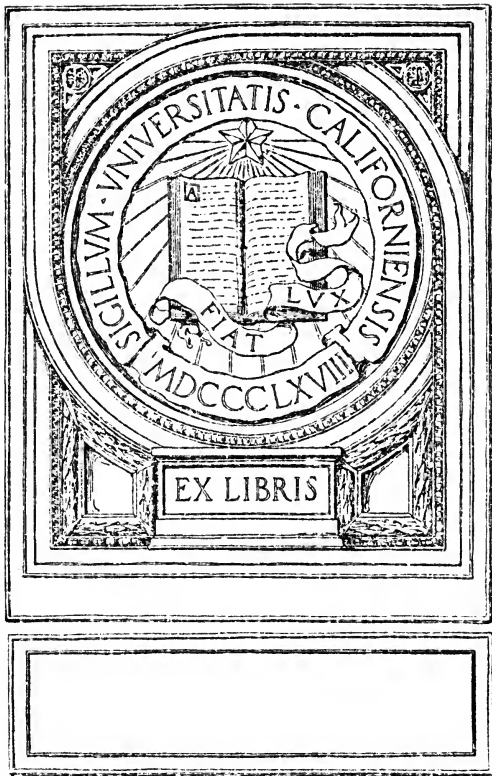


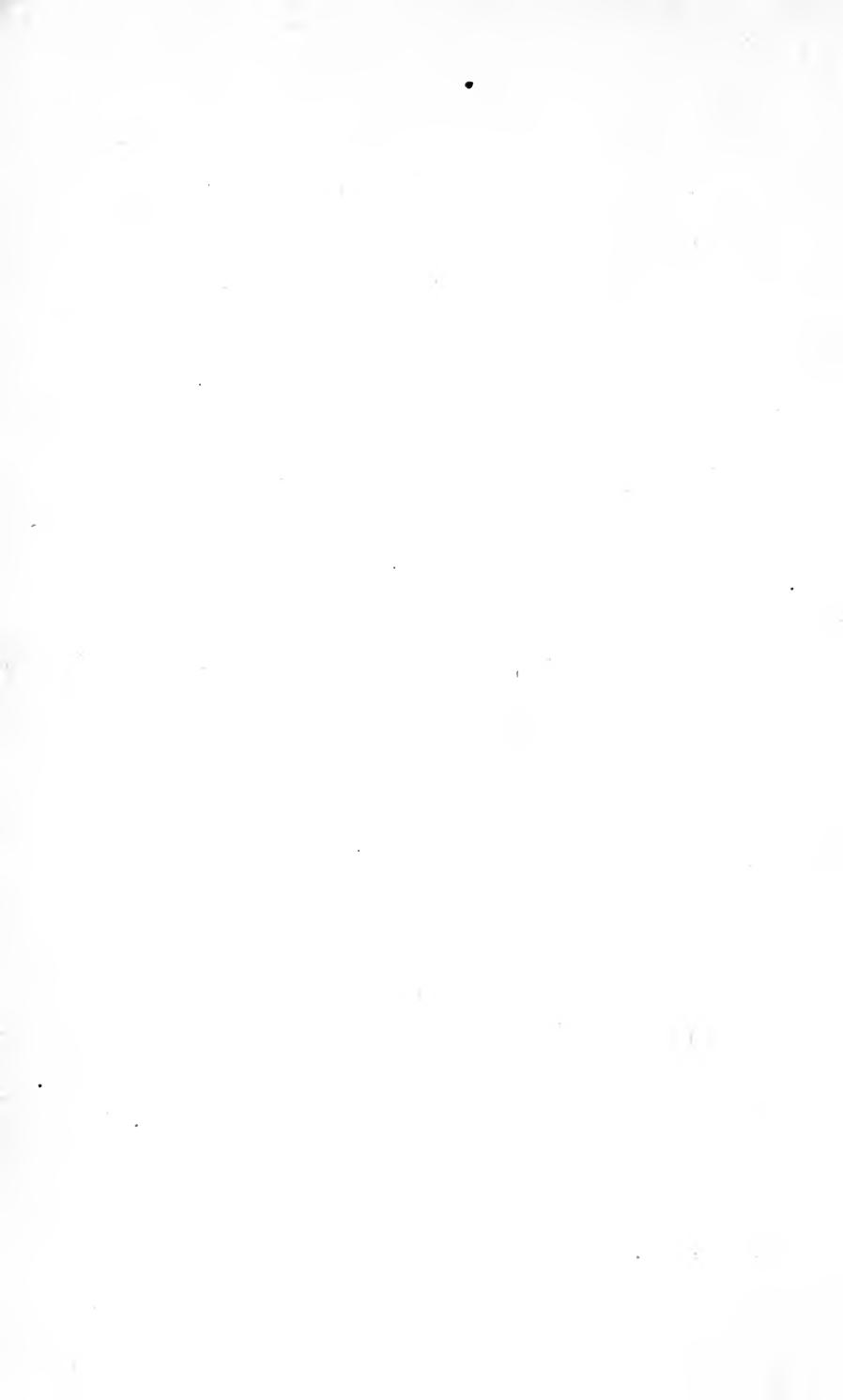
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## LOOKING BACK



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*Charles W. Chapman*

MY GRANDMOTHER

# LOOKING BACK

BY

CAPTAIN THE HON.

SIR SEYMOUR FORTESCUE, K.C.V.O., C.M.G.

(ROYAL NAVY)

*WITH ILLUSTRATIONS*



LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.

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## DEDICATION

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TO

HER MAJESTY QUEEN ALEXANDRA

MADAM,

Your Majesty in so readily consenting to accept the dedication of this humble volume, has only added one more to the long list of gracious favours, that I have constantly received at the hands of Your Majesty, ever since the day on which I was fortunate enough to commence my service, as Equerry-in-Waiting to the late King Edward.

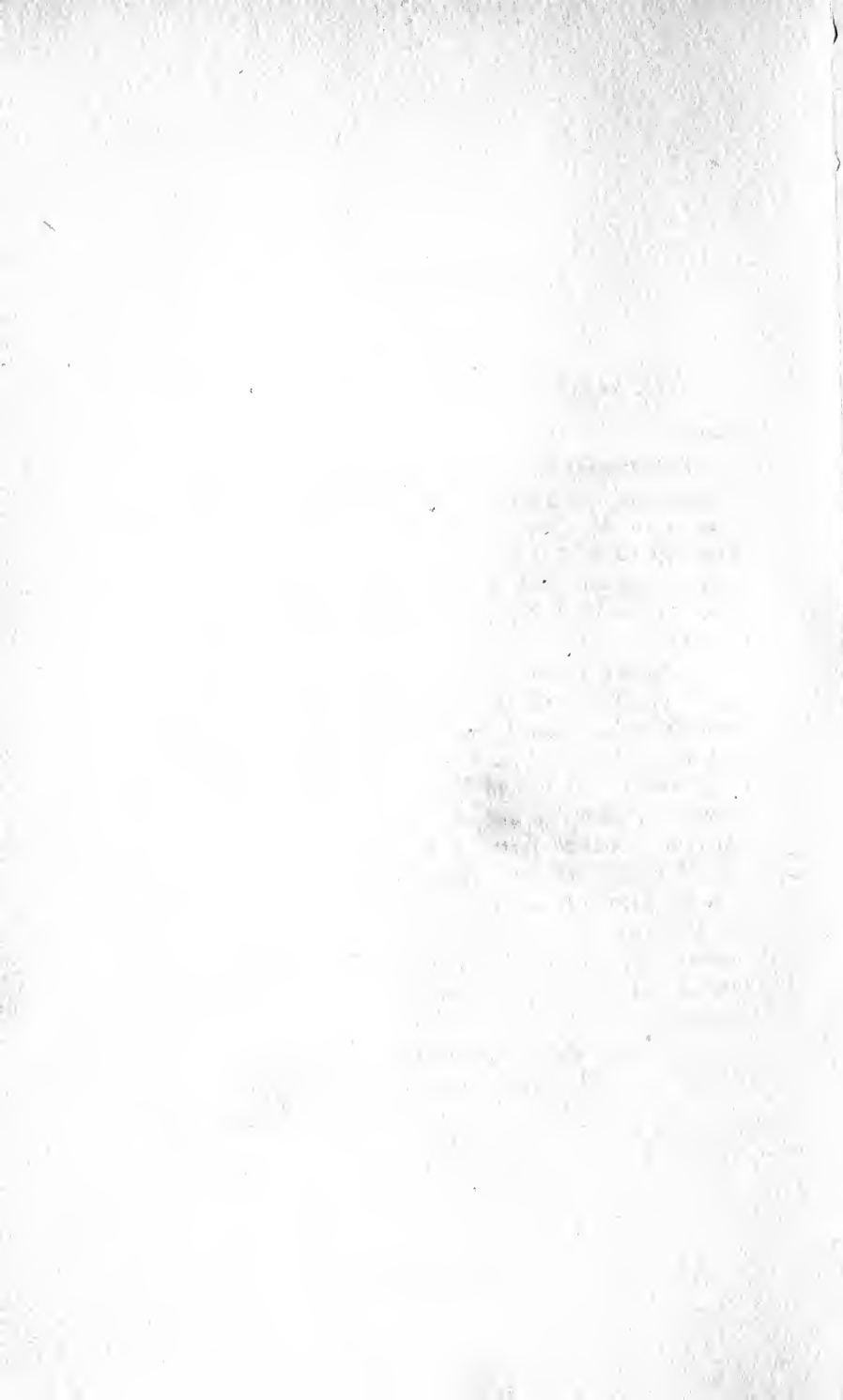
The portion of this book that deals with that period, relates something of the manifold activities of that monarch, and, as regards myself, is the time of my life to which I look back with the greatest pleasure, both on account of the honour it was personally to serve so illustrious a Sovereign, and also because of the great and unvarying kindness that was extended to me by my beloved Master and the members of his family.

It has been a labour of love to write of those days, and has given me an opportunity of expressing, however inadequately, some of the gratitude that I feel towards those, who made the years that I spent in His Majesty's household, the happiest of my life.

I have the honour to remain, Madam,

Always your Majesty's devoted servant,

SEYMOUR FORTESCUE.



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(1) The first part of the document is a list of names and addresses of the members of the committee. The names are listed in alphabetical order, and the addresses are given in full. The list includes the names of the members of the committee, the names of the members of the sub-committee, and the names of the members of the advisory committee. The addresses are given in full, including the street name, the number of the house, and the city and state.

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# LOOKING BACK

## CHAPTER I

### EARLY DAYS

THE principal excuse for this attempt to bring the reminiscences of a very unimportant member of the community to the notice of the public is that, owing to the series of accidents which make up what is commonly called life, I can claim to have had rather exceptional opportunities as a spectator from a great many points of view. Commencing my career as I did on board a man-of-war, I have since lived at Court, in Society, in Clubs, both Bohemian and Social, and during the seventeen years that I was on the personal staff of the late King Edward VII, I was necessarily brought into contact with a great number of persons of all sorts and all nations, to say nothing of seeing something of the daily work of a great monarch. As an example of the many points of view, taking a few of the more salient ones, with complete disregard for dates, I may instance that it has been my good fortune to witness the work of the British Army in the Field in more than one campaign; I was in attendance on the late King in Paris when he was engaged in what is possibly the greatest achievement of his life,—namely, laying the first

## Looking Back

stone of our *entente* with France, and thereby probably saving Europe from the domination of the Teuton ; I have seen his son, our present King George, when, as a young naval lieutenant, he was serving his country in that subordinate capacity with the same earnestness and devotion to duty that he has shown in his present exalted position ; and, from another side, I have seen him on the polo ground, taking his part in the Inter-ship and Regimental Polo Matches at Malta, and exhibiting that same working together of hand and eye that has made him one of the best game shots in the kingdom. I have ridden many miles of messages for that gallant old Field-Marshal, the late Earl Roberts, as his Naval Aide-de-Camp in South Africa ;— have occasionally tried to extract some information from the late Lord Kitchener (then the Field-Marshal's right-hand man), and have breakfasted with the Staff of the then General Sir John French on the Veldt. I can remember David Beatty as a midshipman riding racing ponies, in which I was frequently interested, with the same skill, dash, and determination that has distinguished him in that larger field of operations which the Armistice has just enabled him to quit. I have discussed at Henry Labouchere's table the possibilities of *Cyrano de Bergerac* as a drama for the English stage, with the late Sir Henry Irving ; I was present in the House of Lords in my present post of Sergeant-at-Arms at the time of the fateful division when,—in spite of the "die-hards" and their venerable chief, Lord Halsbury,—that august body virtually voted away their own powers.



## Early Days

This long career as a Spectator of Events has resulted in a list of acquaintances which, like the immortal Sam Weller's knowledge of public houses, is "extensive and peculiar." I confess to a great love of the real Artist, be the artist a king or a prize-fighter, and I think that, on the whole, this world of ours is a pleasant enough place to live in, always assuming that you do not expect too much from your fellow-man. So perhaps I may claim to have had more opportunities than have most philosophical lookers-on of seeing the inside turn of life in general. Having now made my excuses, I may as well go back and begin at the beginning.

I was born at my father's place, Castle Hill, in North Devon, in February 1856, so I may be said to have been a Crimean baby, as that expedition had not then arrived at its conclusion. My father, the third Earl Fortescue (who in those days was Viscount Ebrington), had always taken life seriously, and in his early years, before going into Parliament, where he sat as Member for Plymouth and Marylebone, had been appointed Private Secretary to Lord Melbourne, Queen Victoria's first Prime Minister, and had also served in the same capacity to his uncle, Lord Harrowby, then Foreign Secretary. During the eighteen years that he was in Parliament he was for four years Secretary to the Poor Law Board, and he seemed to have quite a promising Parliamentary career before him, when, unfortunately for him, his health was broken down, so far as his official life was concerned, by a violent attack of ophthalmia contracted whilst visiting

## Looking Back

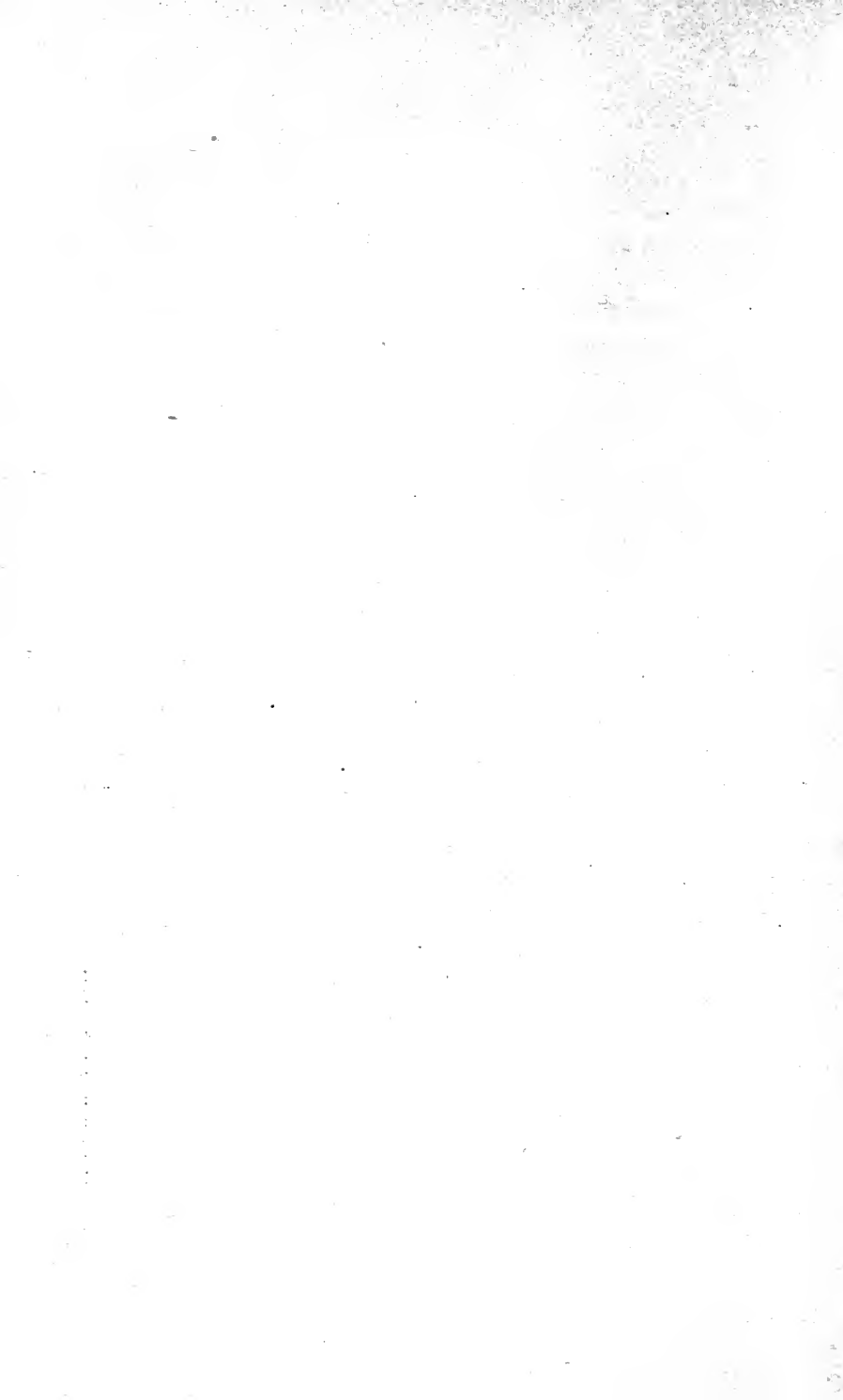
a military hospital when serving on a Sanitary Commission. This unfortunate accident completely lost him one eye and much weakened the sight of the other; so for the rest of his life he confined his activities to the management of his estates, to which he had succeeded in 1861, and to general County work.

These estates consist of small properties in Ireland, South Devon, Gloucester and Lincolnshire, and considerable property at Castle Hill in North Devon. The Lincolnshire property, which has since been sold (I believe to some speculative firm of land buyers), deserves a passing mention, for the Manor House of the property consists of the remains of the famous old brick castle of Tattersall. This Tattersall Estate came into the possession of my family about 1690, through the marriage of the Hugh Fortescue of that day with the heiress of the Earl of Lincoln, when it became her property (the male line of the Clinton family having died out), and has remained in our family until its recent sale. The Castle now only consists of a rectangular brick tower, and was built by the Lord Treasurer Cromwell about the year 1440, which would make it some few years more ancient than the other celebrated brick castle of Hurstmonceaux. It was originally designed to be a place of defence and suffered severely during the Civil War, so much so that the then owner, Theophilus, fourth Earl of Lincoln, actually petitioned Parliament in 1649 for the damages sustained, but whether successfully or not I know not. The tower that still remains, which was probably the keep, is wonderfully beautiful, not only in colour but owing



*Photo: F. Frith & Co., Ltd.]*

THE KEEP OF TATTERSALL CASTLE



## Early Days

to its exquisite workmanship, and it still contains the celebrated Norman Gothic chimney-pieces which are so well known to art students through their models in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Shortly after its sale, which took place a very few years ago, there was a report current that the old keep and its famous fire-places were to be pulled down, brick by brick, and sent over to America to be there reconstructed. Whether this report was true or not I cannot tell, but anyhow the American scheme came to nothing owing to the patriotism and love of archæology exhibited by Lord Curzon of Kedleston, who stepped into the breach and bought the old Castle so as to ensure its remaining in this country.

To return to my father : it is only necessary to say that for the many years that remained to him, after giving up political life, until old age and infirmity had limited his activities, he remained faithful to his County duties and was a most just and generous landlord. When he died at the age of eighty-seven, I believe it to be true that the only building on the estate, whether it were cottage, farm, farm-building, village school, or church, that was badly in need of a new roof and general repair was his own house. In fact, he was an excellent specimen of the average Victorian peer.

