famous as being the new home of Don Bradman. It seems strange that the best bowler in the world—Grimmett—and the best batsman—Bradman—should have settled down in the one town. It is a very beautiful city; broad streets; solid buildings; splendid parks and open spaces, and an electric tram service which the citizens say is the best in the world, are outstanding features of this town.

In the afternoon we were motored to the top of Mount Lofty from which a remarkably extensive view of the surrounding country is obtained. These hills, with the intervening valleys are subjected to intensive cultivation, and a tremendous amount of vegetables and fruit is grown here.

These spells ashore are most refreshing, and make the trip via Suez most enjoyable.

We left Adelaide before dinner, and set out on our last leg to Melbourne. The weather is decidedly cooler.

We had quite a good trip round the coast, and arrived at Port Melbourne early on Monday morning, October 21st. We will stay over here for some sixteen days, as we have relatives here we will doubtless have a full programme.

Melbourne celebrated its Centenary last year, but there are more people present at this particular time from other parts than were at the celebrations; there is more money about, and the hotels are absolutely full, for it is Melbourne Cup week. We were very fortunate that we had engaged our rooms at St. Kilda before starting out for England.

A very prominent Australian statesman absolutely could not find a room at any of the city hotels this week; I suppose he got in somewhere. The Cup is to Melbourne what the Derby is to London. Never before have there been such crowds; never before has so much money been put through the totalisator. New Zealand was once again on the map that day by virtue of Keith Voitre's efforts on Marabou.

Melbourne city is unlike any other we have seen, and is characterized by its alternate broad and narrow streets: this is rather fascinating. It possesses the largest store—in Myer's emporium—that we have observed on our travels; it occupies 72 acres of floor-space, employs 5,000 hands, and has an average weekly wage sheet of £18,000.

What impressed us most here is the St. Kilda road; this boulevard possesses two outer roads for fast traffic, two inner roads for slow traffic, and two lines of tram car tracks. These are divided by zones, beautifully tree-planted. As there is another row of trees separating the footpath from the traffic lanes, I think this makes the most perfect roadway we have seen anywhere.

Looking up this road towards the city, one beholds on a commanding eminence the Memorial Shrine: the whole effect is very fine, and leaves a lasting picture in the mind's-eye. The Dandenong road is another wonderful boulevard.

An interesting trip we took one day with our relatives was to the top of the Dandenong range. From here, with binoculars, it is possible to pick out many of the well-known landmarks of Melbourne city. We leave here by the *Marama* for the Bluff and Dunedin where we disem-

bark finally after our wanderings. We are quite prepared once more to settle down, and pick up the threads we have dropped during the past few months.

One of the attractions in Melbourne at the Centenary Celebrations was Captain Cook's cottage, which was brought from England and erected in Fitzroy Gardens.

MILFORD SOUND.

We have just steamed out of Milford Sound: it is strange to think that this wonder is at New Zealand's backdoor, and so few have seen it. We were anxious to see this because for years past we have read of it, and seen pictures. Having visited Norway we were dying to know how little New Zealand's wonder fiords compared with those of Norway.

Tourists are indeed lucky that the U.S.S. Company has put on the *Marama* to do this summer trip, and I can assure you everything is done for the passenger's comfort, and the whole ship's staff from Captain Morgan downwards seems to lay itself out to make the trip enjoyable and interesting.

My idea of a sea-trip is to have things as much like "a home away from home" as possible; this boat gives it to you, and as comparisons are odious, I will leave it at that.

A pall of grey cloud hung over the New Zealand coast as we approached in the early afternoon, but later the fog and mists cleared away, and as we entered Milford Sound the sun came through gloriously. We were enabled to see the Sound under the very best conditions, viewing the rugged mountains from top to bottom.

