

4. Both ships were dressed overall on the occasion of the birthday of His Majesty the King, and Commander H. L. Morgan, C.M.G., D.S.O., R.N., was on that day informed by His Excellency the Governor-General that His Majesty had been graciously pleased to confer the Companionship of the Order of St. Michael and St. George upon him in recognition of his services at the Napier earthquake.

5. On the 8th June H.M.S. "Laburnum" departed for her Pacific Islands cruise, and on the 22nd June H.M.S. "Veronica," after she had assisted H.M.S. "Diomedes" practices by towing targets, also proceeded for her islands tour.

6. The sloops did not meet during their cruises until all ships assembled at Suva at the end of August.

H.M.S. "Veronica" visited islands and ports in the following order: Vavau, Pago Pago, Niue, Rarotonga, Mangaia, Atui, Aitutaki, Palmerston Islands, Pago Pago (in company with H.M.S. "Diomedes" for part of the time), Apia, Atafu Isle, Nukunono Isle, Fakaofu Isle, Apia, Pago Pago, Apia, Suva, Lautoka, Ellington, Levuka, Savu Savu, Somo Somo, Koro Island, Suva (H.M.A.S. "Canberra" in port), Nukualofa, and finally arrived at Auckland on the 11th October.

7. H.M.S. "Veronica" had thus accomplished a very lengthy and comprehensive cruise lasting nearly four months. His Honour Judge Ayson, the Resident Commissioner at Rarotonga for the Cook Islands, embarked in the ship during the time she visited the islands of that group.

Later, at Apia, the Administrator of Western Samoa, Brigadier-General H. E. Hart, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., embarked on a visit of inspection to the Tokelau Group, and subsequently also proceeded in H.M.S. "Veronica" to Pago Pago to pay an official visit to the Governor of American Samoa. Opportunity was taken of H.M.S. "Veronica's" cruise in Fijian waters to embark the Bishop in Polynesia, who was thus enabled to visit the outlying parts of his diocese.

8. Meanwhile H.M.S. "Laburnum" had carried out a similar series of visits in the north-western portion of the South Pacific.

9. After leaving Auckland she proceeded to Suva, where His Excellency the Governor and High Commissioner for the Western Pacific embarked for a visit of inspection to the British territories in the Solomon and Gilbert and Ellice Groups. H.M.S. "Laburnum" left Suva with His Excellency on board on the 22nd June, visited Vila, Malo Island, and the vicinity, Segond Channel, Hog Harbour, Vanikoro Island, Aola, Tulagi, Gizo, Tunibuli, Auki, Tulagi, Ocean Island, Tarawa, Beru, Onotoa, Manomea, Funafuti, Rotumah, and finally returned to Suva on the 24th August, where H.M. ships "Diomedes" and "Veronica" were already present. H.M.S. "Laburnum" had thus completed a cruise of nearly 5,000 miles, and His Excellency was pleased to express his appreciation of the manner in which the ship had carried out this voyage.

10. After the regatta at Suva H.M.S. "Laburnum" proceeded via Nukualofa to Auckland, where she arrived on the 10th September.

11. After their return to Auckland both sloops were refitted and prepared for recommissioning, the latter taking place on the 2nd November.

12. Armistice Day ceremonies were held in the Naval Base in accordance with naval custom.

13. In the early part of December H.M. ships "Veronica" and "Laburnum," the latter under the command of the new Commanding Officer, Commander R. Ramsbotham, R.N., both carried out exercises with their new ships' companies in the Hauraki Gulf, and co-operated in towing targets for each other and H.M.S. "Diomedes" practices.

14. H.M.S. "Veronica" returned to Auckland for Christmas, while H.M.S. "Laburnum," after a short stay at Auckland after the practices, proceeded to Whangarei.

15. During January, 1932, H.M.S. "Veronica" visited Tauranga, while H.M.S. "Laburnum" returned to Auckland for a short stay. Subsequently both ships visited Port Russell together. During her time in Auckland H.M.S. "Laburnum" had the honour of embarking His Excellency the Governor-General for a two days' visit to the Hauraki Gulf.

16. At the end of the month both sloops were again in Auckland and participated in the anniversary regatta. In the evening Commander H. L. Morgan, C.M.G., D.S.O., R.N., was invested by His Excellency the Governor-General with the insignia of the Companionship of the Order of St. Michael and St. George.

17. In the first week in February both sloops proceeded on their New Zealand summer cruise, H.M.S. "Veronica" visiting Lyttelton twice, Dunedin, Stewart Island, and Timaru; and H.M.S. "Laburnum" Kawau, Lyttelton twice, New Plymouth, Westport, Greymouth, the West Coast Sounds, Stewart Island, Bluff, Dunedin, and Oamaru.

18. Both ships were together during the first visit to Lyttelton and intended carrying out combined gunnery firings at the dismantled s.s. "Breeze," which had been presented to the Naval authorities for this purpose by the owners. Unfortunately, the weather was inclement, the tow parted during the passage from the harbour to the firing-area, and the hulk became a total wreck on the coast inside the heads of Lyttelton approaches; the firings had consequently to be abandoned.

19. Both ships met again at Stewart Island and held their annual regatta.

20. On the concluding day of this report H.M.S. "Veronica" was at Lyttelton and H.M.S. "Laburnum" at Oamaru, whence she will proceed to join H.M.S. "Veronica" at Lyttelton on the 2nd April, 1932.

VI. H.M.S. "PHILOMEL."

H.M.S. "Philomel" (Commander Edward L. Berthon, D.S.C., Royal Navy) continues to act as training-ship for the New Zealand Division and Naval Depot ship at Devonport, Auckland. The prolongation of the life of the ship, as stated in my last report, is proving satisfactory, though additional repairs of minor importance are proving necessary from time to time.