My mother, who, alas ! died when I was a small boy ten years old, was the eldest daughter of Colonel and Mrs. Dawson Damer, both of whom died before I was born. The Colonel was a very considerable personage in his time. He had fought at Waterloo, and was earlier a member of the Military Mission that was

## Looking Back

attached to the Emperor Alexander during Napoleon's Moscow Campaign. In 1825 he married Miss Mary Seymour, the daughter of Lord Hugh and Lady Horatia Seymour. Lady Horatia will always be remembered by lovers of art as the most beautiful of the three Ladies Waldegrave, immortalised by Sir Joshua, and her daughter, my grandmother, Mrs. Dawson Damer, was the "little Minnie," Mrs. Fitzherbert's adopted daughter, so often mentioned in the Memoirs of the times of the Regency and the reign of George IV. After Mrs. Fitzherbert's death my grandparents lived in the well-known house in Tilney Street which Mrs. Fitzherbert had occupied for so many years and had, on her death, bequeathed to her adopted daughter. Besides the house in Tilney Street, Colonel and Mrs. Dawson Damer had a charming property in Dorsetshire, Came by name, in the neighbourhood of Weymouth, and it was from there that my parents were married. There was a great deal of entertaining done at Came in my grandfather's time. Prince Louis Napoleon, afterwards Napoleon III, was a constant guest there when he was a very poor young man about town, and was always said to have proposed marriage to my mother. I rarely believe family legends, and so used not to have much faith in this particular story, but Lord Rosebery told me some time ago that he believed it was perfectly true. The Colonel, who was eminently a man of fashion as well as a Member of Parliament, was one of the last of those to be concerned in a political duel. He did duty as second to Lord Alvanley when he fought Morgan O'Connell at Wimbledon.



*From the miniature by Isabey]*

THE HON. MRS. DAWSON DAMER





## Early Days

The cause of the duel, as is well known, was that O'Connell called Alvanley a "bloated buffoon" in the House. When called out he made his usual excuse of having vowed never to fight another duel, and his son, Morgan O'Connell, took his place. Three shots were exchanged on both sides and no one was hurt, but Greville writes in his Memoirs that O'Connell's second behaved outrageously, and, had an accident occurred, should have been hanged.

I hardly remember my grandfather, who had married in 1817 Lady Susan Ryder, a daughter of the first Earl Harrowby; she died in 1827, but his second wife (the widow of an Irish Baronet), to whom he was married when Viceroy of Ireland, was one of the greatest friends of my childhood. She must have been adorably lovely in her youth, for in her old age she was the most beautiful old woman I have ever seen. Her first visit to England was when she settled down at Castle Hill after her marriage, and I well remember, in later days, when she was staying there, the admiration we children used to feel for the neat Wellington boots that always stood outside her bedroom door at Castle Hill, for, from the day she first left Ireland, she always insisted on wearing Wellingtons in the country as she was afraid of being bitten by snakes! She survived my grandfather for many years and died at a great age.

At the time of my birth the only celebrity with whom I came in contact was the Barnstaple doctor who assisted my entrance into the world. I knew him well when I was a schoolboy, and in his way he certainly was, as well as being a very good fellow, somewhat of

## Looking Back

a celebrity. He was the eldest of nine brothers who were all doctors and all practised in the West of England. I am positive about the number, for when covert shooting with him as a boy he invariably talked about the medical exploits of "my brother Octavius" or "my brother Nonus," the two who, apparently, in his opinion, were the pick of the Budd family.

In the winter of 1859 my father, then Viscount Ebrington, accompanied his brother John, who had developed consumptive tendencies and was ordered abroad by his doctors, to Madeira, and, what was still more remarkable, elected to go there with his wife and children. We were then a family of seven children, and, as far as I can remember, from motives of economy we were all packed up in a sailing ship with our governesses and nurses, while our parents took the steamer to Funchal.

We arrived there all well after a journey lasting, I believe, some three weeks. We children lived for two years in that delightful island, and during that time two more of my brothers were born. Two events which I remember very clearly were the arrival of the late Empress of Austria, who came to winter there, with a large suite in attendance, and the arrival of Captain Keppel (subsequently Admiral of the Fleet Sir Henry Keppel) in H.M. Frigate *Forte* on his way to take command of the Cape of Good Hope Station. It was there that he met his future wife, Miss West, who was living with her sister in a small villa near the one occupied by my parents. We children, as a treat, were taken on board the *Forte*, and that

## Early Days

was my first introduction to the quarter-deck of a man-of-war.

The Empress of Austria arrived about the same time in the royal yacht *Victoria and Albert*, which had been lent to Her Imperial Majesty by Queen Victoria. Many years afterwards, when I was serving as a lieutenant on board her, I was able to read in the journal of the Royal Yacht the account of the Empress' journey across the Bay. The *Victoria and Albert* was the most beautiful vessel of her day and a great credit to our Naval Constructors, but, though capable of going what in those days was an unheard-of speed—about fifteen or sixteen knots—being under 3000 tons and a paddle steamer, she could get considerably knocked about in heavy Atlantic weather. Unluckily for the Empress and her travelling companions, the yacht encountered a severe gale, and there was a heartrending account in the said journal of the horrors of the passage. However, all things come to an end, even a bad sea voyage, and the Empress and her suite duly arrived and installed themselves in a couple of villas, or "quintas" as they were named in Madeira, in close proximity to the quinta where my parents lived.

I think that, even at that very early age, I was dimly conscious of the Empress' extraordinary beauty, but what we children naturally liked most of all were the lovely little knick-knacks from Vienna which she showered on us,—to say nothing of the chocolates they generally contained.

I heard in after years what I believe to be the true reason for the Empress' expedition. In 1859 she was

## Looking Back

very young and conscious that she was probably the most beautiful woman in Europe, and naturally greatly resented the Emperor's indifference to herself and attention to various other ladies, of both worlds, in Vienna. In her dilemma she wrote and asked the advice of Queen Victoria. The Queen strongly advised her to leave Vienna for a time, and suggested that she should, under the plea of ill-health, go to Madeira, which in those days was a sort of fashionable sanatorium for all kinds of ailments, and placed her new yacht, the *Victoria and Albert*, at the disposal of the Empress for the journey.

It was at Madeira, too, that I saw for the first time the late Duke of Teck, the father of Her Majesty, Queen Mary. In those days he was a young and extremely handsome man, and for the moment was attached to the suite of the Empress, to whom he was related. He and my father naturally saw a great deal of each other, and remained friends for the rest of their lives.

We were for the greater part of two years at Madeira, and during that time my uncle died and was buried in that wonderful bower of flowers which is the little cemetery there.

The autumn of 1860 saw us on our way back to Europe, and the winter of 1860-61 was spent at Pau. In those days the railway only went as far as Dax, and the rest of the journey had to be done by "diligence." I have a hazy recollection of the discomforts of that journey, for our *little* party consisted of nine children and two governesses, and I suppose a nurse or two.

## Early Days

Anyhow, we must have taken up a good deal of the interior of that somewhat archaic vehicle, and we children remembered afterwards with delight the remark addressed to our most respectable middle-aged spinster governess, who was in charge of this caravan, by a sympathetic Frenchman: "Mon Dieu, Madame, êtes vous donc la grand'mère de *tous* ces enfants?"

During our stay at Pau my grandfather died, and my parents settled down at Castle Hill, with 17 Bruton Street as their London house.

Naturally the next few years, which were passed while still in the hands of governesses and nurses, were absolutely colourless, but I can still remember some of the house parties at Castle Hill. My father, like all the Whigs of the early 'sixties, was greatly interested in the Italian movement. Various Italian celebrities used to undertake the long journey down to Devonshire, I suppose to make the acquaintance of a specimen of an English country house and to see a week of English country life. It was our great amusement as children, just before being packed off to bed, to lean over the gallery which surrounded the hall when the guests were assembling before dinner, and watch them processing into the dining-room, and I can well remember our childish delight and wonder at the behaviour of the Italians, who invariably went in to dinner, as was the custom in those days on the Continent, with their gibus hats under their arms.

For the next few years Castle Hill and Bruton Street were my alternate homes in their respective seasons, and one of the impressive ceremonies I remem-

## Looking Back

ber was being allowed to see our parents dressed up for Court, and, greatest joy of all, to see them driven away in a coach with a footman behind, and one of my dearest friends, the coachman, in a wig and state livery, enthroned on his hammer-clothed box. How smart were the carriages in London in those days, and how paltry do the most expensive Rolls-Royce cars appear in comparison! Even on ordinary occasions the whole of London Society, which in those days was small and select, used to take their afternoon drives in barouches. In our turn, we children used to drive in the sacred vehicle with our mother. It was very magnificent. To drive in a barouche in London in the height of the Season was rather a solemn affair and not particularly amusing, and the only redeeming feature I remember was that at the end of the outing the carriage used to pull up under the trees in Berkeley Square, and, delight of delights! strawberry ices used to be brought to us from Gunter's to consume in the carriage, and that admirable institution, I am glad to see, still keeps its hospitable doors open. It was one of the sights of the London Season to see the carriages pulled up in the shade of the trees, full of children consuming strawberry ices. I insist on strawberry ices, for, as far as I can remember, no child ever dreamt of asking for any other.

The expression "dearest friend" as regards the coachman was certainly no mere figure of speech. The two men a boy loves best in the world are the two who teach him how to ride and how to shoot. My friend of the hammer-clothed box did the former,

## Early Days

the tuition of the latter fell to the lot of the butler. The butler's business is generally supposed to lie in another direction, but in our particular case he was undoubtedly the right person, as, apart from his other dignities, he had the high honour of being own brother to the head gamekeeper.

The early years slipped away in the happy childhood that is always ensured by being one of a large family of children treading close on one another's heels. For, by the time I went to school in 1865, there were exactly a dozen of us,—no very unusual number in those days of large families. Our nearest neighbour and kinsman, the Lord Portsmouth of that day, was the happy father of nine, and to go back another generation or two, I was always led to believe that my step-grandmother, to whose Wellington boots I have already alluded, was one of a family of over twenty.

In the summer of 1865 my eldest brother—my senior by a little over a year—and I were sent to school at Brighton. The owner and manager of this establishment was an old lady, Mrs. Walker by name, and, as was inevitable in those days, the school came to be known by the name of Hookey's. This school, one way and another, earned an excellent reputation, and I suppose was quite as good as any other preparatory school for Eton and Harrow, to one of which schools nearly all the boys went eventually. Certainly the boys of my time achieved, as a lot, very considerable success in after life. Out of about sixty boys, who must have passed through there during my time,

## Looking Back

I can remember three Lytteltons, known to us as Bob, Edward and Alfred : the eldest of the three is now a well-known solicitor, the second was Headmaster of Haileybury and Eton, and the youngest was one of the most brilliant men of his time, not only as a born athlete, but in the House of Commons, and in the Cabinet as Colonial Secretary. I also recollect two Northcotes, one being the late Lord Northcote, a most successful Colonial Governor-General ; the late Sir Michael Herbert, whose much-to-be-regretted early death had not prevented him from rising to the rank of Ambassador at an unusually early age ; Colonel à Court Repington, the well-known writer on military subjects ; my own younger brother, John, now a distinguished man of letters ; my cousin, the late Lord Portsmouth, and his next two brothers, —the late peer was at one time Under-Secretary of State for War ; the present Lord Strathmore and his brothers ; and a good sprinkling of boys who subsequently became soldiers, many of whom,—including my brother, Lionel, who was killed in South Africa,—have met a bullet in the wars, great and small, of the last forty-five years.

Poor old Hookey ! She was a good old woman and a terrific snob. It speaks well for the sense of humour of the school when I can aver that its best mimic always had his greatest success when he gave his imitation of the old lady showing parents of possible prospective pupils over the school. She invariably used to produce, apparently out of her sleeve and quite by accident, all the eldest sons, the regular



## Early Days

formula being : "That boy is Lord Blank, Earl Dash's son. Come here, Blank, my dear ; I am so glad to learn from your tutor that you are first in your class this week." If there happened to be a slump in eldest sons, even a wretched "honourable" would be produced as a makeshift ; but as we were well supplied with Viscounts this very seldom happened.

My holidays were passed entirely at Castle Hill, and hunting became the great joy of the summer and winter holidays, for, in addition to the fox-hunting provided by our kinsman and neighbour, Lord Portsmouth, the Devon and Somerset Staghounds used to begin their season in mid-August, and it was in August 1866 that I was formally entered to the sport of stag-hunting, having been in at the death of a hunted stag after a terrifically long run. My eldest brother and I were both baptised at the same time, having both managed to get to the end on our Exmoor ponies. The ceremony of blooding was performed by the Rev. John Russell, the well-known sporting parson, generally known as Jack Russell, who, in those days, was vicar of a neighbouring parish and esteemed to be the greatest authority on hunting, whether of the stag, the fox, the otter, or the hare, that lived in the West Country. We got home somewhere about ten o'clock that night and fought ferociously to prevent the blood being washed off our faces before being packed off to bed.

## CHAPTER II

### GUNROOM LIFE IN THE 'SEVENTIES

DURING my school days, owing, I suppose, to my thorough dislike of the whole process of education, I made up my mind to go into the Navy if I could get the necessary permission from my father, so as to escape from school once and for all. I am afraid that I had not reckoned on the amount of elementary mathematics, which I detested even more than Latin grammar, that was to be forced into me during the fifteen months' training in the *Britannia*. Anyhow it was decreed that the Navy should be my profession, and I was taken down to Portsmouth in the summer of 1869 to try to pass the examination for candidates for Naval Cadetships, the necessary nomination having been procured through the kindness of a cousin of my mother, then Captain Beauchamp Seymour, Naval Private Secretary to the First Lord of the Admiralty of that day, who subsequently became Admiral Lord Alcester, of whom more anon.

Naturally, every candidate was submitted to a medical examination which took place at Haslar Hospital. In those days Army and Navy Surgeons had not developed into lace-clad Generals and Inspector-Generals. (Incidentally I can never understand why a man who is by profession a doctor or surgeon should want to call

## Gunroom Life in the 'Seventies

himself a colonel. To my mind a captain in the Navy might just as logically call himself a dean, or a commander-in-chief an archbishop!) The Superintendent of Haslar was a Post-Captain, Wodehouse by name. He had lately returned from commanding a line-of-battleship in the Mediterranean, Admiral Sir Robert Smart being his Commander-in-Chief at that time. It was always spread abroad that Captain Wodehouse was on extremely bad terms with Bobby Smart, which was the pet name of his Commander-in-Chief, but, on the other hand, his great friend on the Station was the French Commander-in-Chief, who in those days was very apt to be at Malta with his squadron, as the *entente* which existed during the Crimean Campaign was still kept going during the late 'sixties. As may be imagined, he did not have many opportunities of getting even with his Chief, but on one occasion he may be said to have had the best of it. His vessel was leaving Malta for England and was moving majestically out of the Grand Harbour, Valetta, with the band on the poop and all the usual pomp and circumstance. Wodehouse knew that the French Admiral was on board the English flagship, so as a parting shot, as he passed under the flagship's stern, the band was ordered to play, "Robert, toi que j'aime." This affecting farewell was a delight to the Frenchman, who could not resist telling Smart how fond he was of "ce cher Wodehouse qui avait tant d'esprit."

I succeeded in passing my examinations, both medical and scholastic, all right, and after a few weeks' suspense I was informed by the Admiralty that I was

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to join the *Britannia* at Dartmouth in September. That training-ship has so often been described that I do not think it necessary to say much about it; but a few words may be written about the impressions that my first introduction to the Navy conveyed to my youthful mind. The Captain of the *Britannia* was at that time Captain Corbett, a very distinguished officer, and, to the cadets, an awe-inspiring figure when he inspected our ranks on Sundays with his ribbon of the C.B. (a really prized distinction in days when orders and ribbons were very sparsely bestowed), and the sash over his shoulder that was then worn by the Naval Aide-de-Camp to the Sovereign. The fashion in hair at that time was very different from the present Navy fashion, when every one is either bearded or clean-shaven. In 1869, just before Mr. Childers allowed beards to be grown, every officer and man had to shave his upper lip and chin, the result being that the young bloods of the quarter and lower decks delighted in appearing in long Dundreary whiskers.

The *Britannia* was a good school in its way, for the amount of hard knowledge in the shape of the elements of navigation and mathematics that we were made to absorb in twelve months was rather remarkable; but the old hulk was not particularly sanitary, and we were shamefully underfed, considering the amount of school work and drill that we had to do. During my year there I personally lost a good deal of time owing to a simultaneous outbreak of smallpox and scarlatina that occurred in 1870. I was unfortunate enough to develop the scarlatina and was at once put behind a canvas

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screen, which was supposed to separate me from my fellow-cadets, whilst waiting for the boat to take me ashore to the sick quarters. Unfortunately for me, another cadet was attacked with smallpox that same morning; so, to save trouble, we two wretched boys were coupled together behind the same screen, for, as the doctor sagely remarked, it was very uncommon for anybody to have smallpox and scarlatina at the same time. I, unfortunately, thanks to his speculative philosophy, succeeded in getting both, with the result that I was extremely ill, and was put considerably back with my studies.

There is no period of my life that I look back upon with less pleasure than I do to the time I spent in the *Britannia*. Whilst admitting that the instruction was good—indeed very good—it was rather overdone considering the average age of the boys—between thirteen and fifteen—and, as I have already said, the food was disgracefully bad and scanty. To show how hungry we were, it became a regular practice of the cadets when passing a bluejacket to drop a handkerchief with sixpence knotted into the corner, the handkerchief being surreptitiously returned in the course of a few minutes with bits of ship's biscuit wrapped up in it instead of the sixpence. I think that all of us—and by all of us I mean the fifty cadets who had joined together in the autumn of 1869—were rejoiced when our release came in December 1870. I was fortunate enough to take a first-class, which meant that I was raised to the dignity of a midshipman at once instead of having to wait for three, six or nine months, accord-

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ing to the class taken on passing out. I may as well confess that, as a matter of fact, I was first of the whole term, and was probably conceited and odious on the strength of it. The conceit only lasted till I joined a sea-going ship, where, naturally, no one cared a straw whether a midshipman was first or last when he left the *Britannia*; and as I had acquired a certain amount of philosophy, even at that early age, it was brought home to me that the only individual who benefited in the least by my exploits was my father, for the grateful country bestowed a regulation dirk and a spy-glass upon me as prizes, both of which necessities would otherwise have been supplied by an outfitter and paid for by my parent.

And now to mention some of my contemporaries who have arrived at distinction. A good many of the survivors I still meet from time to time, and they include Admiral Sir Berkeley Milne, Admiral of the Fleet Sir Hedworth Meux, and that really authentic specimen of the "bravest of the brave," Admiral Sir James Startin. Jimmy Startin, from his youth up, was one of those very rare and fortunate individuals who have absolutely no sense or knowledge of fear. He has distinguished himself by his splendid personal bravery a hundred times, but perhaps never more so than when, as a man of over sixty years of age and Commodore of a squadron of patrol vessels, he boarded a burning patrol vessel that was in momentary danger of blowing up and attempted to rescue the engineer of that vessel. For this gallant exploit he was decorated by the King with the Albert Medal, and I cannot do

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better than quote the official account which appeared in the *London Gazette* :—

“*Gazette*, 20th August, 1918 :—

“ADMIRAL SIR JAMES STARTIN, K.C.B.

“An explosion occurred on board H.M. Motor-launch 64 on the 10th June, 1918. Immediately after the explosion Commodore Startin proceeded alongside Motor-launch 64, the engine-room of which was still burning fiercely. On learning that the engineer was below he sprang down the hatch without the slightest hesitation and succeeded in recovering the body practically unaided. In view of the fact that the bulkhead between the engine-room and the forward tanks had been blown down by the force of the explosion, and that the fire was blazing upon the side and on the top of the forward tanks, which are composed of extremely thin metal, and consequently were liable to burst at any moment, the action of Commodore Startin in entering the engine-room before the fire was subdued showed the utmost possible gallantry and disregard of personal safety. Had the engineer not been past human aid he would undoubtedly have owed his life to the courage and promptitude of Commodore Startin.”