What makes Milford so wonderful is the vegetation, the height of the mountains, and the cramming into such a small area so many and so varied wonders. Milford runs into the land only about 14 miles, compared with Hardanger in Norway which extends inland for 80 miles; but

though the Norse fiords are more extensive, our New Zealand fiords have a beauty and charm that are unsurpassable: everyone should try to see Milford.

Our skipper fired detonating rockets which echoed and re-echoed somewhere near a dozen times; the siren wailed around the mountain-sides like a lost soul in purgatory, till the lions and the elephants (we had Wirth's Circus aboard) joined in with the most blood-curdling roars and trumpetings.

It was a great finish to a glorious trip, and as we steamed out of the Sound, and saw the last of the waterfalls and Mitre Peak, we realized our indebtedness to the Captain of the *Marama* and his officers for presenting in a truly wonderful manner the glories of Milford Sound.

Berthed at the Bluff about 9.30 a.m., and, after nearly eight months of wonder, we stepped ashore and trod once again the soil of our native land—good old New Zealand!

Coaling, Port Said.

Street Scene, Colombo.

CHAPTER X.

VIEWS AND REVIEWS.

IF one were asked to give one's impressions of a holiday spent abroad such as I have just returned from, it would be most difficult to know where to begin and what answer to make. One's mind is simply crowded with impressions. A perfect kaleidoscope of changing mind pictures seem almost to overwhelm one another with their rapidity of appearance and disappearance. There are so many and so varied subjects which have been reviewed at different times, all of which have created impressions of more or less lasting durability; some have left indelible prints on the mind, others to-day, alas, have left a picture like a badly-handled photographic print. Truthfully, I must admit that I have seen so much, that I feel my inability at present to sort out and tabulate in correct sequence of order, the matters which have created interests and which have impressed me.

Time only will allow me to view things in their proper perspective, and calm reflection will probably enable me to assign correct values and possibly alter my views after more careful analysis. It may be that mature consideration would prevent me from the folly of hazarding opinions which, after all, are only my impressions and are really, so far as others are concerned, practically valueless.

Fools rush in where angels fear to tread; and knowing what risks I run, I will, nevertheless, try to set out those things which have crossed my path during my wanderings and which have stamped themselves on my memory, and will endure there so long as I have any.

Above everything, I can honestly say that as a New Zealander mixing with British people intimately for the first time in my life, I was struck with amazement at the deep ingrained sense of, and expressions of, loyalty to the Royal House and the Constitution. This loyalty, so sincere, so intense, is perhaps the most wonderful thing in Britain. It is the spontaneity of the thing which gets one; there is no organised reception of the King and Queen by the masses—it is the bursting of a full heart, the great and wonderful heart of the people, with the strong love and affection for a Royal House which has earned by its majesty and its conception of what Kingship and Royalty mean, the cheers and the homage of the bared head from one end of the land to the other. Between the people of Britain and the Royal House there is a bond which is difficult to analyse, but it is a bond cemented with love.

Now, I wouldn't want anybody to think that I am a Royalist for Royalty's sake. Oh dear, no! I am merely stating the impression I received of the present King and Queen, with the other members of the Royal Family, in their relationship with their people who give their allegiance to them and who have placed them on a pedestal, from which they will not be pulled down for many a long day. Kingship is no longer an office, a state of being. It is a vast responsibility, and so our present rulers envisage their position. I have tried, rather inadequately, in previous letters to give you some idea of the composite Britisher as I saw him. One thing, however, stands out clear cut, and that is my impression that you can put your trust in the Britisher. The national characteristic is one of trustworthiness, solidity, honour. No matter what may occur in Europe or in the

councils of the nations, I am certain that the feeling everywhere remains that Honour, Steadfastness and Truth are to be found in Great Britain. The people of Great Britain are trusted, and I am satisfied that every other Power in the world to-day looks to England, knowing that any lead she may give is free from ulterior motive and is conductive to the general well-being and health of the nations. I could give many personal instances where this has been brought to my notice, and I have come back to my own country very proud to know that I am a Britisher, living under a flag which stands for Truth and Righteousness.