Of course there were several others who arrived at the rank of Admiral, and amongst them may be mentioned a very dear old friend, the late Sir Frederick Hamilton, who, after serving as Second Sea Lord and as Commander-in-Chief at Rosyth during the War, practically succumbed as the result of a long period of overwork.

After the labours of the *Britannia* a fairly long holiday was very pleasant, and my first appointment after a Christmas spent at home, was to the guardship, H.M.S. *Duke of Wellington*, at Portsmouth, whilst waiting to be appointed to a sea-going ship. Any-

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thing worse for the morals and discipline of a number of lads of our age than life aboard the guardships of those days, it is hard to imagine. We were nearly a hundred in the mess. In the gunroom there were a certain number of sub-lieutenants and assistant paymasters who were actually serving in the ship for various duties and were known as "standing numbers." The steward treated them on a sort of favoured nation basis, supplying them with all the best of the food at minimum prices, wisely making a large profit out of the supernumeraries like ourselves, who, being there for only a short time—anything from a few days to a few months—were obviously sent there by Providence and the Admiralty for that particular object. There was one very remarkable specimen of a "standing number" of a gunroom mess in the guardship at that time. He was an elderly, white-haired gentleman of about fifty years of age—a man of fifty is certainly elderly for a gunroom. His rank was that of Acting Navigating Sub-Lieutenant. He had passed his preliminary examination for Master's Mate, as they were then called, some thirty years before, had never presented himself for the final examination—which, successfully passed, would have confirmed him in his rank—and so an acting master's mate or sub-lieutenant he had remained ever since.

The *Duke of Wellington* period lasted only a very few weeks, but long enough to earn me my first certificate from my first captain afloat, Captain the Hon. Richard Carr Glyn, then Flag-Captain to the Commander-in-Chief at Portsmouth, and who sub-



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sequently commanded the *Serapis* on the occasion of the late King Edward's visit to India when Prince of Wales. The certificate I allude to was betowed on all officers by all the captains under whom they served, whether for days or years, and to my mind was couched in the most insulting terms. I suspect it to have been composed by some more than usually red-tapeist specimen of an Admiralty clerk in the early part of the Victorian period. It ordained that whatever else the captain liked to say about an officer he had to testify in writing to his sobriety. I remember, years afterwards, when I had arrived at a rank that made it my province to give, instead of to receive, these benefits, the joy with which I destroyed some dozens of them testifying to my sobriety over a period of some thirty years. I wonder if they still exist! The permanent officials and civilian clerks at the Admiralty are not fond of change, unless it takes the shape of an increase to their own pay, and, human nature being usually much alike, were I one of them I should probably take exactly the same view as they do.

In the spring of 1871, when I first went to sea, the Admiralty had instituted a system of sea-going training-ships, which was abandoned a few years later and revived, I believe, shortly before the War in a new scheme of education which was devised by Lord Fisher as First Sea Lord. I could never understand why the Admiralty ever did away with it, for, in my opinion, it worked excellently well, and to modernise it and bring it up to the present date it was only necessary to divert the time and instruction that used

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to be devoted to masts and sails to marine engineering, wireless telegraphy and torpedo work. However, this dissertation has nothing to do with my reminiscences, so I must return to my story.

The whole of my "term" in the *Britannia*, still some fifty strong, was appointed to H.M.S. *Bristol*, a frigate of between 2000 and 3000 tons that had done duty as flagship at the Cape of Good Hope Station. Our Captain, the Hon. Walter Carpenter, was thus able to take up his abode in the quarters designed for an admiral, under the poop, the ordinary captain's quarters being turned into a mess-room and school-room for the young gentlemen under training. The ship had her usual complement of officers and men, and carried, in addition, an extra lieutenant, sub-lieutenant and assistant paymaster, and two naval instructors for special duties connected with the cadets. Practically the onus of directing our training fell upon one man, Lieutenant Day Hort Bosanquet, who, many years afterwards, I knew as Commander-in-Chief at Portsmouth. Certainly, it could not have fallen into better hands. He was a thoroughly good fellow and a gentleman, to begin with, and a first-rate seaman and disciplinarian to go on with, and though he kept us all in terrific order he was none the less very popular.

We were worked hard ; but anything was preferable to our late home, the *Britannia*. The routine was somewhat as follows :—We were turned out of our hammocks just after 6 a.m. Then came gun drill, rifle-drill or sail-drill on alternate mornings ; breakfast at

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8 a.m. ; after breakfast we were inspected, and after prayers at 9 a.m. we were put into the hands of the naval instructors till dinner time at noon. At 1.15 more school or drill of some sort, and about 5 p.m. the ship's company would be at sail-drill for the best part of an hour, and we shared in their exercises of shifting sails, masts, reefing topsails, and all the manœuvres that were dear to the smart naval officer of that day. In a very short time we had complete charge of the mizzen masts and drilled against the men at the fore and main. After evening drill was over we were left in peace except for about an hour's preparation work for the next day's studies. On alternate weeks we kept regular night and day watch under the officers of the ship, and though it was a sad struggle to turn out of one's hammock, at midnight after a long day, to keep the middle watch, the discomfort and want of sleep so necessary for a young growing boy was almost made up for, when the weather was fine and warm, by the beauty of those tropical nights when the ship was bowling along under easy sail running down the trades. All our passages were made under sail, for the steam engine in those days was very rarely requisitioned unless the ship was becalmed for a very long time or was entering or leaving a port, to sail in and out of which was impossible. In those days, I regret to have to say, gunnery in the Navy was terribly neglected, principally on account of the craze which existed for smartness aloft. And there was considerable excuse for it, for the upper yardmen of that time were, to my mind, the finest specimens of humanity I

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have ever met. From constantly running the rigging at top speed, they were in the highest state of training ; they were as active as cats and as brave as lions ; for, if once a man showed, when aloft, the smallest desire to hold on with one hand and work with the other, instead of chancing everything and working with both, he was useless as an upper yardman, and was at once relegated to safer and less ambitious duties. And so the tradition went on and descended to us. The only quality we really admired in our superior officers was their seamanship. Anything in the shape of science was a bore, and the only part of the gun-drill that interested us was the part that resembled seamanship ; the shifting of tackles and breeching, and transporting the 64-pounders which formed our armament to a different position, the whole business of the gun in those days having to be done by quoins, handspikes and tackle. When it came to gun practice, which consisted in firing at a cask with a small flagstaff bobbing about in the sea, the one object was to get it over as soon as possible, as it was looked upon as distinctly uninteresting. Notwithstanding this defect, I still think that, in those days, the sea-going training did us boys a great deal of good. Amongst other advantages, when visiting foreign ports we were made to go and see the principal sights whether we liked it or not. Probably famous cathedrals, world-famous panoramic views, and such like, did not appeal to many of us, and we would far sooner have been left to our own resources ; but in after life I have become grateful to those who

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first introduced me to some of the wonders of the world.

The *Bristol* sailed away from Portsmouth in February 1871 on an eminently fine-weather cruise, most suitable for the raw material on board her. There is always some sort of a swell when crossing the Bay, and the new hands were nearly all sea-sick. As for myself, I am proud to say that I was one of the exceptions ; this immunity was due, I suppose, to the previous voyage that I had made on a sailing ship to Madeira some dozen years before. Madeira, as a matter of fact, was our first port of call, and it was interesting to me to see how much I could remember of that lovely island. A very few days after we were rolling along in the trades on our way to Rio de Janeiro. At Rio a long stay was made, for the ship required a certain amount of refitting after nearly a month at sea under sail, and leave had to be given to the men. The cadets were taken in a body to Petropolis, a lovely place up in the hills which was the summer residence of the Court and the Corps Diplomatique. The beauty of Rio has been so often described by far abler pens than mine that I refrain from giving any childish impressions of it ; but what we enjoyed most, I well remember, was the drive back from Petropolis in large coaches with four horses, the one I was in being actually driven by an old Yorkshire stage-coachman, who had found his way out to Brazil.

The only very distinct memory I have of the actual town of Rio of those days (I am glad to say I have revisited it since) was the peculiarity of the currency.

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In 1871 a tramway ticket for an ordinary length of fare was equivalent to sevenpence, English. For this same ticket, anything of a similar value from a hair-cut to a cocktail could be purchased, and with a pocket full of tickets a great deal of purchasing could be done. It was like shopping in a small provincial town with a pocket full of sixpences. After leaving Rio, the *Bristol* stood down to the southward and presently picked up the "Roaring Forties," as the strong prevailing westerly winds which are found about  $40^{\circ}$  south of the equatorial line are called, and stood across to the Cape of Good Hope, our next port of call. Next to fishing for albatross, with a bit of meat on the end of a hook and a long fishing line,—a sport which was occasionally successful,—the greatest excitement was when, as midshipman of the watch, it came to one's turn to heave the log, for, with half a gale behind, the old ship was really travelling, and our great ambition was to be able to chronicle an actual run of 50 nautical miles in the watch. A steady  $12\frac{1}{2}$  knots for four hours consecutively was not so very easily accomplished, and did not happen very often. It has to be confessed that the *Bristol* was not a very fast frigate, and compared very badly as a sailer with my next two ships of the same class.

Well, we finally arrived at Simon's Bay, and once more leave and refitting took place, and there I certainly spent some of the happiest days of my early youth, thanks to the hospitality of an acquaintance who had a large farm in the neighbourhood of Constantia, about half-way between Simon's Bay and Cape Town. This

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kind man, Watermeyer by name, had married a daughter of the Rector of Filleigh, the village of Castle Hill, and hearing that I was on board, asked permission to take me and a friend away for a week to stay with him. My friend on this occasion was another cadet of the same standing who was also a cousin, Francis Stuart Wortley, the present Lord Wharncliffe. Leave having been granted, we were driven off in glory in Mr. Watermeyer's Cape cart, and after a drive of some fifteen miles, principally along the coast, we arrived at our destination. It was one of those typically Dutch houses, with a stoop or verandah all round, so well suited to the fierce heat of that delightful climate. Our hostess was delighted to meet old and new friends and made us most welcome, and later on, when the time came to go to bed, it was a pleasure to sleep in a good English bed again, in a room all to oneself, after being accustomed to have one's worldly surroundings limited to a sea-chest and a hammock. And what a pleasant country it was! We used to ride for miles over the flats, which would have made an ideal hunting country, except for the absence of fences, and were shown the various business establishments in the neighbourhood. These were principally connected with the wine-making trade, for vines flourished exceedingly in that part of the Colony, and wine-making was a very thriving industry.

The world is very small and very round. Nearly forty years later, during the South African War, it was my fate to meet my old friend's son, then attached to Lord Robert's Staff as Colonial Aide-de-Camp, I

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being Naval Aide-de-Camp to his Lordship at the time.

After a delightful week of freedom, we were back on board again, and now our bows were turned for home. St. Helena, Ascension, Madeira, and Gibraltar, were visited in succession, and we finally anchored at Spithead after an excellent cruise.

The Admiralty had meanwhile decided that our time in training was to be extended, and as the *Bristol* was about done for, we cadets—who, by the way, were by this time nearly all midshipmen, were turned over to the *Ariadne*, a larger and far more beautiful vessel than our late one. The *Ariadne* was one of the crack frigates of her time. She sailed very well and had been selected for the use of the Prince and Princess of Wales in the spring of 1867, when their Royal Highnesses made their Eastern trip to Egypt, Turkey, the Crimea, and Greece.

By this time the season of Christmas was close by. We were all given leave for Christmas, and early in the New Year joined the *Ariadne*. Our next destination was the Mediterranean, and, timed to arrive at Malta, as we were, in the early spring, as far as climate and surroundings were concerned, nothing could be pleasanter. Our first passage from Portsmouth to Gibraltar was marred by a very bad boat accident. We were crossing the Bay heading for Finisterre, running before a strong breeze and rather a tumbling sea, when, unfortunately, a man fell overboard. A life-buoy was let go, and the ship was at once brought to the wind and hove-to; but she was a very long ship for those days,





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and by the time she was hove-to the man was some way off. The life-boat cutter was lowered and pulled off in the direction of the life-buoy. Unfortunately, the breeze was freshening, and the sea was becoming heavier every minute, the situation thus becoming unpleasant. Meanwhile, the boat's crew having ascertained that the man was no longer hanging on to the buoy—he had let go, doubtless, from exhaustion—tried to turn round and return to the ship. In turning, always a very dangerous manœuvre in a bad sea, she broached-to and was swamped. Another boat was immediately manned, but owing to the heavy rolling of the ship she swamped alongside, and there we were with about five-and-twenty men struggling in the water, and with practically no other boat to lower that was big enough to stand such a sea. Steam had been got up meanwhile, and the ship, with great difficulty, was brought as near the survivors as possible. A certain number we managed to get on board with ropes, but the loss was heavy, for out of those two crews we lost eleven men and two officers. Of the two officers something more must be said. By a curious coincidence those two men had been such bitter enemies during the whole time they had been messmates on board the *Bristol* and *Ariadne*, that they had never been known to speak to each other except on duty when the exigencies of the Service so required. When the first boat was manned they both happened to be on deck; they both, with the instinct of gallant men, jumped into the cutter as volunteers, and the senior of the two took charge of the boat. They were both drowned

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together, and it was always a wonder to my youthful mind as to whether, with death staring them in the face and only a question of a few minutes, they ever made up their paltry quarrel? There was yet another curious incident connected with this affair. Two of the men who were in the boats' crews were survivors of the *Captain*, a vessel which was lost with nearly all hands and which was still much talked of in the Navy; both these men were saved, and after two such escapes, it seemed evident that Providence never intended that either of them should drown.

The next six months were passed in the *Ariadne* cruising in the Mediterranean; Malta, the headquarters of the Mediterranean Fleet, being our most frequent port of call.

Once again I feel tempted to write a description—a temptation that must once more be resisted, for no one but the practised artist should be allowed to attempt to describe, and, moreover, the Grand Harbour of Valetta has been so often dealt with. But the subject, like the place itself, has an endless charm for me. For ten years, off and on, I was on the Mediterranean Station; on countless occasions I have gone in and out of the Grand Harbour, for I have often revisited the place in later years; yet, were I transported there to-morrow, I feel sure that I should be as much impressed with its beauty and charm as ever. I know no place where there is such a feast of brilliant colour as is to be met when steaming to a buoy up the Grand Harbour. Every creek that is passed swarms with gondola-shaped *dhaisas*, painted with all the colours

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of the rainbow, the rich ochre-colour of the beautiful old fortifications, interspersed with the residential dwellings, many of which are pink with green shutters, and the whole sandwiched, as it were, between the deep blue of the sky and the still deeper blue of the Mediterranean, make up a picture which, to me, is unforgettable. It was at Malta, too, that I really began my operatic career as a spectator ; for, though I had heard Madame Patti at Covent Garden when I was nine years old, it was at Malta, that I first became an habitu . It was a cheap luxury in those days, the stalls costing only half a crown, and even a Naval Cadet could occasionally afford himself that amount of pleasure. Every one in musical circles of Valetta was still raving about the then newly discovered prima donna, Emma Albani, who had fairly captured their hearts during the winter season of 1871, when she had sung continually at the Opera House of Valetta before being whisked away to start her triumphant career in London and the world in general. Though, alas ! Albani had gone, the opera was not at all bad, and as going there was allowed, it was also an excuse for being ashore in the evening ; and so I spent a great many pleasant hours in that well-ordered little Opera House.

A visit to Naples, was of course, inevitable on an instructional cruise, and the *Ariadne* spent some time there also. The " young gentlemen " were duly taken to Herculaneum and Pompeii to improve their minds, and I had the chance of hearing more operatic performances in that colossal Opera House, San Carlo, and,

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moreover, of studying for the first time the manners and customs of an Italian audience. Fiercely critical, with apparently a natural intimate knowledge of singing, the members of the audience would almost conduct the singer on the stage by their incessant remarks. They could be the most enthusiastic audience in the world when really pleased ; but, should an unfortunate singer fail to please them, their brutality (there is no other word !) was frankly disgusting. I remember a poor woman singing at San Carlo. She had been a first-class artist in her time, but her voice showed signs of wear and tear, and the Neapolitans had had enough of her. Six times running was this poor creature made to repeat her aria in order that the audience might give themselves the pleasure of hissing and hooting her, to say nothing of hurling obscene curses at her across the foot-lights. Were I an artist I fancy I should prefer the cold Covent Garden audience, who, though inclined to be unenthusiastic, at any rate could never be induced to insult a woman.

Our stay at Naples was very pleasant, for our taskmasters gave us a good deal of leave, wisely encouraging us youngsters to see everything of interest in the neighbourhood, and in an old photograph-book I can still turn up the inevitable presentment of the Blue Grotto at Capri, and the extremely artificial waterfall at Caserta,—one of the numerous Royal Palaces in Italy,—with its barocco groups of glaring white marble placed at the foot of the falls—Diana and her nymphs on the one side, and the ill-treated Actæon and his hounds on the other.

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But the training-ship period was rapidly coming to an end, and the autumn of 1872 saw the *Ariadne* on her way home. She called at Algiers and Gibraltar, and finally returned to Portsmouth in October, by which time we had all become real midshipmen and were only waiting our turn to be appointed to proper sea-going ships to commence our real service in the British Navy.

In the spring of 1873 I was appointed as midshipman to H.M.S. *Narcissus*, the flagship of a squadron of six frigates, and under the command of Rear-Admiral Campbell. This squadron consisted of the *Narcissus*, *Doris*, *Endymion*, *Aurora*, *Immortalité* and *Topaz*, and was officially known as the Flying Squadron. As we were nearly always at sea, generally engaged in making long sailing passages, and consequently condemned to live a great deal on the ship's provisions, the bluejackets bestowed on the squadron the name of "The Hungry Six," by which designation it was usually known in the Service.

There was a galaxy of talent on board the *Narcissus*. The Rear-Admiral, Frederick Campbell, who had earned a considerable reputation as a smart officer and seaman, had appointed a nephew of his, Charles Campbell, as his Flag-Lieutenant, and, to make the thing complete and Scottish, one of his servants was a piper, who, on guest-nights, used to march round the Admiral's table after dinner, according to the custom of pipers. Personally, I rather like pipes in the distance in Scotland, or when they play with troops on the march; but between decks, where the

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beams were only six feet high, the noise made by this solitary specimen of his tribe was enough to wake the dead. John Ommaney Hopkins, in after years a Lord of the Admiralty and Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Fleet, was Flag-Captain, and J. R. Fullerton, who afterwards was for so long the Admiral of Queen Victoria's Yachts, was Commander. In those days he had the well-deserved reputation of being one of the very smartest young Commanders in the Fleet. Our First-Lieutenant was Lieutenant A. K. Wilson, who, later on, earned the V.C. for his gallantry when leading his men,—the men of a machine-gun party,—in the Sudan, and who subsequently became the well-known Admiral of the Fleet, Sir Arthur Wilson. Another officer of the ship, a perfectly undistinguished one, was our Naval Instructor. I have forgotten his name, but will call him "Mr. Smith." Mr. Smith suited the midshipmen perfectly ; as long as they did not bother him he never bothered them, so we strolled in and out during study hours at our own sweet wills. One day he announced his approaching marriage, and invited all those of us that could get leave to the ceremony. We all knew his fiancée, for she was the barmaid at a small hotel where we youngsters used to foregather when ashore. I was one of the fortunate few present at the wedding breakfast given by the proprietor of the hotel, whose speech, when proposing the health of the happy pair, I can never forget, and I recommend it to any gentleman who happens to find himself placed in the position of orator on similar occasions. It was



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to this effect: "When the courtship began he (the hotel proprietor) had rather feared that the whole thing would end in a liaison (pronounced ly-a-son), but Mr. Smith, to his great surprise and pleasure, had behaved honourably and had married the girl!"

Shortly after I joined at Plymouth the squadron was reported ready for sea, but before starting we came in for one of the most furious and sudden gales that I can recollect. We were lying in the Sound at the time, and I remember I was midshipman of the afternoon watch on that Sunday, and though the glass was falling ominously the weather was so lovely that it did not seem worth while to disturb the ship's company, who invariably on Sunday afternoons sleep the sleep of the just, there being apparently plenty of time to make everything snug for the night later on. Suddenly, without any warning, a terrific squall struck the ship, and though the water inside the mole was perfectly calm, so great was the force of the wind that the spray was lifted bodily from the surface of the water and became in a moment absolutely blinding, and the boats at the boom were in danger of being swamped. The hands were at once turned up, the boats were hoisted just in time, nearly full of water from the spray that had been driven into them. Top-gallant masts were struck, two more anchors were let go (as we had begun to drag towards Drake's Island), steam was got up, and we steamed to our anchors almost all the night, during the whole of which time the wind was blowing with almost hurricane force. In the morning the gale abated, and then

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one could get some idea of what had been going on. One of our consorts, the *Aurora*, anchored close to us, had parted her cable. Luckily, the spare anchors brought her up, and she too had been steaming up to her anchors all night. In addition to this, there were no less than six merchant ships of different sizes ashore in the Sound around various parts of the coast.

We left Plymouth shortly afterwards, the West Indies being our destination, via the inevitable Madeira. On our way out we experienced even worse weather than that which I have already described—worse because it lasted so much longer. For a whole week the entire squadron was hove-to under storm-sails in the Bay, and the *Narcissus*, though a first-rate sea boat and magnificently handled, suffered a good deal. She was old and the seams were inclined to open, and, moreover, two of the gun ports on the main deck were driven in by a heavy sea; consequently she shipped so much water that there was hardly a dry place in the whole vessel. All this time hammocks were never stowed, so the moment our watch was over we midshipmen used to turn in, our hammocks being the only comparatively dry place to be found. We really rather enjoyed this novel condition, as though we were constantly employed on deck, seeing to the extra security of the guns and a hundred and one odds and ends, at any rate school and drill were out of the question.

I now have to ask pardon for being tiresomely technical, as I must allude to one of the bravest and smartest bits of seamanship that I have ever witnessed.

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During the height of the gale the outer bobstay carried away. The bobstays on the bowsprit of a sailing-ship do the duty of supporting that important spar, on the safety of which depends the foremast, the main topmast, and hence practically the whole of the great fabric of masts and yards. Our First-Lieutenant, the A. K. Wilson before alluded to, the boatswain, and the captain of the forecastle managed to hang a grating under the bowsprit to give them something to stand on, and then proceeded to execute the necessary repairs. For many hours these three intrepid men laboured at this most difficult job, alternately up to their necks in water as the bows of the ship plunged into the sea, and then high up some fifty feet above it when she recovered herself and took her pitch upwards. Their labour was rewarded, for the bowsprit was saved, and one likes to remember what a mere matter of course it was considered in those non-advertising days. In more modern times one has seen brass bands and local mayors meeting the heroes of far less dangerous and difficult exploits, after the necessary "boom" has been judiciously engineered.

During the gale the squadron was dispersed and lost all knowledge of each other. However, the rendezvous had been given as Vigo, and at Vigo we all eventually turned up, and from thence proceeded to Madeira.

And now to say something about the life of a midshipman in those days. We had,—besides a good deal of so-called study which was imparted to us by a naval instructor, and a considerable amount of drill,—to keep regular watch in four reliefs ; the only time

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we ever ceased to keep watch was on being put in charge of a boat in harbour. To be in charge of a boat was considered rather an honour. Steam launches were rare,—even a large frigate carried only one, and that one merely an ordinary pulling boat with a small rattletrap engine bolted into it, the maximum speed being about six knots,—so practically all the boat-work of a ship was done under oars and under sail, and great fun it was. But the really important business was, of course, the sail-drill, ship against ship, that took place every evening when at sea, and to a limited extent twice a day in harbour. There was a terrific competition of the most jealous nature ; the upper yardmen, upon whose smartness it mainly depended, used to carry their jealousy so far as to pick quarrels with their principal opponents directly they got ashore together. For the sake of general peace and quietness, and the comfort of the local police, it eventually became necessary to give certain ships' companies leave on different days, to prevent the eternal battles they used to fight on shore where there was no discipline to restrain them.

A sailing cruise round the West Indies sounds extremely like a yachting excursion, but, in absolute fact, a journey performed by a squadron of sailing frigates keeping meticulous station under sail, and sometimes having to make short tacks every five minutes or so, to come into their anchorage, and all this in tropical heat, does not seem to have much of the yacht connected with it.

The days and months passed by quickly enough, if

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in somewhat monotonous fashion, until the spring of 1874, when we were ordered to reinforce the Mediterranean Fleet, then under the command of Admiral Sir Hastings Yelverton. Sir Hastings was then flying his flag on board the *Lord Warden*, one of our very early ironclads. She really merited the name of ironclad, for she was a wooden ship with wrought-iron plates bolted on to her. Sir Hastings was himself quite one of the best specimens of the great sea officer of those days. A very fine gentleman, with a thorough knowledge of the world, he was an invaluable servant to his country at that particular moment, as Spain was in a state of semi-revolution, and it was fortunate for England that the Commander-in-Chief united in his person all the best characteristics of the diplomatist, the man of the world, and the sailor. The trouble began from the Naval point of view, when the Revolutionary party seized two Spanish men-of-war of considerable size and importance, the *Vittoria* and *Almanza*, and started on what was probably going to be a piratical cruise in foreign waters. The British Navy, amongst its other numerous duties, has always been busy in the suppression of piracy, so that in a very few days the *Vittoria* and *Almanza* were duly rounded up, the crews landed, and the ships themselves safely interned at Gibraltar. The next move of the Intransigentes,—as the revolutionary party called themselves,—was to seize the forts that commanded the arsenal of Carthagena, and they then took possession of the greater part of the Spanish Fleet. Our Mediterranean Fleet promptly went to Carthagena and

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the neighbouring ports on the east coast of Spain to watch the course of events. Being short of funds, the Intransigentes conceived the idea of cruising down their own coast, sticking to territorial waters, and demanding money from all the towns along the coast. In case of refusal the towns were to be bombarded. In the interest of humanity the English Fleet used to hover round and place themselves between the Intransigente Fleet and the shore, and insist on forty-eight hours' grace being given to enable the women and children to be removed to a place of safety. The local Carthagenan butcher, who, I think, was for the moment the Intransigente admiral, was given to understand that unless he complied with the request of the British admiral, he and his squadron would, in all probability, be blown sky high. Being a sensible man, he did as he was told, but, occasionally, after the necessary interval on which we had insisted had expired, a bombardment would take place. I was present at one, and enjoyed the spectacle most thoroughly. Alicante was the town in question. In the way of defence it possessed a charming old sixteenth-century citadel, as well as two or three little batteries on the beach that could just manage to return a salute. None the less, the Governor of Alicante, on being asked "for his money or his life," with true Spanish chivalry, firmly declined to pay any sort of ransom, manned his little popguns, and prepared for the worst. We, as usual, were anchored between the town and the Intransigente squadron, and after the forty-eight hours' interval had come to an end we retired like "seconds

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out of the ring," purposely taking as long as possible over this necessary manœuvre. Then the fun began. The Intransigentes, some of whose ships were very heavily armoured for those days (they carried 9-inch guns, which really were 240-pounders), began to bombard, and the citadel and batteries returned the fire. At that time I was midshipman of the foretop, so up there I ensconced myself, and a splendid view I got of the whole proceedings. It was a deliciously comic performance. The Intransigente shooting was so bad that the proverbial haystack would have been quite safe. Indeed, as we saw later when we landed, they could not even hit a town, and barring a few broken windows there was no harm done at all, and no casualties. The shore defenders meanwhile fired little round shots that went skipping along the top of the water until they were tired and sank. It is needless to remark that had they actually hit one of the iron-clad vessels at which they were directed, they would have had no more effect than the classical patting of the dome of St. Paul's would have had on the Dean and Chapter. After a few hours of this performance, the Intransigentes wearied of it and went on to some other coast town to try their luck there, shadowed by another portion of Sir Hastings' fleet. The captain of the foretop, who was a great friend of mine, was much looked up to by his top mates as a sort of encyclopædia of knowledge of all sorts, so I was much amused to hear the following conversation, which, of course, was not intended for my chaste ears, while I was looking through my spy-glass at the bombardment.

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The captain of the foretop was being interrogated: "Bill, 'oo is that there 'ere Queen of Spain at all?" Bill replied: "The Queen, she's a . . ." and then followed a string of lurid adjectives, leading up to the suggestion that the royal lady in question belonged to what Rudyard Kipling calls the oldest profession in the world.

I did not see much more of the *Intransigente* Fleet, but not long afterwards it brought its cruising to an inglorious end. The Spaniards succeeded in getting together a few loyal ships under a real admiral, as a means of putting an end to this potential piracy. Just before the expected general engagement could take place, the *Intransigente* admiral,—who, though doubtless he may have known a great deal about bullocks and sheep, was woefully deficient in knowledge of fleet manœuvring,—succeeded in ramming and sinking one of his own squadron. This untoward incident upset his nerve and that of his companions to such an extent that the whole of his fleet ignominiously surrendered.

Shortly after the *Intransigente* episode considerable changes were made in the personnel of the senior officers of the *Narcissus*. Rear-Admiral Campbell hauled down his flag and was succeeded by Rear-Admiral Randolph, the Captain and Commander were relieved, and our First-Lieutenant was about the same time promoted to the rank of Commander and left us. With the exception of the ship's company and junior officers, the *Narcissus* had become almost a new ship, and of course there was the usual grouching that always takes place on these occasions among the



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junior officers. To our experienced minds nothing that was new *could* be right, and I must confess that so far as efficient seamanship and smartness aloft were concerned, the old lot could hardly have been improved on. The squadron remained in the Mediterranean, but was no longer closely attached to the Commander-in-Chief, and went eastward for a cruise in the Levant.

Amongst other ports visited was Smyrna, and there a couple of my messmates and I got into rather considerable trouble. The Consul at Smyrna had arranged a special train to give the Admiral and Officers of the squadron a chance of visiting Ephesus, where a number of archæologists were then busy excavating the celebrated Temple of Diana. We, in our wisdom, thought it would be dull work going up with a number of officers, most of whom would be our seniors as the companions of this excursion, so having hired horses, we slipped away early in the morning and proceeded to ride some thirty miles up country to Ephesus. Of course we never dreamt of bothering about a guide or any detail of that kind, but somehow or another midshipmen generally manage to turn up at their destination, and after a delightful ride over a fine grass country, we arrived all right. Meanwhile, unfortunately for us, the Flag-Lieutenant had, in a casual way, mentioned to the Admiral at breakfast that three of the youngsters had started to ride up. The Admiral had been previously warned by the Consul that the country outside Smyrna was infested with brigands, and on account of the bother that it would have given him had anything happened to us,

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he was full of wrath, which was eventually to descend on our innocent heads. Orders were at once sent ashore to the Consul to inform the Turkish Governor, and altogether such a fuss was made that eventually a squadron of Turkish cavalry was sent out to get hold of us and bring us back. By this time we had about three hours' start, and as, probably, from what I know of Turks, the Cavalry did not hurry over much, they never got near us. None the less, when we arrived at Ephesus our troubles began. We were looking about for some place to put up and feed our horses, preparatory to feeding ourselves in view of our ride back, when we happened unluckily to meet the Flag-Captain, who got into what we thought a most unnecessary state of rage, and ordered us at once to get into the train and go back in that comparatively undignified conveyance to Smyrna, then to go straight on board the ship, and report ourselves as prisoners under close arrest. This was a bore of course, but with my usual philosophy I consoled myself with the reflection that, as a prisoner, I should not have to keep any watch that night, and would have a good night in, which would be infinitely preferable to walking the deck for four hours after a long outing. The first part of the programme was carried out all right, but, to my disgust, when I tried to excuse myself for not going on duty, pleading that, as a prisoner, I was incapable of doing duty, the Commander calmly informed me that I was temporarily released, so on watch I had to go.

Our arrest lasted about a month and came to an

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end very unexpectedly. Somehow or other (we youngsters, who were naturally the severest of critics, all thought from very faulty seamanship) the *Narcissus* and another ship of the squadron took the ground rather badly off the coast of Sicily. Of course there was a Court-martial, and to our intense delight our Captain was dismissed his ship and our arrest came to a triumphant conclusion. With the usual pitilessness of youth, we looked upon it as a judgment upon our superior officer, and to round the episode off nicely, I, having been just relieved from watch when the ship went aground, was one of the witnesses at the Court-martial. I am ashamed to say that our delight when the sentence was promulgated was scarcely, to say the least of it, decent, and when the unfortunate Captain returned on board to turn over his command to an acting successor who was at once appointed, he must have almost heard the uproarious cheering in the midshipmen's berth. What brutes boys are!

Nothing particularly exciting happened during the rest of my time in the *Narcissus*. She was paid off in the summer of 1874 on her return to England, and I managed to get some leave whilst waiting for an appointment to a new ship.

In August 1874 the appointment came, and the "new ship" turned out to be the *Audacious*, fitted out at Chatham as the flagship of Vice-Admiral Ryder, a distant connection of my own, who had been appointed to the command of the China Station.

The *Audacious* and her sister ships, one of which was the *Vanguard* which was sunk later by another sister,

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the *Iron Duke*, in a collision in the Channel, were a type of middle-sized battleships evolved about that period by the Chief Constructor of the Navy and his Naval Advisors at the Admiralty. I have seen some fairly useless types of vessels produced in my time, but really the "Audacious" type was almost unique in that way. Fairly heavily masted and barque rigged, the *Audacious* could not even sail with a fair wind, for it was impossible to steer her unless the engines were kept going. With considerable horse-power her full trial speed was barely twelve knots; indeed I do not think that in the whole of her career, which was a long one, she could ever really do ten knots for six consecutive hours. The main armament consisted of 9-inch muzzle-loading guns. These guns were very much on the same lines as the modern howitzer as far as length was concerned. This type of weapon had such a high trajectory that it was practically useless unless the range was known within 100 yards, an almost impossible condition at sea. They were mounted on what was known as the Box Battery System—a name that described the battery so well that any further explanation is superfluous, and, as the name implies, the whole formed the most perfect shell-trap that could be conceived by the ingenuity of man. There is always a reason for everything, and there was some sort of reason for the "Audacious" class. The Navy in the early 'seventies was mad on the subject of ramming. The lesson was, of course, learnt from what had occurred at Lissa, but probably it was terribly over-applied. There was a consequent craze for what were

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supposed to be short, handy ships, and that was where the failure of the system came in. They were short, but they were never handy, for shortness can never make up for the consequent loss of speed and bad steering. However, having served for nearly four years in sailing frigates, I was duly impressed by the size and magnificence of this new monster of the ocean. It was only by experience that we learnt what an appallingly bad ship ours was, even as compared with already existing types.

I must now say something about the superior officers. Admiral Ryder had the reputation of being an extremely erudite and scientific officer, so naturally we midshipmen distrusted him instinctively. I saw a great deal of him later on, and a kinder and more amiable old gentleman never lived. Captain Philip Colomb was his Flag-Captain. He, at any rate, was a very able man, and, far in advance of his time, was one of the earliest advocates of the abolition of masts and yards, as being useless appendages and a danger in action. How right he was we know by our modern Navy; and the experience he was about to acquire,—I allude to what I have already written about the sailing qualities of the *Audacious*,—could only have confirmed his judgment. Our Commander was the present Admiral Sir Cyprian Bridge, so—as in the *Narcissus* (though of a totally different stamp),—I was again fortunate enough to be serving under a very distinguished group of officers. Two or three of the midshipmen in the *Audacious* had been in the *Narcissus* before, and it is needless to relate how convinced we were that, as seamen, we were

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sure to compare very favourably with the poor unfortunates who had only had experience of life at sea in what we irreverently called a tin pot.

Chatham was a foul locality in those days, and, for all I know, may still be unattractive. The only incident I remember well, however, was the excitement in the Dockyard when the then Princess of Wales, in the heyday of her exquisite beauty, came down to christen her godchild, the *Alexandra*, which was launched about that time. Soon after this the *Audacious* sailed for her Station, and we began to realise what we were in for in our new ship. One good point she certainly had. Owing to a variety of reasons, at sea she was as steady as the proverbial rock. There were reports current that this steadiness was the result of carrying all the principal weights,—guns, armour, spars, etc.,—abnormally high. However, the Constructor's Department, by means of all sorts of figures (and of course figures cannot lie), clearly proved that she was, if possible, unnecessarily safe; but, anyhow, as we midshipmen knew nothing about angles of safety, and cared still less, we greatly appreciated the fact of her steadiness. Her other good point was that she was high between decks, which made the gunroom mess a little more habitable, and gave us more air when tucked up in our hammocks at night, as compared with the old-fashioned frigate barely 6 feet high at the beams.

We were directed to proceed to China through the Mediterranean, passing through the Suez Canal, although it was considered doubtful whether a ship of the size of the *Audacious* could get through the Canal

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as it then was. And, indeed, it was a job of some dimensions! On arrival at Port Said the ship was lightened of all the coal and stores that we could spare and we proceeded on our course through the Canal, provided with one tug ahead and two tugs astern, to keep her straight. Anything less straight than our course it is difficult to imagine. In spite of the tugs we bumped about merrily from one bank to the other, our bluff bows making such a wave that the whole countryside was flooded. Surely, since the *Argo* first took the sea, there never was such a brute to steer as H.M.S. *Audacious*! After two days' bumping about in the Canal we reached Suez, and from Aden, our next port of call, we proceeded to Galle in Ceylon.

To cross the Indian Ocean from Aden to Point de Galle, a distance of only 3000 miles, took us about thirty days. The most economical speed of our species of Noah's Ark turned out to be well under five knots an hour, and though we had filled up one of the large flats below the battery with coal, and carried a deck cargo into the bargain, it was all we could do to crawl into Galle before we came to the end of our tether. Do not let it be imagined that all the ships built about that period were the same hopeless failures. Far from it. Many of our early battleships and cruisers were fine specimens of naval architecture and steamed quite well. Some of the cruisers could sail as well as steam extremely well. The "*Audacious*" class, as before explained, was simply the outcome of the "short, handy ship" theory carried out to the verge of lunacy.

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From Galle we wended our way in the same leisurely fashion to Singapore, and arrived there about Christmas time. Singapore was practically the southern limit of the China Station, and there our Admiral and Commander-in-Chief saw the first of his command. The China Station was then practically divided into three portions : the southern based upon Singapore ; North China based upon Shanghai ; whilst the ships stationed in Japan lay for the most part at Yokohama. Hong Kong was the main headquarters of the Station, and the Commodore flew his broad pennant from the mast-head of an old line-of-battleship, the *Victor Emanuel*, which, doing duty as guardship and receiving-ship, was in the same category as the previously described *Duke of Wellington* at Portsmouth. The Commodore was also superintendent of the Dockyard. Each of the three districts,—if one may apply such a term as district to the sea,—was looked after by the senior officer in the shape of a captain commanding a corvette, having under him a string of gun-vessels and gunboats. It was a great station for small craft. These were necessary because they could go a considerable distance up the great rivers of China, for some of them would spend the best part of three years up the same river, only varied by an occasional visit to Hong Kong for a refit. The flagship herself had a sort of roving commission, and when things were quiet her presence on different parts of the Station became a question of climate, which usually meant Japan for the summer and South China for the winter. As may readily be imagined, to serve in a flagship on the China Station was one of the



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pleasantest jobs that came a sailor's way, and I, for one, passed two very happy years there.