Whatever may be the cause, I found that as New Zealander's, treatment was meted out to us even beyond what would be conceded as a Britisher. Everywhere one went one realised that we were looked on as super-Britishers. The name New Zealander was even a better "open sesame" than that of Englishman. I imagine we can thank our soldier boys for that. Both in Colombo and Port Said I was given to understand that I could select what goods I desired and forward payment for them on my arrival in New Zealand. What trust! I now have an understanding with a gentleman of Portuguese descent to order from him what goods I require, which will be forwarded to me, payment to be made by return or at my convenience. I do not think I will avail myself of his kind offer, but it is nice to know that New Zealanders have such a good name. Even in Italy, the manager of an emporium near Pompeii offered me a necklace valued at £1,500 in exchange for my cheque, I do not know which of us would have been the more foolish.

Very little is ever seen in the news columns concerning New Zealand; an earthquake may be taken notice of, murder and robbery for the most part are disregarded, but the arrival of the Right Hons. Messrs. Coates and Forbes was duly chronicled to the extent of a few lines. Matters of great pith and moment to New Zealand certainly have their currents turned awry or are left quite neglected. We are

really too far from the world's centres to count very much. Our voice in Empire affairs is scarcely heard. We are very small potatoes and few in the field. They look on us as the small child of the family, a good, well-behaved child certainly, giving promise of becoming quite a credit to "Dad," but even the constant visits of leading politicians at great expense, with their army of secretaries and retinue, seems not to bring forth an answer to our many economic problems. At any rate, not the answer we desire. My opinion is that these visits are only half the campaign. Until the members of the British Cabinet, Colonial Secretaries, and those whose province it is to deal with Dominion and overseas problems, come abroad and see for themselves on the actual spot the conditions under which we live, move, and have our being, the conditions under which we work, the manner in which our exports are produced and marketed, the true state of affairs will never appeal to them, and they will be unable to appreciate our point of view, no matter how else we approach them in London or by whom the position here is argued before them. I am convinced that what is badly required is an interchange of visits by responsible heads of both Governments.

I feel sure that the bad time which we have all passed through in the last few years is rapidly passing away in Britain. There are evidences everywhere of a renewed prosperity.

There is a brightness and a light-heartedness about the people one sees in the streets. Trade seems brisk, all the shops seem to be full, and business is being done. Of course, one sees squalor and poverty, and there is still great unemployment. But for all that there is evidence everywhere that the corner has been turned.

Nowhere is this recovery to be more strikingly evidenced than to observe all over the country the vast amount of building which is going on. Around London, and, in fact, right throughout our tour, large areas and estates are being

cut up into new villages and streets. There is a revival of building with a vengeance. There are literally rows and rows, and miles and miles, of houses being erected all over the country, and whether this is being overdone or not is a matter for serious consideration. But there it is, and with the wonderfully organised bus traffic there is a tendency for the people to move further out into the more open spaces.

One of the most striking features of the English countryside and villages is the number of cricket parks and spaces given over to all kinds of sports and recreations. I honestly believe that before laying out streets, houses and civic centres, the Englishman first sets out his playing grounds and makes provision for their upkeep.

Not only in England but on the Continent and at ports of call I was amazed at the evident value placed on playing grounds by civic authorities. To give only on example: Take Melbourne, this beautiful city is liberally endowed with beautiful parks and playing fields. There one realises what a city can be made whose residents take a pride in the planting and care of ornamental trees. The more beauty you can place in a city the more love of beauty will you engender in the children growing up, and civic pride, which, unfortunately, is almost absent among the young people of New Zealand, will be fostered, encouraged, and in consequence a better type of citizen grow up among us.

Apropos of the licensing question. Well, London is not under prohibition, and the hotels are open until 10 o'clock at night, even on Sundays. I was resident in London something like eight weeks, and I was abroad in the streets at all kinds of hours, and I can state honestly and truthfully that I never saw a drunken person in London or in England. And I was keeping my eyes open, too, because I was rather interested in the question of liquor or no liquor.