It was at Singapore that I met, for the first time, a man of whom I was destined to see a great deal many years afterwards,—Sir Frank Swettenham,—then at the commencement of his long and successful career in the Straits Settlements and Malay States, a career which only came to an end with the termination of his Governorship in 1904. I forget exactly what his post was during the winter of 1874-75, but I have the happiest recollection of dining at a bungalow which he shared with a distant cousin of mine, one of the Herveys, who was then a Civil Servant at Singapore. Fancy how great a delight it was to a midshipman to get out of the gunroom,—which in hot weather was rather like a heated sardine tin,—and instead of eating the usual horrible food which was our daily fare, to *dine* in the best sense of that important word. I may, parenthetically, remark that I have always taken the greatest interest in food ; that is to say, whenever I have had the opportunity, for when attached to an Army in the Field, or, worse still, living in a naval mess, it is useless to bother about anything from a culinary point of view, beyond the elemental fact of eating to keep oneself alive. There are many things that are good to eat in this world, and, in their turn, I have appreciated the *cuisine bourgeoise* of Provence and Gascony, the numerous *pasta* dishes of Italy, to say nothing of the supreme efforts of quite a large quantity of the great chefs of Paris, but I still think the one thing very difficult to beat in the way of a delicacy is

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the genuine Malay vegetable curry eaten in its own home, with which every dinner, and indeed every meal, in that part of the world, is invariably topped-up. Moreover, the setting was so pleasant:—The verandah of a bungalow, with a tropical moon so luminous that candles were hardly needed, with the murmur of the jungle in one's ears, and, in place of the eternal "shop" which becomes one's portion in the gunroom, to enjoy the conversation of two extremely agreeable men, one of whom was certainly a remarkably able one into the bargain. The cynical mind may suggest that as likely as not the agreeable men in question were talking their own "shop" most of the time. Perhaps it may have been so; at any rate it was a new "shop" to me.

Our next move was to Hong Kong; for the *Audacious*, quite a long sea-trip, with the accompanying difficulties which I have already described. These were partially overcome by calling at Saigon, the Headquarters of the French Navy in those waters. The Commander-in-Chief was there able to kill two birds with one stone—to exchange courtesies with the French Commander-in-Chief and take in a fresh supply of coal for the remainder of his journey. It is quite unnecessary to describe Saigon. Claude Farrère, who, though a sailor, is also a great writer, has done it already in the most masterly fashion in *Les Civilisés*. Even a few days of the climate of Saigon, which resembles nothing in the world so much as the interior of an orchid house, are trying enough. Small wonder that the unfortunate Government officials and naval officers who are out there for years take to opium smoking and various other weird

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amusements—in fact, anything—to while 'the time away.

We finally arrived at our destination,—Hong Kong, —after about a five months' journey from England, and there we spent some considerable time refitting and preparing for our summer cruise. During our stay there I had finished serving my time as a midshipman, having completed four and a half years, and passed my examination, so far as seamanship was concerned, for sub-lieutenant. I was fortunate enough to be given a first-class, and on the strength of it could have claimed a passage home to pass the other two examinations in gunnery and navigation which were necessary to confirm me in my rank. Until these were passed one could only hold the rank of Acting Sub-Lieutenant. Of course I ought to have done so, for, had I taken the other two first-classes,—and, barring accidents, there was not much difficulty in doing so,—I should have been made a Lieutenant at once. Unfortunately there were attractions of various kinds at Hong Kong, and I am afraid I succumbed to them all. The result was I remained out there for over another year having a very pleasant time, but steadily losing seniority. Nevertheless, the year in the Far East was really well spent even at the expense of spoiling what might possibly have been a successful career in the Navy. To see something of China,—to my mind by far the most interesting country in the world,—to see the beginning of the Europeanising of Japan, is a pleasanter thing to look back upon than the possibilities of high command in various parts of the world, finishing

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off, at its very best, with the command of a Home Port.

Shortly after I had attained to the exalted rank of Acting Sub-Lieutenant, a vacancy occurred owing to the sudden death of a Commander of one of the gun-vessels, and, as was always the case in those days, the acting vacancy was given to the Flag-Lieutenant. The Admiral very kindly made me his Acting Flag-Lieutenant for the time being, so that, at the age of a little over nineteen, I found myself on the Staff of a Commander-in-Chief. The result of my temporary promotion was that I was suddenly thrown into the vortex of Hong Kong Society, about which it is necessary to say something. Naturally, the head of the whole business was the Governor of Hong Kong, Sir Arthur Kennedy. The honours of Government House were done by his daughter, Miss Kennedy, in the most charming fashion, and many were the pleasant dinners I enjoyed at that hospitable table. Miss Kennedy subsequently married the late Admiral of the Fleet, Lord Clanwilliam, but that was later, and after her father had left the Colony. The next in rank to the Governor was the Naval Commander-in-Chief, and the General in Command of Troops, Captains of ships and Colonels of regiments, all came along in the usual official way. All this was obvious enough and not in the least amusing, but what delighted me was the table of precedence of those whom we youngsters always talked of as "dollar grinders," who, with their wives, were in real life the representatives of the great firms of China Merchants. I had to make myself acquainted with

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these terrible rules of precedence so as not to make an unnecessary number of mistakes on the occasions when my Admiral was entertaining the rank and fashion of Hong Kong. They were rather a terrifying lot, these same wives of dollar grinders, and used to fight like cats if not put in their proper places. The whole precedence was based on the importance, or supposed importance, of the firm, and in my time Jardine & Mathieson were an easy first ; consequently the wife of that firm's representative was in the prime position of being the leading civilian lady of the Colony. But even in 1875 the importance of the China Merchant was beginning to dwindle, and small wonder ! The youngsters who used to go out as tea-tasters were started on a salary of £400 a year. Admirable board was provided for them by the firm at what was called the Hong, where they not only had the best of messing provided for them gratis, but, in addition, could ask as many guests as they liked. Moreover, to make the thing complete, the firm provided them with a chair and two coolies to carry them about. (We have not yet heard of runners on the Stock Exchange being accommodated by their employers with free taxi cabs !) Being for the most part very little more than schoolboys, they naturally had a very good time. There were rumours that they had a certain amount of work to do in the morning ; but even this was never confirmed. Anyhow, after a remarkably copious "tiffin" and the necessary hour's rest, the real business of the day began, such as the training of racing ponies, cricket, rowing, and every sort of sport that was then popular. If nothing better

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offered, the Hong provided an excellent dinner, and then everybody adjourned to the Club for cards, billiards or bowls until the small hours. Meanwhile, the German merchants,—to say nothing of the indigenuous Chinese,—were gradually ousting the Englishman. Even at the unreflective age of nineteen it struck me that, as a business proposition, the German clerk who worked all day, spoke at least four languages and kept himself on £80 a year, would be apt to further the interest of his firm and be more generally useful to it than our own young men, who lived luxuriously, amused themselves a good deal, spoke no language but their own, and probably cost the firm not far short of £1000 a year apiece.

But to return to the Society aspect :—I remember well the first dinner to which I accompanied my Admiral, given at East Point by the then representative of Jardine & Mathieson. After the complete dinner party had filed in arm in arm, strictly in accordance with the precedence of the firms, I wandered in humbly, last and alone. However, I reflected, while I was philosophically consoling myself with the pleasures of the table, which included remarkably good wine, that had I been there in my real rank as an Acting Sub-Lieutenant, I should probably have been sent to dine in the steward's room instead.

The drawback to Hong Kong, as the Headquarters of the China Station, was that it was a terribly expensive place, and as a system of universal credit obtained, it was really difficult for young officers to resist the temptation of running into debt. A certain

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number certainly did come to grief, and the only wonder is that there were not more of them. The British public is beginning to realise at last how miserable a pittance is the pay of the Naval Officer of to-day. In my young days it was a great deal worse, and in China we were literally defrauded by the Admiralty into the bargain. It is a disgraceful fact that the officers and men were paid monthly in silver dollars valued by the Government at what used to be the par value of the dollar, namely 4*s.* 2*d.*; when their real value was well under 4*s.* Of course this did not affect the higher ranks; on the contrary, it suited them admirably. They could get their cheques cashed at the bank on shore, and instead of taking their dollars could remit not only their pay but, up to a decent point, a good deal besides at 4*s.* 2*d.* and make a very fine profit; but as far as the unfortunate junior officers (who had no banking accounts) and the ship's company were concerned, it was nothing else than highway robbery. But from time immemorial, the officers and men serving afloat and doing the real work of the Navy have been robbed by the civilian side of the Admiralty. Readers of history will remember the great Dundonald's crusade, when he was Captain Lord Cochrane, against the Malta Prize Court, and his subsequent exposure of similar scandals in the House of Commons. All the scandals then exposed must necessarily have been within the knowledge of the Admiralty of those days, who either connived at it or shared in the plunder. Two of the cases quoted by Dundonald in the House of Commons are worth repeating:—

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“The noble lord then read a letter from a captain of a vessel at the Cape of Good Hope, complaining ‘that the officers of ships of war were so pillaged by those of the Vice-Admiralty Courts, that he wished to know how they could be relieved; whether they could be allowed the liberty to send their prizes home, and how far the jurisdiction of the Vice-Admiralty Court extended; for that the charges of Court were so exorbitant, it required the whole amount of the value of a good prize to satisfy them. In the case of one vessel that was sold for 11,000 rupees, the charges amounted to more than 10,000. This was the case at Penang, Malacca, and other places, as well as at the Cape.’

. . . . .

“The noble lord said he had produced the copy of the bill to show the length of it. He then showed the original; and to show the equity and moderation of the Vice-Admiralty Court, he read one article where, on the taxation of a bill, the Court, for deducting fifty crowns, charged thirty-five crowns for the trouble in doing it. A vessel was valued at 8,608 crowns, the Marshal received one per cent, for delivering her, and in the end the net proceeds amounted to no more than 1,900 crowns out of 8,608—all the rest had been embezzled and swallowed up in the Prize Court. He was sorry, he said, to trespass on the time of the House, on a day when another matter of importance was to come before them. He pledged himself, however, that no subject could be introduced more highly deserving their serious attention and consideration.”

The public have not yet heard all that is going to be done in the case of the prize money earned by the Navy during the late war. For the sake of my old comrades and their successors I hope that those who have gone through and survived the wear and tear and exhaustion of those terrible four and a half years will not be fleeced of their just due as were their great-grandfathers.

But to return to Hong Kong. It was obviously



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difficult for very insufficiently paid young men to resist living like others of their own age, regardless of the fact that those others were much better off. I remember the instance of two brothers, one a sub-lieutenant in a gunboat and the other a subaltern in the Royal Engineers. There was only a year's difference in age between them. The sub-lieutenant in the Navy received £90 a year, subject to the illegal tax already mentioned ; the subaltern R.E., what with colonial pay and allowances and an extra £1 a day from the Colony as Surveyor of Roads, made up just £900 a year. Further comment is unnecessary. The system of credit already alluded to needs mention, for at that time both in the Crown Colonies and also in the Treaty Ports of China no money other than copper was in general circulation, and this was not on account of any lack of silver but owing to a Chinese peculiarity. The Chinaman is, I believe, considered by all those doing business with him to be the most honest and trustworthy trader in the world ; dealing on a large scale with a Chinaman it was always said that no signature would be necessary, the Chinaman's word being as good as his bond. On the other hand, the lower class Chinaman could never resist helping himself to a tiny slice off any silver dollar that came into his hands. The result was that after a short time the dollars in circulation lost so seriously in value that they could not be accepted at their face value, and earned for themselves the sobriquet of " chop dollars." Hence dollars, except at the end of the month, were never seen, and the only cash ever carried were the

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few coppers necessary to pay for the chair which did the work of the then hansom in London. The "chit" system was universal; whether it was dinner at the club, a cocktail at the bar, or a hair-cut at the very smart hairdresser's shop on the Bund. All that was necessary was to sign for the amount. It was hardly to be wondered at if we boys were on the verge of bankruptcy every month.

Sometimes, alas! it was worse than bankruptcy. I am rather ashamed, even now, when I remember that I helped a brother officer, who turned out to be a real rogue, to escape. He was a paymaster on one of the small craft on the Station. He had been put under close arrest by Admiralty order as an irregularity had been discovered in his accounts when submitted home. Three or four of us young idiots firmly believed in his version, namely that not a halfpenny was really missing or had ever got into his pocket. He admitted having been careless and said it would be impossible for him to prove his innocence at the Court-martial (this part of the story was remarkably true!), and consequently he would be sure to be sentenced to imprisonment. He was very popular with his brother officers, and also (alas, for his sake!) with a great many of the light-hearted division ashore. The upshot of it was that we, at the risk of our own necks (for had anything leaked out we must have been tried by Court-martial and dismissed the Service at the least) assisted him to escape. We procured a boat in the dead of night, manning it ourselves, squared the sentry over the

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cabin door to look the other way when the prisoner went on deck ; he then succeeded in creeping over the bows while the officer of the watch was aft, and got into the boat from which he was pulled on board a steamer bound for San Francisco. And that was the last we heard of him. The only two incidents connected with this story that give me any pleasure on looking back, are that I, who was rather behind the scenes, knew that the trouble originated as the Frenchmen say all trouble originates. It was a case of *cherchez la femme*, and that knowledge pleases my sense of philosophy ; while my sense of humour is tickled by the fact that the sentry's bribe for looking the other way was a bottle of rum !

In the summer of 1875 there was a rising of the natives in Perak, which, assuming serious proportions, eventually culminated into one of our many little wars. On board the Flagship we were all in a great state of excitement, feeling convinced that the Commander-in-Chief would at once proceed to the scene of action with every available ship and land a Naval Brigade, and that, consequently, war service and medals, and, what was more important still, promotion would be coming our way. As Acting Flag-Lieutenant I would not have changed places with any one in the world, and had rosy visions of being the youngest Commander in the Service. Alas ! those rosy visions were never even to get to the fading stage. The Commander-in-Chief, instead of proceeding to the south, breathing fire and flame, as we all hoped he would, calmly went in the other direction, namely

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to Shanghai and Japan, and left the Senior Officer, Captain Alexander Buller, commanding the corvette *Modeste*, to deal with the situation and reap the rewards. We junior officers never forgave the "old man," as we called him ; but I dare say he was perfectly right,—for all any of us knew there might have been excellent reasons for keeping the central and northern part of our forces intact. Indeed, I strongly suspect that our Legation at Peking had a considerable say in the matter from what I saw in North China later.

Whilst on the Admiral's Staff I came in for a most interesting visit to Canton. The flag was shifted to the *Vigilant*, a small paddle-boat yacht that was part of the establishment of the Commander-in-Chief in China, and a very necessary part, as it enabled him to go up and inspect his gunboats, many of which were perpetually stationed up the various rivers, in the never-ceasing work of the Navy, namely the protection of British interests. I was naturally in attendance on my Chief when he paid his official calls on the mandarins whom it was necessary for him to visit, and interesting it was to be carried in palanquins through the narrow streets of Canton, and finally to penetrate into the courtyards of the various *yamens* where these mandarins lived and had their being. Unfortunately I was too young and ignorant then to appreciate things fully, and never took in the beauty of the artistic treasures I had this chance of seeing ; in fact, the only outstanding impression that was left on my mind by Canton was one of amazement that anybody

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could keep alive in the city for long, in such an atmosphere of heat and stink!

The *Vigilant* remained one night up the river, and of course our cicerones, the English residents, insisted on taking us to visit the flower boats, which were curious enough in their way. To the Western mind, the painting of the women's faces seemed rather overdone, and gilded lips, one thought at the time, were perhaps a shade too artificial. Nowadays, I suppose it would scarcely be noticed, since our own women have taken to raddling themselves with paint to quite an Oriental extent, and really the difference between the eternal blob of carmine that one sees on the lips of every woman in London and the gilded mouth of the Eastern women is almost negligible.

Shortly after the commencement of the Perak Campaign, the *Audacious* left for Shanghai *en route* for a summer in Japan. During my service on the China Station, which lasted about two years, the *Audacious* was several times at Shanghai, and a very pleasant place it was. The magnificence of the dollar grinder of that port overshadowed that of his counterpart in Hong Kong in every way, the Club was far better and the racing on a bigger scale. Huge sums would be given for racing ponies, meaning that big money could be won in stakes and selling lotteries, were the animal only good enough. I remember one pony that fetched as much as 2000 taels, the equivalent of about £700 English,—a long price for a pony of barely fourteen hands. The other sport indulged in by the people who were fortunate enough to have both the

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time and the money was the shooting up the Yangtse River, which used to be done in houseboats. These boats were most comfortable, with every sort of convenience, drew so little water that they could go almost anywhere, and the sport was excellent. Quite respectable bags used to be made of pheasants and wild duck, and, in addition, the snipe-shooting was extraordinarily good.

After Shanghai, we proceeded direct to Japan. Japan has been so minutely described and written up by so many distinguished men of letters, that any observations of mine would merely result in a poor attempt to paint the lily; but it is interesting to have seen, in 1875, some of the early period of the Europeanising of that country. In the real country districts, where a good walker with a jinriksha in attendance could travel considerable distances into the interior, it was still "Old Japan," and what could be more attractive? In the towns everything was in the transition stage. For instance, the metropolitan policeman of Yeddo and Yokohama was being evolved, his uniform generally consisting in a copy of our police helmet and absolutely nothing else but his truncheon. But anyhow, whether old, or new Japan, it was a pleasant country in which to pass the summer.

Before returning south to Hong Kong, Vladivostock and Tientsin were visited, and at Tientsin I spent some of my pleasantest days on the China Station. Commander the Honourable Edward Dawson,\* then

\* The Commander Edward Dawson here alluded to is, I am sorry to say, one of the many of those who have joined the Majority since these pages were commenced.

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commanding H.M.S. *Dwarf*, was kind enough to allow me to accept the hospitality of the ward-room officers of his ship, then stationed up the river, and on board her I spent ten very agreeable days. It was then a great place for paper chasing on pony back, and many were the good gallops we had over the fine open country surrounding Tientsin. The snipe-shooting, too, was capital fun. We used to start early in the morning on our ponies, ride for some six or eight miles, and come back a few hours later with generally some fifty couple of snipe; without dogs and with no beaters, and four very inferior guns, this meant as much shooting as one could reasonably expect. To show what could be done, one of the residents there, who was really a fine shot, used constantly to get a good deal more than our united bag to his own gun, assisted only by two Chinese coolies, whom he had trained to watch exactly where the birds fell, so as to retrieve for him. Dogs, even had we possessed them, were of very little use, for they were constantly drinking the very foul water that irrigated the paddy-fields (the favourite habitation of the snipe), and generally died of some sort of internal disease.

Another interesting place visited was Manilla, where the *Audacious* called in the course of the following winter. The cigar merchants there, received us with the greatest hospitality, and one of the items of the round of amusements they provided for us was a cricket match. Apparently, the unwritten law of cricket in Manilla was that enormous tumblers of iced beer

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should be set down and kept constantly refilled, a foot or so behind the stumps. Of course, the bowlers, wicket-keeper and batsmen, being in the immediate vicinity, had all the best of it ; but when the "over" was called, the out-fields, if not too lazy to cross over, had their opportunity to pay attention to the glasses if they felt inclined. As the heat was terrific and these tumblers were in constant use, the unfortunate native whose business it was to keep them filled must have been fairly exhausted by his constant journeys from the pavilion to the wicket and back, before the day was over. Dinner succeeded cricket, and after dinner an adjournment was made to the Opera. The Opera House, which was established at one end of the local bull-ring, was only covered in with canvas, and the scenery was therefore of a more than usually flimsy character. The travelling company gave the *Trovatore*, and I can still remember how the prison bars trembled, nearly bringing the canvas roof down, when the tenor, as Manrico, was singing his passionate farewell—"Addio, Leonora ; Leonora, addio."

Time was slipping away, and I had long since been relieved of my Staff duties, when a second opportunity came (the first I ought to have taken a year before), of going home to pass the necessary examinations. There happened to be at that time on the Station one of the most remarkable hybrids, in the shape of a ship, that the genius of the Admiralty had ever produced. She was named the *Thalia*, was a sort of spurious corvette, and she and her consort, the *Juno*,—the only two of the class that were ever built,—were known in the



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Service as "Fighting Troopers." Her peculiarity was that she was half corvette and half frigate in construction,—a corvette in that she carried her guns on the upper deck, and a frigate in that she possessed a main deck, which main deck, instead of being used for the armament, could be utilised for berthing troops. In case of a sudden emergency I suppose she might possibly have embarked one wing of an ordinary Infantry battalion, with the necessary officers.

Towards the end of the summer of 1876 the *Thalia* was ordered home, and filled up with supernumeraries for passage to England. We were a motley collection ! We had on board the officers and crews of two or three gunboats whose time had expired ; a certain number of acting sub-lieutenants who, like myself, were on their way home to pass their examinations ; a number of officers who had been tried for various offences and had been dismissed their ships, or the Service (amongst others, I remember there was a young officer, belonging to the garrison, who had been broken for cheating at cards) ; and, to top up with, there were a number of Court-martial prisoners, some of whom had to go home to serve long terms of penal servitude. The Captain, who was a very fine seaman of the old school, consoled himself with the reflection that, though he had a very scratch lot of officers and men to serve under him, if anything happened we should have been such an undeniable haul for the devil that, in all probability, we should reach England safely and without any contretemps. And so, accordingly, we started to make a sailing

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passage home, coal only to be used in case of absolute necessity. We were short of everything when we started. All the Chinese servants and cooks had to be discharged before the ship left the Station. We, in the gunroom, had no servants except the sort we could improvise out of the very mixed material that was on board, and no money to buy stores. There was nothing for it but to live on ship's provisions, and so great was the crowd on board that water was also very short, and we were on an allowance of one small basin full for all purposes—cooking, drinking and washing—not a very liberal allowance in the tropics. However, nothing matters when one is homeward bound, not even a passage in a sort of convict-ship, for more or less a convict ship she was, as the penal servitude prisoners counted their time on board as part of their sentence; it was also carried out, so far as hard labour was concerned, by exercising them at shot drill on the quarter-deck.

We were a cheery lot in the gunroom, and we arranged to trade with the saloon messman, who having a small allowance from the Admiralty for messing the supernumeraries, managed somehow to produce a few necessaries, wet and dry. As I had charge of a watch I rather enjoyed my time until we got to the Red Sea, where we were compelled to steam from Aden to Suez without a break. Beyond coming in for a short but very violent gale on our way from Port Said, nothing else of interest happened, and we duly arrived at Plymouth, having taken nearly four months to get home;—not a very speedy journey, but

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anyhow it was better than the *Audacious*' performance on the way out.

After a little leave, the next thing to do was to get through the necessary examinations. Gunnery came first, so a whole batch of acting sub-lieutenants took up their abode at the old Naval College at Portsmouth, to drill on board the *Excellent*, the gunnery ship that used to lie up the Creek where the naval barracks now stand. I was very keen to take a first-class if I could, which meant very hard work in and out of hours, as, besides having practically to perform all the drill of every arm carried by a man-of-war, it was also necessary to learn what might be called the "patter" of the business—pages and pages of the gunnery and small-arms drill-books—the idea being that one should be able to pass on the extensive knowledge thus acquired to others. It was then that I, from a very respectful distance, first came into contact with Admiral Sir Reginald Custance, who was the senior lieutenant on the instruction staff of the *Excellent* at that time, and consequently head examining officer. We sub-lieutenants were in a holy terror of him, knowing that we had eventually to pass through his hands at the final examination, and, being aware that this subsequently-very-distinguished officer, had the reputation of not suffering fools gladly. One way and another our noses were kept very closely to the grindstone, and there was not much to do in the way of amusement except after dinner, when we became great patrons of the drama in the front row of the pit of the old Portsmouth Theatre. It was then that I made my first

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acquaintance with Offenbach. An excellent travelling company was there for some weeks, giving, in turn, *La Grande Duchesse*, *La Perichole*, and many more of those delightful comic operas so deservedly popular at the time. After all, I greatly doubt whether anything as good in their way has ever been produced since. Moreover, the Prima Donna of the company was that delightful woman and artist, known on the stage as Madame Selina Dolaro. So no wonder that we boys were in the theatre every night of our lives.

The three months' course at Portsmouth came to an end, and I was lucky enough to get a first-class certificate. And now, all I had to contemplate was the six months' course at Greenwich College, which would complete my education. There was a good deal of luck, as well as knowledge, required to get first-class in seamanship and gunnery, but at Greenwich it was only necessary to work hard enough to make a first-class a certainty for any one who had any aptitude for mathematics, though for others who had not that aptitude, however superior in other ways, it meant hard work to scrape through. I regret to say that I made up my mind at once to do next to nothing. I knew that I could get a second-class without any difficulty, which would mean that I could spend most of my evenings and week-ends in London, and in fact that I could amuse myself to the top of my bent. If I went in for a first-class it involved hard study, which I disliked particularly, though it would result in instantaneous promotion to the rank of lieutenant. I had been acting sub-lieutenant so long that the whole difference in seniority would amount to only about a year ; a year

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did not seem much to worry about, and so—*vive le plaisir!* I need hardly say that I was not the only one who held the same views. The class I was in was composed of an extremely cheerful crew, who earned, and I believe deserved, the reputation of being the wildest and laziest class that ever went through Greenwich; but we did enjoy ourselves! There was plenty of cricket in the summer, football in the winter, excellent racquet courts for every season; and, moreover, there was the Gaiety Theatre, at the time when that delightful quartette, Nellie Farren, Kate Vaughan, Terry and Royce, were at their best and brightest. I am afraid to think of the number of times I went to see *Little Don Cæsar de Bazan*, but, at any rate, most of us could have passed a much better examination in the libretto of that cleverest of burlesques than we eventually did in our abhorred Euclid.

All went merrily until it came to the last fortnight before the final examination, and then it became necessary to turn night into day and try to pump in enough knowledge, through assiduous cramming, to make sure of a pass,—such things as first-classes having vanished altogether from our perspective. The examination lasted a week, and when daily comparing notes we all felt happy up to the last day, but the last paper we had to tackle (I forget the subject) fairly broke us down. Whether it really was of a more than usually high standard I know not, but anyhow we all agreed that, in our several spheres, it had been our ruin, so in this desperate condition we thought we might as well celebrate our failure by embarking on a terrific bear-fight, after what we fondly imagined would be our last

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dinner at Greenwich. Unfortunately the bear-fight assumed such proportions that the Authorities got very cross about it. The whole lot of us were put under arrest, and were solemnly tried by a Court of Inquiry, held at Greenwich by the Admiralty for the purpose. I, for my sins, was the senior officer, having had acting rank for so long, so I had to speak for my brother malefactors. There really was not a great deal to say; it would not have been easy to explain to the officers of the Court that we were dissatisfied with an examination paper, so no excuse was attempted. The upshot was that we were all sent to guardships for a month under arrest, instead of being given the leave we had earned after a long and trying course of instruction. Presently, the result of the examination came out. Three were plucked and put back for three months. Luckily for me, I had succeeded in taking a second-class, which was all I could expect.

Very shortly after my month's arrest had expired, I was appointed to H.M.S. *Agincourt*, the flagship of Rear-Admiral Sir Edmund Commerell. Sir Edmund had been ordered to the East with his flagship and the *Achilles* to reinforce Admiral Sir Geoffrey Hornby (the Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Station), and also to take up the post of Second in Command. The *Agincourt* having left England, I took passage in a P. & O. steamer to Malta and remained there on board the guardship *Hibernia* waiting for an opportunity of joining my own ship. But the importance of the situation in the Middle East in 1877-78 deserves a chapter to itself.



THE  
LONDON  
STATIONERS



*Photo: A. Debenham, Cowes]*

SEYMOUR FORTESCUE

Cowes, 1893



## CHAPTER III

### THE DARDANELLES IN 1878

SHORTLY after my arrival at Malta, the *Sultan* came in for a refit and to give leave, and I was appointed to her for the time being, my own ship, the *Agincourt*, being in Eastern waters, and in the *Sultan* I remained for nearly six months. She was then commanded by Captain H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh, one of the smartest of our young captains afloat, and on board of her I first made the acquaintance of comrades who were, in the future, amongst my best friends, and who also, incidentally, became some of the most distinguished officers in the Navy. Nearly all of them made their mark in later days. Among the lieutenants were the subsequent Admiral of the Fleet, the late Sir Assheton Curzon Howe, and Prince Louis of Battenberg, now Admiral the Marquis of Milford Haven ; whilst amongst the midshipmen were Admirals Sir Stanley Colville and Sir Colin Keppel, both well-known and distinguished officers. There were a good many also who did not persevere long in the Navy. One of the sub-lieutenants, a great friend of mine, was Mr. Frank Alexander, the well-known racing man who left the Service as soon as he was promoted ; he followed in the footsteps of his father, Mr. Caledon Alexander, and raced up to the end of his life. Another great friend

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of mine was Charles le Strange, then a lieutenant. I was destined to serve under him in later years, and through him I had the good fortune of spending some pleasant evenings in the company of that very brilliant man and amusing writer, Laurence Oliphant, his brother-in-law.

Not long after I had taken up my abode in the *Sultan*, she received orders to join the Flag at Vourlah Bay, and, after a short cruise in Grecian waters, the whole Mediterranean Fleet settled down at Besika Bay, as we thought for the winter. Admiral Sir Geoffrey Hornby was then flying his flag on board the *Alexandra*, with Captain Fitzroy as Flag-Captain, Lieutenant Winsloe (subsequently Commander-in-Chief in the China Station) as Flag-Lieutenant, and the Honourable Hedworth Lambton (now Admiral of the Fleet Sir Hedworth Meux) as his Flag-Mate.

Ever since the commencement of the Russo-Turkish War, our Mediterranean Fleet, subsequently reinforced by the *Agincourt* and the *Achilles*, had been in Eastern waters, making Besika Bay, which is situated close to the Dardanelles entrance, their headquarters; and a very trying time it had been to officers and men,—unspeakably so to the latter. The only communication with the outer world, except the mails which were generally about a fortnight old, was the daily Reuter telegram received by the flagship and signalled round the Fleet. It would probably occur to the ordinary mind that the Admiralty might have remembered that the officers and men of a large Fleet, possibly on the verge of a European war, were deserv-

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ing of some consideration in the way of news from day to day. But apparently such an idea never struck them, so the officers duly subscribed for their telegram, which, like most other blessings in this world, had to be paid for. Bets were taken and laid almost daily, as to whether we would, or would not, go up the Dardanelles, and also as to whether we would, or would not, go to war with Russia, and, apparently, the Cabinet of the day were as uncertain as we were. I remember a telegram received only a few days before we actually started,—the alliteration, I suppose, kept it in my memory:—"Cabinet said to be almost unanimous on necessity of proceeding up Dardanelles. Derby doubtful." As may be remembered, the present Lord Derby's great-uncle was then Foreign Secretary, and was always supposed to possess what is called "the cross-bench" mind.

It was bad enough for the officers; but they could occasionally get a day's shooting or hunting, though the shooting was generally spoilt by the number of guns, as what would have provided really good sport and amusement for one ship was not likely to suffice for a large Fleet. But as far as the men were concerned, they had literally nothing to do in the way of amusement. The best sport at Besika was the hunting. The Commander-in-Chief, remembering, I suppose, the great Duke of Wellington's pack of hounds in the Peninsula, instituted a pack at Besika. Kennels and stables were run up by the ships' carpenters. The Admiral and many of the senior officers had their own horses, and we small fry used to hire from the Beef

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Contractor. That functionary,—who probably died a millionaire,—managed to provide almost everything in life, and could always get hold of horses with a fair proportion of legs among them. Captain Hunt Grubbe was the Master, one of the Chaplains in the Fleet, the Reverend H. Gilbert, was Huntsman, and very good fun it all was. There were plenty of foxes, a fine open grass country, and many was the good gallop we had.

The date of the last time I was out with the hounds, February 9th, 1878, became almost a landmark in history. We had had a good run and were a longish way from home, when, the hounds being checked, and the field pulled up, we suddenly heard in the distance the repeated strains of the Officers' Call. Mounted buglers had been sent to the top of the neighbouring hills to sound the Call, and in a few moments hounds were whipped off and we were all on our way back to the landing place at Besika. On our return to our ship we speedily learnt the reason. Orders had been received from the Admiralty that the Fleet was to proceed up the Dardanelles, so we found our comrades busy preparing for sea, and clearing away for action. Of course, we were the Turk's best friends ; but the Pasha in command of the forts had the reputation of not being over-trustworthy, and it was thought extremely possible that Russian "baksheesh" might induce him to make it very unpleasant for us in the Narrows ; so we were taking no chances.

The Fleet sailed the same evening from Besika, but the firman from the Sultan, giving permission to pass

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the forts, not having arrived, our ships anchored later at the mouth of the Straits. The Government then had to be communicated with to ask,—in the case of the firman never arriving,—whether the Fleet was to force a passage. Eventually, the Members of the Government succeeded in making up their minds, and the Fleet was ordered up, *coûte que coûte*; so, on the morning of February the 13th the Fleet weighed and steamed up the Dardanelles in the teeth of a northerly gale, and one of the thickest snowstorms I ever saw at sea. My station being at the forecastle guns, I received the full benefit of the snow; even there, in the eyes of the ship, it was only just possible to see “one’s next ahead.” In the ’seventies ten knots was about the highest speed at which a squadron could be manœuvred, so what with the gale and the snowstorm, to say nothing of the strong current that runs through the Dardanelles, it was no great wonder that the *Alexandra* took the shore. The spot she selected was just opposite the great fort at Chanak, and my ship being the next astern of her was detailed to tow her off. It was an exceedingly difficult job; but the Duke of Edinburgh, who, in the opinion of the Commander-in-Chief, was, of all his Captains, about the best handler of a big ship, succeeded in doing what was necessary, so, after four hours’ hard work, we rejoined the rest of the Fleet close to the entrance of the Sea of Marmora. It was just as well for us that the before-mentioned Pasha had not been “squared,” for, as the mischance above described took place immediately opposite the most heavily armed fort at

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Chanak in the very narrowest part of the Narrows, I need hardly emphasise the fact that both the ship ashore and the consort trying to tow her off, would have been reduced to matchwood in a very short time by a heavily armed fort firing at a range of a few hundred yards.

Shortly after our arrival in the Sea of Marmora, the Commander-in-Chief divided his forces. The larger portion of the Fleet, including the most powerful units he possessed, were under his own immediate command, and remained in the neighbourhood of Constantinople. What might be termed the Second Division, under Sir John Commerell, was ordered to Gallipoli. The Fleet being thus broken up, resulted so far as I was concerned in my leaving the *Sultan* and joining the ship to which I had been appointed many months before.

Whilst in the Marmora I made the personal acquaintance of a man whose sensational career excited a great deal of attention a few years afterwards. I allude to the then Prince Alexander of Battenberg, who was at that time serving on the Staff of General Gourko, commanding the Russian Army Corps that, after hard fighting and still greater hardships, had succeeded in crossing the Balkans. The Prince managed to get a few days' leave, and came on board the *Sultan* for a short visit to his relative, the Duke of Edinburgh, and his brother, Prince Louis, then a lieutenant on board the *Sultan*. There was nothing very remarkable about this incident, except for the shameful abuse that was hurled at the Duke of Edinburgh by an obscure London news-

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paper (long since dead !) on account of this very harmless visit. The Duke having married a Russian Grand Duchess, was accused of every sort of villainy—"owing to his well-known (?) Russian proclivities he was capable of allowing a Russian Staff Officer to penetrate the secrets of the British Fleet" ; " he was harbouring Russian spies,"—and in fact a very venomous and lying series of imaginative articles appeared, and, as always, a certain amount of the mud thrown stuck. The most ludicrous part of the business was that this most important Russian Staff Officer and reputed spy was, in those days, extremely young, and came on board the *Sultan* with the full knowledge and consent of the Commander-in-Chief, who, like any other reasonable man, had not the slightest objection to permitting a young officer to have a few days' rest, in comfort, with a bed to sleep in, and a chance of seeing his relatives. Prince Alexander made himself very agreeable during his short stay on board ; perhaps the best-looking member of a very handsome family, he looked absolutely fitted for the romantic career to which Fate later destined him.

It was a long and trying time that we spent at the anchorage off the town of Gallipoli. The map of that part of the world must be so indelibly stamped on the memories of our countrymen by recent hostilities that no topographical description is necessary. The general situation in the winter of 1877-78 was this : There was a small but well-equipped Turkish Army of a strength of between 20,000 and 30,000 men, which, after a successful retreat, had fallen back on the old

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Bulair lines which date back to Crimean days. The lines cross the neck of the Peninsula, just to the Eastern end of the town of Gallipoli, at the very narrowest part of the neck. Indeed, it is only about eight miles as the crow flies, from sea to sea. The Commander-in-Chief being in the *Marmora*, the Second Division, under Sir John Commerell, was left at Gallipoli, at the moment a very important strategic position. In case of war with Russia it was thought that the Turkish Army at Bulair, assisted by that portion of the British Fleet, could, at any rate, make certain of holding the all-important Peninsula pending later developments. Sir John Commerell's Division was disposed as follows :—Half of his Fleet, including his own flagship, the *Agincourt*, lay at Gallipoli, and the other half at Imbros, on the northern side of the peninsula ; and there for months we lay, with slips on our cables and steam up, ready to proceed on the shortest notice to the two extreme flanks of the Bulair line, and thus be in a position to enfilade any advancing troops attempting to attack those lines. Signals were pre-arranged with the Pasha in command at Bulair, and once again the usual bets as to whether war would be declared or not were taken almost daily. During the day, when not on duty, leave was given to officers, but our only amusement was to gallop about the country inside the lines, or ride over to Imbros and play cricket with the Imbros Squadron, where the officers had managed to find quite a decently flat field. At Gallipoli there was nothing of the same kind, but as a set-off we had the joys of town life, as exemplified



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by a squalid Turkish village, adorned by the illustrious presence of the British Vice-Consul and his family, to say nothing of the inevitable beef contractor and his belongings.

A very short time after we took up our station at Gallipoli we received information to the effect that, before war was actually declared, the Russians would make an attempt to attack the Fleet with torpedoes. Torpedo warfare was then in its earliest infancy, but something could be done with spar torpedoes by an enterprising enemy, and, as a matter of fact, earlier in the war the Russians had succeeded in blowing up and sinking a couple of small Turkish monitors on the Danube. A steamboat patrol was therefore organised, as an additional protection to the Fleet, which otherwise had only its ordinary armament on which to rely. In those days, nets and quick-firing guns were non-existent, and the ordinary armament of our iron-clads was extremely unsuitable for the repelling of night attacks, if delivered by a swarm of steamboats, great and small. In the 'seventies our allowance of steamboats for ships of all sizes was very limited, so between us I doubt whether we, on the Gallipoli side, could have mustered more than half a dozen all told, and as the nights were very long, and the weather nearly always abominable, sometimes two were as many as we could manage to produce on patrol at a time. Though steam-pinnaces were scarce, sub-lieutenants were fairly numerous, and I never could understand why it fell to my lot to be away on patrol duty every night of my life, while my messmates were,

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in their turn, snoring in their hammocks. But so it was.