I frequently remarked on this absence of intoxication in the streets, and was informed that to a large extent the reason was the small alcoholic content of the beer which

the people were provided with. Nobody drinks spirits in hotels in England now. It is far too expensive, and beer is cheap, palatable, and very innocuous. I understand that one can drink buckets of it without harmful effects, but this is not a personal observation, only an impression. Joking apart, I saw no drunkenness in Great Britain, none in Norway and Sweden, and at no port of call did I observe any of the ill-effects due to over-indulgence in intoxicants.

So those who believe that an Utopia will supervene on a State pledged to Prohibition will certainly vote that way, as they ever have, but personally, I have my doubts about Utopia. Sweden has an excellent system for the control of the liquor traffic. In the licensed houses there is no bar as we know it. You can only get alcoholic refreshment with meals, and each is restricted to a certain specified quantity of liquor each month. In other words, he is rationed. It seems to work extremely well. As the old proverb has it: half a loaf is better than no bread. The open-air restaurants, the beer gardens under the trees, instead of encouraging drunkenness, make for temperance. I am convinced of this. In New Zealand we, by drinking over the bar behind shutters, make what should be a natural, every-day habit and sight, a kind of secret sin. It is all wrong. Drinking in New Zealand is a crime; over there, a pleasure.

I was impressed with the splendid behaviour of crowds in Great Britain. Certainly they are wonderful. I saw no hooliganism, no larrikinism, no unseemly conduct, no disorder of any kind. The people seem to be imbued with a spirit of fun and good nature, and enter into the spirit of things like a lot of school children. I was at the Derby and strolled about among the huge crowds everywhere, but not even there did I see any drunkenness or any disorder or disturbance. I never heard any language that I would not use myself. The holiday spirit of these crowds is much to be admired. I was in Glasgow and down the Clyde during Fair Week, and I travelled on steamers crowded with

Glasgow holiday trippers, both coming and going, and they were just the same happy, light-hearted, good-natured crowd. And aren't they amusing?

It must not be imagined from what I have said that I have said that I saw no poverty in Great Britain. In some of the large towns we passed through I made a special point of visiting the poorer quarters. The conditions met with in some of these areas are appalling. Glasgow and Liverpool presented a side of existence which I had never met with before and which were not seen by me anywhere in London. For these poor people there is no bright outlook possible. Their round of existence is one drab, dreary, dirty day followed by another *ad infinitum* and *ad nauseam* Cooped up in narrow alleys, mews and courts, these people rarely see any sunshine, and what sun filters through the fog and smoke is just a poor, weak imitation of the glorious sunshine we enjoy in New Zealand.

To add to the general discomfort, inadequacy of sanitation, air space, and means of recreation is too often found an insufficiency of food, or at any rate, an unbalanced dietary deficient in variety and certain very necessary factors. To all these concomitants one can attribute the poor physical development and stunted growth of the dwellers in these areas and the incidence of diseases of deficiency and under-nourishment.

In spite of heroic efforts which are being made to get these people out of this slum environment, there are still literally miles of these areas to be found in the industrial quarters of all the larger towns. Strange to relate, these people have become so accustomed to the habits and the habitations of years that they are loth to pack up and get out even when offered newly-built modern homes replete with sanitation, copious water and electric light. The children in these slums are pitiable little objects, half-clothed, dirty, half fed, stunted, wistful and wan looking. Their only play-

ground is these narrow shut-in alleys, where the sun only fitfully shines for a few brief moments through a pall of smoke or fog. Contrasted with our own glorious environment, we realise how very unevenly distributed are the good things of this world, and what a wonderful lucky chance has provided for us New Zealanders such a land of bounty and of sunshine. Truly, a land flowing with milk and honey; a land where every prospect pleases and only Cabinet Ministers make one's lot difficult.