Our largest steam-pinnace at that time was very little over thirty feet long, no shelter was provided for the engineer and crew—except tarpaulin screens, for the only part that was decked over was the forecabin where the gun was mounted. The cold was bitter, and in those days neither officers nor men possessed such a thing as a great coat, so the only way to keep comparatively warm was to put on as many garments as one conveniently could, and retain what caloric one could collect inside, by enveloping the whole fabric in oilskins. I contrived to keep going until the end, which was naturally a great deal more than the pinnaces could manage to do without reinforcements being sent from England, and these reinforcements deserve mention. Directly the patrol was started it was pointed out to the Admiralty that more steamboats were urgently needed, and it would be a great advantage that they should be decked nearly all over. The Admiralty behaved with commendable promptitude, and soon afterwards a steamer arrived at Gallipoli with a consignment of boats. We were all agog to see the latest thing in patrol-boats just arriving from England, and no one was more personally interested than I myself, with the hopeful vision of keeping dry in the future. It is hardly believable, but it is none the less true, that our new patrol-boats turned out to be a consignment of Thames pleasure-boats! Their scantling was so thin that one bump against a ladder would certainly have stove them in, and so absolutely unseaworthy

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were they that they could only be used in the very finest weather,—a very rare commodity in Gallipoli. I suppose that, although England was still at peace, the probabilities of war were near enough to give the profiteer (a breed we now know so fatally well!) his chance, and these boats were the result. Anyhow, they were slightly better than none at all, as they could run about in the daytime, if the weather were fine enough, and thus save our pinnaces. The trouble was to name these curious hybrids, for a boat has to be given some sort of a name for the purpose of manning her. This difficulty was temporarily overcome by endowing them with Christian names, which we were led to believe were those of the female relatives of the Admiral and his Staff. However, this nomenclature did not last long. Even the most hard-hearted and cynical of parents could not endure the knowledge that, owing to the inherent defects of these craft, the familiar names of his daughters were being coupled hourly with all the most abusive epithets in the sailor's vocabulary.

Though the Armistice was signed at San Stephano between Russia and Turkey in the month of March, relations between England and Russia remained so strained that no relaxation took place in the patrol until many months had passed. In June, on the strength of all the boat work which I had done down to that time, I managed to coax a fortnight's leave out of the Authorities, and I and another sub-lieutenant went to Constantinople for a holiday. Of course, it was a most interesting moment to be there. Constantinople

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was swarming with Russian Officers, who had also arranged to get leave from the Front. They mainly consisted of officers of that favoured Corps, the Imperial Guard, and we Britishers were much impressed by the magnificence of their turn-out. They all appeared to be in brand-new and very smart uniforms, and there was nothing about them to show that they had just fought their way through a very trying campaign. The other memory I have of Constantinople is of a very different nature. I went to visit the great mosque of Ste. Sophia, and never shall I forget the horror of it. Thousands of refugees, who had fled before the advance of the Russian troops, were camped out on the floor of the great mosque in every stage of suffering, disease and filth. Wretched women and children were there, without any sort of comfort ; smallpox was obviously raging, and the stench, from the lack of all sanitary arrangements, was enough to turn even the strongest stomach. I was not particularly squeamish in those days, but the experience remained in my memory, as a nightmare, for months afterwards.

The leave was all too short, and very soon I was back aboard the ship again, to learn, a few weeks afterwards, that I was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant. There being no available man-of-war going home just then, I, and two more newly promoted Lieutenants, were allowed to take a passage in a steamer and find our way home via Marseilles and Paris. Paris was then in the throes of the 1878 Exhibition, and consequently was very full and rather uncomfortable. However, we did our duty by spending a couple of

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days in visiting the Exhibition, and presently I found myself back in England and temporarily my own master, for, from the moment I set foot in my native country I became a Lieutenant on half-pay whilst waiting for further employment.

I may as well mention that the half-pay in question amounted to the munificent sum of four shillings per diem,—less than half the daily stipend of the present-day police constable.

Of course I was delighted to be promoted and to get home ; but it was with very real regret that I had said good-bye to many of my brother officers in the *Agincourt*, and most of all was I sorry to be no longer serving under the flag of Sir Edmund Commerell. Surely there never could have been a Flag-Officer more beloved than was Sir Edmund. Literally one of the bravest of the brave, he had won his Victoria Cross in the Crimea. Later, when Commodore of the South African Station, he was very dangerously wounded whilst leading a boat attack up one of the West African rivers. His popularity in the Fleet was unbounded, his officers and men really loved him, and what was more remarkable still, was the hold he had established over the Turk. In the ranks of the Bulair Army they all knew that the British Admiral was an old Crimean Veteran, on the strength of which they spoke of him as Ghazi Commerell Pasha. As an instance of his never-failing courage, I well remember his behaviour on an occasion when his galley had been capsized. The Admiral was passionately fond of boat sailing, and, moreover, was a great expert ; so one

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of his amusements was to take his galley for a spin round the Fleet. On this particular occasion at Gallipoli it was hardly a galley's day, for it was blowing a strong breeze with nasty squalls. However, away he went. When an Admiral is sailing his boat a very sharp look-out is always kept by the officer of the watch, and so when, after a very heavy squall, his boat was seen to capsize, there was no delay in sending a steamboat away post-haste to pick him up. When the sub-lieutenant in charge of the boat arrived, he naturally selected the Admiral as being the proper person to be rescued first ; but nothing would induce him to be touched until every member of the boat's crew was on board the pinnace. Meanwhile, encumbered as he was with a heavy boat cloak, the dear old gentleman had swallowed such a quantity of salt water, that he was in measurable distance of being drowned.

He was always most anxious to try and do something to alleviate the terrible monotony of the men's lives at that time. Leave was out of the question, so everything had to be done on board. The *Agincourt* had a splendidly clear upper deck, so there was no difficulty in laying out a racing track of ten laps to the mile, and many were the exciting contests that took place upon it. The most popular of all was a ten-mile go-as-you-please race between selected candidates from the marines and bluejackets respectively, the conditions being heavy marching order, the bluejackets to be dressed like the marines in busby and tunic, so as to make the conditions absolutely equal.

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Another amusement was what the sailors used to call a sing-song. The upper deck being covered in, the Admiral and his Staff and officers not on duty being present, all the available talent on the ship was mobilised for a so-called musical entertainment. The most successful turn was given by one of the sub-lieutenants, who had some sort of a voice that had been partially trained during his time at Greenwich, and he used to give us the classic song, "We don't want to fight." This song, as rendered by the "great McDermott," was the rage of the London Music Halls during the Russo-Turkish War. It was all very well for the peace party, who are always with us under all circumstances, to jeer at the vulgarity of the song and decry the so-called jingoism that was derived from it; but when sung by a thousand men, who were expecting every moment to be actively employed in taking measures to make it a certainty that "The Russians shall not have Constantinople," it became rather more than a comic music-hall song. There was a grim earnestness about it as then sung on the quarter-deck of a man-of-war, that made it almost impressive, and eliminated its vulgarity.

Many years afterwards, when Sir Edmund stood as Conservative Candidate for Southampton, with these incidents in my memory, the cleanliness (?) of English electioneering practices was brought intimately home to me. He lost whatever chance he may have had of being elected in a constituency full of seafaring men, on account of a poster that was displayed all over Southampton by the agents of his opponent. The

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Admiral, one of the kindest and most chivalrous of gentlemen, was portrayed to the electors of Southampton as a prize specimen of the old flogging captain of the early part of the century. The poster actually depicted him, in cocked hat and epaulets, flourishing an enormous cat-o'-nine tails over the bare back, streaming with blood, of a bluejacket seized up to the breech of a gun.

Later on, he was Commander-in-Chief of the North American and West Indian Stations, Commander-in-Chief at Portsmouth, and afterwards for many years a Groom-in-Waiting to Queen Victoria.



## CHAPTER IV

EGYPT IN 1882

ABOUT the period at which I was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant the number of ships in commission was so small that there was a great deal of unemployment in all ranks of the officers of the Navy. For instance, a freshly promoted lieutenant, unless he intended to specialise in gunnery (the torpedo lieutenant had not then been invented), had to wait for the greater part of two years before being appointed to a ship. Captains frequently had to wait for as much as four years. Quite apart from the manifest injustice of leaving officers to starve for years on the most miserable scale of half-pay that ever was devised by a Government Department, nothing could have been invented more calculated to injure the Service. For young lieutenants it meant a long period of inactivity at the average age of from twenty-three to twenty-four—just the years in which they should have been acquiring the habit of command, as watch-keepers, and inculcating discipline as divisional officers; whilst for young captains it may even have been worse; four years of unemployment ashore at the average age of forty was as likely a scheme for promoting rust instead of polish, on what is considered the finished article of the British Navy—namely the Captain of a

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man-of-war—as could be devised by mortal man. A certain amount could be done to mitigate the situation by short courses of gunnery, and officers were even graciously permitted to study at Greenwich on half-pay. A good many took advantage of this permission, principally because, in their necessarily impoverished condition, they found the mess there the cheapest place to live in. But even when every advantage was taken in the way of courses of education, there would be still long intervals of unemployment. Personally, I enjoyed my time on half-pay very much. I was fortunate enough to have a home to go to where there was sport of all kinds to amuse me, and I was not at all averse from being my own master after nearly ten years of a junior officer's life under the strictest discipline.

In the spring of 1880 Sir Geoffrey Hornby's time was up in the Mediterranean, and he was succeeded as Commander-in-Chief by Sir Beauchamp Seymour, who, when a captain, had given me my nomination for the Navy. At one time he had, I believe, the intention of taking me as his Flag-Lieutenant; but, unfortunately, the bump of veneration for those set in authority over me was represented on my head by a large hollow, and a few expressions of opinion about some of my superiors that I had either uttered, or was supposed to have uttered, got round to his ears, with the result that he wrote to my father and told him that although his original intention had been to take me as his Flag-Lieutenant, he really could not have a young officer on his Staff who expressed such very

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remarkable opinions about his superior officers. At the time I was not in the least anxious to go as Flag-Lieutenant. Haul-down promotions had been abolished, so there really was nothing particular to gain by it except that, of course, it was what is known in modern days as a "cushy job." But, later on, I had real cause for regret, as, owing to the Egyptian War, Sir Beauchamp became a peer, and, what would have concerned me much more, his Flag-Lieutenant was promoted over some 300 or 400 lieutenants' heads, including my own. When that moment arrived I consoled myself by winning a biggish bet from my brother officers, none of whom thought that such a leap in the way of promotion was possible, I having,—rightly, as it turned out,—taken the other view.

Curiously enough, I was destined to go on the Staff of a Commander-in-Chief before Sir Beauchamp Seymour had hoisted his flag; for, in January 1880, Admiral the Honourable Sir Charles Brydone Elliot was appointed Commander-in-Chief at Plymouth and offered me the post of Flag-Lieutenant. Sir Beauchamp, who was still a Lord of the Admiralty, knew nothing of this offer, and had, in the meantime, appointed me to a small craft in the East Indies. I went to see him at the Admiralty, and, before I had time to explain that I wished my appointment cancelled as I had already written to Sir Charles Elliot accepting his offer, the dear old gentleman, with a fine sense of irony, proceeded to congratulate me on my appointment to an old sloop commanded by one of the most unpopular officers in the Service, and serving on one

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of the most unpleasant stations in the Navy,—namely the East Indies and Persian Gulf. After he had finished his speech, I told him that I regretted very much that I must ask for a cancellation of such a charming appointment; but that, as Admiral Sir Charles Elliot had done me the honour of asking me to serve as his Flag-Lieutenant, and as, moreover, I had accepted his offer, cancelled it would have to be. My venerable relative nearly had a fit on the spot, but it had to be done, and I must say that, though not very long afterwards I was serving in his Fleet, he never bore me the slightest malice, and was always a kind and most hospitable friend to me. Both of us being very fond of Bordeaux, many were the bottles that we drank together after dinners at the Admiralty House, for Sir Beauchamp belonged to the old school of men who settled steadily down to their wine after dinner, and looked upon tobacco as an abomination.

And so, in January 1880, I found myself occupying a shore appointment at Devonport; for the Commander-in-Chief of a home port lives entirely on shore, and practically never goes afloat, except for inspections.

To my great joy, there was no room for me in Admiralty House, so I settled down in lodgings round the corner, and, generally speaking, after luncheon was practically a free man unless there happened to be a dinner at Admiralty House. Altogether, it was a very pleasant life. Being Devonshire born I had plenty of friends and acquaintances, and it was a most hospitable neighbourhood. Mount Edgcumbe, Anthony, the charming home of my old friend, General Sir

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Reginald Pole Carew, and Port Eliot were all close by just over the Cornish boundary, while on the Devonshire side, and within easy reach by road, was Saltram, Lord Morley's fine place, then leased to two very kind friends of mine, Mr. and Mrs. Hartmann, who were there for twenty years. A little further on in the same neighbourhood was Flete, which has just been rebuilt by the late Mr. Bingham Mildmay; Membland, then the property of the late Lord Revelstoke; and, camped out between his two brothers-in-law, was the late Mr. John Bulteel at Pamflete, in the most lovely of cottages, full of beautiful china, and with some of the most remarkable claret I ever was lucky enough to come across, in his cellar.

I managed to keep a hunter and a pony and dog-cart, so what with a certain amount of hunting with the Dartmoor Hounds, and a good deal of shooting with all my kind friends in the neighbourhood, life was very agreeable. It was at Saltram that I first really learnt to take an intelligent interest in food. In those days French chefs were very rare in England. I do not believe there were more than half a dozen in the whole country; but at Saltram I made the acquaintance of one of the greatest of these benefactors of the human race, and he has been a friend of mine ever since. I allude to Monsieur Menager, who was for something like a quarter of a century with my friends, the Hartmanns, both in the country and in London, and subsequently for many years with the late King at Marlborough House and Buckingham Palace. I believe that he has now retired into private

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life, after a long and honourable career, and, taking him all in all, I do not think that I ever came across a greater artist in his profession.

When not on duty or amusing myself in the neighbourhood I spent most of my time at the Royal Western Yacht Club. The Club House was finely situated on the Hoe at Plymouth. It was, unfortunately, rather a long way from where I lived at Devonport, but none the less I generally dined there and found, moreover, an excellent rubber of whist before and after dinner. My whist education, if somewhat expensive, was very thorough, and I found later on in London that I could pretty well hold my own in most companies. Whist has probably vanished for ever, driven off the field by auction bridge, but none the less there never was a game of mingled science and luck that lasted longer, and I always think that the wise old Talleyrand was so right when he administered the gentle rebuke to the young man of the Travellers' Club, who professed that he did not play it: "Vous ne jouez pas le whist, jeune homme? Quelle triste vieillisse vous vous préparez?"

After some fifteen months, passed very agreeably at Devonport, it became obvious to me that it was about time I began to serve afloat again if I meant to go on in my profession, so, with the permission of the Admiral, I duly applied for a ship. Shortly before the time of which I am writing, the Admiralty had, in their wisdom, established a system of espionage on the officers of the Navy, which consisted of confidential reports from Commanding Officers relating not only

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to their professional attainments but also as to the characters of the officers serving under their orders. Personally, I am very strongly of opinion that anything in the nature of a confidential report is an abomination. It puts vast powers for mischief into the hands of Commanding Officers, who, being human, are naturally full of imperfections. The spiteful ones, whom I hope and believe are scarce, can vent their spite on any subordinate who is distasteful to them ; but a far more dangerous man to deal with is the honest faddist. The man who is prepared to go to the stake for his own opinions is generally ready to light the match that is necessary for the successful execution of those whose way of life differs from his, and God help the unfortunate lieutenant reported on by one of these upright, but narrow-minded gentlemen.

My Admiral was, consequently, obliged to report confidentially to the Admiralty on the members of his Staff. One of them, his secretary's clerk, being a friend of mine, thought it would amuse me to see what the old man had said about myself. It did amuse me very much, but I confess that the report in question gave me the impression that it was time for me to seek "green fields and pastures new," ending, as it did after a slightly uncomplimentary comment on my general view of life, with the sentence : "It is quite time that this young officer went to sea." I cordially agreed with the last sentence ; but I still thought that it might have been spoken to me directly instead of being reported confidentially to the Admiralty. This, of course, was not the fault of my Chief, who was only

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carrying out, what I still consider was, a very iniquitous order.

Early in the spring of 1881 I was appointed to the *Superb* on the Mediterranean Station, and before taking leave of my late Commander-in-Chief, I must relate a very curious incident which happened to him when a very young captain in the early 'forties, and I may add that he told me the story himself.

In those days, amongst the great naval families who assisted each other to all the best appointments in the Navy, the Elliots, the Greys, and the Seymours were extremely prominent. My Admiral was the son of the second Lord Minto. This Lord Minto, who at various stages of his career had been First Lord of the Admiralty and later on Treasurer of the Navy, was naturally able to insist that his son should be promoted to Captain at a very early age. I think he must have been promoted at the age of twenty-three or twenty-four. Captain Elliot, as he then was, was appointed in command of a sloop going out to the Pacific Station, and while commissioning her at a home port, he received a letter from an old friend and neighbour in Scotland to the following effect. This friend asked him, as a great personal favour, to make his son a midshipman (in those days a captain had the necessary power to rate any lad as a midshipman quite regardless of any details such as age and acquirements) and to take him with him in his ship. His reason for asking this favour was that his son was such an unreclaimable young blackguard that he could do nothing with him either at home or at any school, and he looked upon



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the Navy as a sort of forlorn hope in the way of reformation. Naturally, Captain Elliot was averse to having this very doubtful benefit thrust upon him, but thinking that there was no great difficulty in inculcating a sense of discipline in a midshipman, and also thinking that as midshipmen were nearly always troublesome, one more or less did not make much difference, he weakly consented to take him. Unfortunately, life in the Navy did not have the reforming effect that was anticipated, and after every sort of thing had been tried to bring this young wretch to his bearings, the Captain decided that, as nothing else had any effect, he would try what a flogging would do. The midshipman in question being an extremely lusty youth, the punishment would do him no physical injury and great moral effects might possibly result. Accordingly, this young gentleman was duly seized up to the breech of a gun and solemnly given a dozen by the boatswain's mate ; and then the comic side of the case developed. The boy wrote to his father and complained that he had been flogged, upon which this grateful specimen of a parent wrote a furious letter to the Admiralty and demanded that his old friend, neighbour, and benefactor, should be tried by Court-martial, and tried he promptly was. Fortunately, his interest in the Navy was far too powerful for any real mischief to result. The Court-martial found the charge proved ; he was duly cautioned, and that was the end of it ; but equally naturally he was always known in the Navy as the captain who had flogged a midshipman, and this reputation of a flogging-captain sat very oddly on

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the shoulders of a man who was the personification of kindness and gentleness.

In the spring of 1881 I joined my new ship, the *Superb* (Captain Thomas le Hunte Ward), and found the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Beauchamp Seymour, installed at Admiralty House, Valetta, with his Flag-Lieutenant, the Honourable Hedworth Lambton, in close attendance, and flying his flag aboard the *Alexandra*, and it was there that I first made the acquaintance of the late Admiral Lord Beresford, then Commander Lord Charles Beresford, commanding the gun-vessel *Condor*. A sailing schooner, the yacht *Aline*, that had been lent to Lord Charles by the Prince of Wales, was converted into a sort of tender to the *Condor*. Lady Charles was living on board, and, with their usual hospitality, the Beresfords constantly took their friends for sailing expeditions in the vicinity of the island.

Shortly after my arrival the squadron proceeded for the usual summer cruise. We made up a squadron of from six to eight big ships—a very convenient number for manœuvring, and my Captain being one of the Seniors on the Station, the *Superb* was very generally leader of the lee line, as the second division was still called, in memory of the old sailing-ship days. This particular summer cruise was a very interesting one, for it included a visit to the Dalmatian coast. I have several times visited the Dalmatian coast since, and I have always wondered how any one, who could afford the luxury of a yacht, did not make a point of making the Adriatic the main objective of his Mediter-

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anean cruise. It really is a most enchanting part of the world, and the pleasantest way of visiting it, is from the sea, beginning at Venice and working steadily down the coast to Corfu. Apart from the absorbing interest there is in seeing one civilisation literally on the top of another, as is exemplified in the Palace of Diocletian, which now is practically turned into the fair-sized town of Spalato, all down the coast it is easy to see that Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Hungarians, Genoese, and, above all, Venetians, have, in their turn, left the impress of their various civilisations. In addition, the beauty of some of the harbours is quite beyond my powers of description. Cattaro, one of the most important, is perhaps also the finest as regards scenery. Approaching it from the sea, the ship has to pass through the narrow winding entrance known as "le Bocche." On either side, in addition to the modern fortifications constructed by the Austrians, the remains of ancient bastions and most picturesque little villages meet the eye. Finally, the great harbour is reached. Surrounded by precipitous mountains, it is completely landlocked, and there is anchorage there for half the war fleets of Europe. At the head of the bay is the town of Cattaro. Perched, as it is, on the side of a steep hill, surrounded by high walls with occasional towers, so thoroughly mediæval is it still, that it looks like the background of one of Doré's fantastic illustrations of the *Contes Drolatiques*. Corfu, too, is lovely. The view over the harbour, with Ulysses Island and the old Venetian fortress as a foreground, the bay, with its islands as a middle distance,

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and the Albanian Mountains as a background, forms a picture that is quite unforgettable.