I have come back to New Zealand fully convinced that we should feel very proud of our hospital system, and that there is a very high standard of work attained by the medical profession in New Zealand. I was particularly interested by a serious discussion in Scotland on maternal mortality, which was under review while I was in Edinburgh. The statement was made that no fewer than 48 per cent. of investigated maternal deaths were avoidable.

The medical men in Scotland were being properly hauled over the coals for what was described as "unnecessary meddlesome midwifery." And this, mark you, in one of the world's centres of medical teaching! It caused me to smile when I thought of the dreadful allegations charged against the New Zealand practitioner a few years ago. However, as a result, efforts are being made to improve the methods and to institute ante-natal care which, to me, seems more than half the question of successful midwifery.

But as I say, I am quite certain that the general standard of medical practice in New Zealand is on a higher plane than it is in the Old Country.

Necessarily, however, research work and investigation in the large hospitals and universities are far and away beyond anything we can hope to attempt out here, for the reason that material is so abundant and there is no lack of funds to carry on the work. Many matters of supreme importance to us in New Zealand which are crying out for

investigation are being merely played with or being absolutely starved by the inability of those able to do the work to secure the necessary money for expenses.

Sad to say, I have heard of able fellows at Home who have been starved to death while patiently investigating and doing brilliant work for their fellow-creatures, with no other hope of reward than the knowledge that success would mean the saving of many lives. In spite of serious drawbacks, however, the field of medical research is being rapidly enlarged and very encouraging results are being obtained in all branches of medical and surgical work.

I have already in several letters given my impressions of various countries and peoples visited. I sincerely hope that everybody who reads my notes will remember that my stay in any one place was very short, and I often wonder at my temerity in daring to discuss them so freely after so short a contact as I was able to make. And so I quite believe that I have not always interpreted correctly what I observed, and I crave indulgence for one who was vastly interested in everything and desired to pass on to others of like minds facts and impressions, although perhaps improperly digested.

Age mellows many things, and one cannot hope to find in new countries like our own what one experiences in older countries like those of Europe. Age and tradition are all that is required, and as youth, through lack of experience, often makes blunders, the passage of the years will give to these new countries in the Pacific a manhood and a civilisation which will one day rule this world of ours. Of that I also am convinced.

There are many other subjects which have interested me. Prominent, of course, is the question of the status of the League of Nations. While admitting that war from every point of view is abhorrent, and that submitting of all questions affecting the nations to arbitration and judgment of a supreme tribunal such as the League should be is the

for its stability and durability on the ability of such a court ideal solution of such problems, the whole structure depends to enforce its judgments. You mention sanctions, and Mr. Hughes, of Australia, tells us "sanctions mean war." And he is correct, I feel sure. The only possible solution is that the League should be so powerful that no country which is to be disciplined could contemplate reprisals against the League for a moment. What kind of discipline could a father enforce in his own family if the children knew that he was too old or too decrepit to use the strap?

Which brings us to the question of disarmament. So there it is in a nutshell. I honestly believe that the heart of man, being deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, Great Britain cannot afford to turn her swords into ploughshares. There will never be peace in the world again, as the song goes, until the nations learn that when the League speaks there is no further argument permitted.

That day seems as yet far off, but I can see it coming, and Great Britain will be the main controlling factor.

But there will always be policemen, for the reason I have given. A John Bull strong on the sea and monarch also of the air is the best argument for, and surest security for world peace that I can imagine.

Another contentious subject at Home is our pegged exchange, but as this has been dealt with very thoroughly by the various political parties, I need not give my views, which is, perhaps, just as well, as I frankly admit it is quite beyond my comprehension!

In conclusion, I must say that New Zealand combines in its small compass all the best of everything I have seen elsewhere. We are wonderfully blest in our climate, our productivity, and our natural resources. No wonder the late R. J. Seddon always referred to it as "God's Own Country."

Let us take care not to make a mess of our goodly heritage.

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