But to return to our cruise. Off Venice the heavy ships of the squadron were anchored at Malamocco, which, just outside the canals, is some considerable distance from the town of Venice, but on a summer's night it was not an unpleasant thing to return in what was called a "four-horse" gondola in the early hours of the morning. Pola, the headquarters of the Austro-Hungarian Navy, was one of our ports of call, and the visit was quite an enjoyable one; the Austrian Naval Officers were very civil and hospitable, and their Commander-in-Chief at that time was a man who had been Flag-Lieutenant to Admiral Tegethoff at the battle of Lissa. In conversation with Austrian Naval Officers it was possible to appreciate some of the difficulties of that patchwork Empire. For instance, so mixed were the nationalities of their men-of-war crews that it was necessary for an officer to be able to speak to his men in at least four different languages—Czech, Slav, Italian, and German; small wonder that, owing to the stress of the late war and the complete victory of the Allies, what was the Austro-Hungarian Empire is now completely disintegrated.

At Trieste I made the acquaintance of two very interesting people, Sir Richard and Lady Burton. He was then British Consul there. The British Consular Service has always been woefully starved, the result being that, as a general rule, a number of very ill-paid posts are filled up by small local purveyors, who find it worth while to fly the Union Jack over their place

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of business ; but at Trieste, at any rate, two men of great distinction were Consuls during my lifetime, one being Charles Lever the novelist, and the other Sir Richard Burton, the great explorer and Oriental scholar and writer.

The Fleet worked its way steadily down the Dalmatian coast, calling at Zara, Sebenico, Ragusa, Spalato, Cattaro, and, to my taste, not staying nearly long enough at any of these interesting places, the reason being, I suppose, that we were there for Fleet exercises and manœuvres, and not for sight-seeing. Sir Beauchamp, however, did go himself for one inland trip from Cattaro. He drove to Cettigne, on a short visit to call on the Prince of Montenegro. From what he told me some time after I do not think that he was much impressed either with this reigning princelet or with what he described as his "little *bicoque*" of a royal residence. After a short stay at Cattaro, the Fleet proceeded to Corfu, where it remained for some time. The *Aline* was still in attendance on the *Condor*, and many were the pleasant afternoons spent on board of her, sailing about that beautiful bay. After Corfu, the Fleet proceeded to Eastern waters, visiting countless islands of the Greek Archipelago of surpassing beauty. In that part of the world it may truthfully be said, that, "only man is vile !"

The winter was passed mainly at Malta, but the *Superb* was privileged to go on an independent cruise to the Coast of Syria, and we passed the greater part of the month in that paradise of the sportsman. Ayas Bay was our headquarters. It is conveniently situated in

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the Gulf of Alexandretta, or Iskanderun as it is called by the Turks. It has a good anchorage for big ships, so the *Superb* could, and did, lay there very comfortably. We officers divided ourselves into two parties, taking our leave in turn—one party remained on board the ship and did perpetual duty, while the members of the other, camped out about twenty miles inland and shot to their hearts' content. We organised a small camel transport to carry our tents and general camp equipment, and hired ponies for our own use. The first detachment rode away and established the camp, and at the end of the week left the camp standing, rode back to the ship to relieve those on duty, who, taking the ponies, went back inland for their turn of sport. Game abounded; francolin, woodcock and every sort of wild fowl, formed the greater part of the bag, and although we were a very moderate lot of shots we really amassed altogether quite a respectable total—enough to give both officers and men a welcome change of diet. It was at Ayas, too, that I first made the acquaintance of the late Lord Kitchener. He was then a young Engineer Officer employed by the Foreign Office as one of their Intelligence Officers in the Euphrates Valley district. He came on board the ship on her arrival, and helped us to organise the camel transport that was necessary for our shooting expedition. Many years afterwards, it was my fate to see him organising transport of a very different kind, and on an enormous scale, for the advance of the British Army on Pretoria during the South African War.

Altogether we had a delightful time at Ayas. The

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climate was divine. Although it was mid-winter there was brilliant sunshine all day, with a wonderfully bracing air. The nights were very chill, but under canvas, with plenty of blankets, the cold was rather pleasant than otherwise. The rest of that really delightful winter was spent at Malta. There was plenty of pony racing, and I was lucky enough to ride a winner belonging to a very old friend and messmate on board the *Superb*, the present Admiral Sir Charles Graves Sawle, one of his ponies having, in my hands, won the hurdle race at the Spring Meeting.

But this peaceful time was rapidly coming to an end. In the spring of 1882 things in Egypt were evidently going from bad to worse, so in May the Fleet was ordered to cruise in the neighbourhood of Alexandria, and off that port the bulk of the Fleet patrolled backwards and forwards for weeks whilst the members of the Government were trying (very slowly, it seemed to us!) to make up their minds as to what steps should be taken. Early in June the Fleet was ordered to enter the port of Alexandria, the heavier ships—*Alexandra*, *Superb*, *Sultan*, *Temeraire*, *Inflexible*—anchoring outside, while the inside squadron consisted of ships of lighter draught—the *Penelope* and *Monarch* joined up with the *Invincible*, the temporary flagship of Sir Beauchamp Seymour, who had been there since the middle of May. The smaller craft attached to the Fleet consisted of the *Hecla*, a torpedo depot vessel, the gun-vessels and gun-boats, *Condor*, *Bittern*, *Beacon*, *Cygnets*, *Decoy*, and the dispatch vessel *Helicon*.

It is none of my business to comment on the situation

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at that time in Egypt, but probably every reasonable man would now agree with Lord Salisbury, who, when exposing the vacillating policy which the Government exhibited for weeks and months, instanced as a direct result that the massacre of Alexandria which took place on June 11th,—(of which I was a spectator and will chronicle more anon),—amounted, amongst other details, to British subjects being “butchered under the very guns of the Fleet, which had never budged an inch to save them.” But, after all, nothing more can be expected of the “great Parliamentarian,”—and I imagine that not even the most bigoted of Tories would grudge the late Mr. Gladstone that measure of compliment. I also suppose that no man but a politician of Mr. Gladstone’s commanding intellect and reputation could inform Parliament, a fortnight after Alexandria had been bombarded and when some 40,000 troops were on their way to Egypt, that the country “was not at war.” But, as I remarked in my Introduction, “I love an Artist,” and surely no greater political artist ever flourished than the man we still hear spoken of with such love and veneration as “Mr. G.”

On Sunday, the 11th of June, the situation apparently remaining fairly quiet, leave was given to officers and chief petty officers, and, cooped up as we had all been when cruising off Alexandria, nearly every one not required for duty took the opportunity of going ashore. I was one of those who landed, and I cannot better describe what I saw of the events of that day than by inserting a copy of a letter which I wrote at the time to my brother, then Viscount Ebrington, M.P. This



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letter was probably the earliest account received by post, and when shown to Sir Charles Dilke, the then Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, was, by his wish, forwarded to *The Times*, which duly published it :—

### “THE MASSACRE AT ALEXANDRIA.

“The following private letter has been received from an officer in the Fleet :—

“*Off Alexandria, June 16th, 1882.*

“My dear——, . . . We are dwelling in the midst of alarms, with our loins girded, etc., all ready to knock down forts and otherwise protect British interests. That was a deuce of a row last Sunday, and we were all precious lucky to get back to the ship alive. I fancy the row was arranged by Arabi, so that he could have the pleasure of putting it down ; but, like every other row, it had to have some *raison d'être*, and this was easily found in a squabble between some Arabs and Greeks. The Arabs began to break windows, and the Greeks produced fire-arms, and let fly amongst them. I was in the same street about a couple of hundred yards off, and saw the stones flying and the shooting ; but though there were Arabs all about us, they never made an attempt to annoy us in any way. Presently up came some troops, all anyhow, without a single officer, and began to blaze away with great impartiality ; but it struck us all that for choice they went for the Europeans. We, being between the bulk of the mob and the troops, and seeing people beginning to drop, thought, on the whole, we were not very happily placed, and having by the blessing of Providence found ourselves near a door, executed a strategic movement to the left, got inside the door, and locked it. The house we got into turned out to be a sort of monastery school, and there we remained for over an hour. Meanwhile, outside the fun was becoming decidedly fast and furious. The soldiers pegged away merrily, and the Arabs looted. We could see them through the shutters carrying off all sorts of trash—toys, chairs, baths (and what could an Arab do with a bath?)—in fact, anything they could lay hands on. Presently, the soldiers having

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evidently got our part of the town into something like order, we strolled out trying to look as if we were not in a funk, and in fact rather liked it. My friend and I were just getting into a trap to drive down to the landing-place, when an Egyptian policeman, who could speak English, came up and told us it was certain death to drive down where we were going, as the mob were at their worst there, and were hauling the people out of the cabs and cutting their throats. We at once came to the conclusion that we would give up our drive, and went to the nearest consulate, where we waited till the disturbance was over.

“All this was child’s play compared to what happened to another lot. About half an hour before we got to the consulate four of our fellows—a great friend of mine (S.), a little Swede we are educating on board here, one of our doctors and an engineer got into a cab, and proceeded to drive down. All of a sudden they were surrounded by a mob of Arabs, who stopped the horses and went for them with their sticks. Being, of course, completely unarmed, they ran—S. and the Swede on one side, and the doctor and engineer the other. Dear old S., having been rather a professor at football in the days of his youth, being very strong and quick on his pins, and the little Swede also being as hard as nails, they managed to get through the brutes, with no injury except a good hammering all over. Of the others, one was stabbed and beaten to death, and the other, who is still in bed, after being beaten most frightfully, managed to crawl up to a soldier, who, for a wonder, behaved like a trump, stood over him with a fixed bayonet, and finally shoved him into a house, where he stopped all night, and was fetched on board next day, poor chap, in a most pitiable condition.

“And now comes the most extraordinary thing of all. One of our chief petty officers was ashore on leave. Our poor engineer was picked up by another trap going the other way, and was taken to the police-station. As he was being helped out of the trap, another Arab came up, banged him over the head and knocked him down. The petty officer went for the beast with a common thorn walking-stick he had in his hand, jammed it into his mouth with such force that it came out behind the ear, and killed him dead. There certainly is a Providence watching over sailors, because this fellow was hardly

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touched. When he came on board and said that he had killed his Arab, as before described, nobody believed him. However, it turned out to be absolutely true.

“The telegrams will have told you more than we know about the numbers killed, but there is no doubt that they finished off at least sixty Europeans, and Heaven only knows how many Arabs.”

Nowadays there are few Englishmen who have not served in the Army or Navy in some capacity, so they will be able to appreciate how the month dragged its weary way along from the 11th of June to the 11th of July, when at last we were permitted to “get a little of our own back” by bombarding the forts. Meanwhile we had fretted and raged at the idea, of Englishmen, many of whom were officers in the Navy, being treated like dogs by a lot of half-naked Arabs, and that we, though on the spot and serving in a powerful Fleet, were not allowed to retaliate. I have never witnessed such discontent as existed, and certainly on board my own ship the cases of men refusing to obey orders became commoner every day ; but while the officers and men of the Service suffered, they could expect no sympathy from the gentlemen of the House of Commons for anything so ordinary as the ill-treatment of British subjects. Among the members of that House of Parliament there are always men who have no enemies in the world except their own countrymen, and the rest of them are engaged in that most amusing and engrossing sport known as “Politics.” Anything outside the region of political exigencies matters nothing to them. I have the opinion of one of the ablest of them that ever lived in support of this theory. Years ago I was

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travelling back from a race meeting with Lord Randolph Churchill, and I well remember his conversation. He told me he had tried most things in the shape of excitement. He admitted that big game shooting was excellent fun, that engineering a successful coup on the Turf (and he and his racing partner, Lord Dunraven, had lately pulled off a remarkably successful coup when that good mare l'Abbesse de Jouarre won a great handicap) was enthralling ; but he went on to say that nothing in the world was half so engrossing, as were the almost daily intrigues and manœuvres that formed the meat and drink of the politician. But this is a digression, and I must return to Alexandria.

During the ensuing month Alexandria was being rapidly deserted, and an enormous number of refugees of all nations were being deported as rapidly as possible to their homes. Commander Lord Charles Beresford was placed in charge, and the work of chartering ships for the embarkation of passengers was no light one. So far as the *Superb* was concerned, our first duty, after the massacre, was to embark a number of corpses, one being that of our own engineer officer. Many others were those of men in the Fleet. We had to take them out to sea, and, in the words of our Burial Service, commit them to the deep. Bluejackets have not the smallest objection to seeing their comrades buried at sea when there are obvious reasons for so doing, but they bitterly resented being sent to sea to bury their dead when there was a Christian churchyard ashore, and this was another cause of much of the discontent of which I have spoken. Mercifully, things

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in England were improving. Public indignation forced the Government reluctantly to take action, and the Admiral was allowed to send an ultimatum, which I believe was principally to the effect that if the work of strengthening the coast fortifications still proceeded the Fleet would bombard and destroy the forts. Arabi replied by bringing more troops to Alexandria and continued to labour on the coast defences, so at last, on July 10th, all merchant ships and foreign men-of-war were ordered out of the harbour, and at 6 a.m., July 11th, the bombardment began.

I am not proposing to write any sort of description of the bombardment as a whole, but am simply relating what came under my personal observation as a lieutenant commanding a battery on board the *Superb*. The *Superb* mounted twelve 18-ton muzzle-loading 10-inch guns in her main battery. My old comrade, the above-mentioned Lieutenant Charles Graves Sawle, commanded the six guns that were mounted on one side, and I commanded the other six. There were then no hydraulic lifts or mechanical appliances of any sort, so what really happened in action was that the side that was unengaged hoisted the shell up by hand from the bowels of the ship, and the engaged battery fired them off. My own battery was terribly under-officered when my side was in action. To assist me to control the firing of six 400-pounders (to revert to the old-fashioned measurement) I had only one subaltern of marines and one midshipman. It may be imagined how difficult it was to give orders and exercise control with something like a hundred men rushing projectiles

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up from the shell-room on one side, while the guns on my engaged side were in action with all the accompanying noise of firing and the clanking of chains and winches for the process of training and loading the guns. After some rather wild shooting at the commencement, when the men, owing to their keenness, were difficult to restrain, we settled down steadily to work, and at last we were able to appreciate by actual practice how scandalous was the sighting of our guns ; how poor their shooting capacity, and how faulty their projectiles. Ten years before Alexandria, the French Navy possessed a breech-loading heavy gun, working on the same principle as does our gun of to-day ; but owing, I believe, to the wisecracks at Woolwich at the time of which I write, our guns were provided for us by soldiers, and the Navy was condemned to go on with these ridiculous muzzle-loaders.

The first part of the bombardment was carried out by the outside squadron under weigh, but we soon found that, when moving, it was impossible to make, with our weapons, any sort of accurate shooting, so the squadron was anchored. Luckily for us, the Egyptian guns were practically just as faulty as our own, their ammunition was a great deal worse, and their shooting beneath contempt, so the damage done to the fleet was very slight, and the casualties were trifling. After a long day's firing the Egyptians were driven away from their guns, and a considerable amount of damage was done to the forts. One lucky shot from the *Superb's* battery set fire to the magazine of Fort Adah, which we were then engaging, and blew it up, and that

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brought the day to a conclusion as far as my ship was concerned.

Although the Egyptians had been driven from their guns, their powers for mischief had by no means come to an end, and the very next day the town of Alexandria was set on fire and looted. The Khedive being in considerable danger in his palace at Ramleh, he was safely moved to another palace at Ras el Tin, situated on the peninsula of that name, which had been occupied by a landing-party of bluejackets and marines, and a few days afterwards I was landed in command of a company of bluejackets to form part of the garrison of Ras el Tin, our duty being to ensure the safety of the Khedive. Like all sailors, we were delighted to get out of the ship, but I do not know that we were much better off than our brother officers who were left on board. It sounded very Oriental and romantic to be quartered in a harem, but as the harem was very stuffy and dirty, and only inhabited by swarms of flies, it did not quite come up to my ideas of Eastern luxury.

But events were beginning to move—the fires in Alexandria were gradually got under, and order had been restored to the town by the unceasing exertions of Lord Charles Beresford. He began his work ashore with only 140 men under him, bluejackets and marines, who, to use his own words, “had to patrol the town, stop the looting, stop the fresh burning of houses, bury the corpses, and protect the lives of those who had come on shore.” His force was subsequently increased by 600 marines, and they were assisted by a

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mixed force of Americans, Germans, Greeks, and Italians. Moreover, for cleaning-up purposes, he succeeded in hiring Arab labour. By the 21st all the fires were out and the city was beginning to reassume its normal shape, and on the 1st August he was able to turn over his post as Provost-Marshal and Chief-of-Police at Alexandria to the Military Authorities and return to his ship.

The late Admiral Lord Beresford did much good service for his country in many capacities and for many years ; but I greatly doubt whether he ever performed a much finer piece of work than when Chief-of-Police at Alexandria.

Soon, troops began to pour into Egypt. On the 17th between 2000 and 3000 were landed under the command of General Sir Archibald Alison, and shortly afterwards all the sailors ashore were relieved by soldiers. By the 15th August, when the General Commander-in-Chief, Sir Garnet Wolseley, arrived, the bulk of his army, some 40,000 men, were either landed in Egypt or else on board transports at Alexandria. Sir Garnet was, without any doubt, one of the ablest soldiers this country has produced since the days of Wellington, and nobody knew better than he how to disseminate false information that was sure to trickle through and deceive the enemy.

On the 18th August the *Superb* received orders to form part of an escorting squadron of ironclads, destined to shepherd the transports to some destination, name unknown. Gradually a whisper went round that Aboukir Bay was to be the jumping-off



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place for the invasion of Egypt. It was rumoured that Sir Garnet had confided the fact to one man,—it was not quite sure whether the man was his Chief of the Staff or an influential Pressman. As to this, opinions differed. Anyhow, the one man in question had been told under the seal of profound secrecy that Aboukir was the destination of the transports. He must have babbled in his sleep, for obviously he would not knowingly have betrayed the confidence of the Commander-in-Chief, but however it might have been, the rumour spread, and many hours before we started there was not a soul on board the combined fleet of ironclads and transports who was not thoroughly convinced that we were going to Aboukir. The night before we started I succeeded in collecting three of my brothers, who were serving at the time, to dine with me on board my ship. One, subsequently killed at Diamond Hill, outside Pretoria, in the South African Campaign, was on leave from his regiment, the 17th Lancers, from India, and was trying to get the Military Authorities in Cairo to give him a temporary job; the second was in the Coldstream Guards, and was on board one of the transports that was under our charge, and anchored close by, he died in 1895; and the third, then a Midshipman in the *Carysfort*, was fated to be drowned a few years later, when a Sub-Lieutenant on the gunboat *Wasp*, that went down in the China Seas with all hands, and was never heard of again. I rather doubt whether we four brothers had ever been all together before, but we certainly never met all together again.

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The next morning the transports and their convoy weighed, and proceeded to Aboukir, and a very imposing spectacle they made. Each ironclad was in charge of three large transports, by which means quite respectable station could be kept, and, unlike most convoys, there were no stragglers.

Just before arriving at Aboukir Bay, as the Fleet was preparing to anchor and excitement was at its highest, a signal was made directing us all to steer on a certain course, and some hours later we found ourselves at the entrance to the Suez Canal, of which entire possession had been already taken by another portion of the Fleet. Suez had, meanwhile, been seized by Admiral Hewett. The transports were passed as rapidly through the canal as possible, with the view of disembarking their troops at Ismailia, and we remained in masterly inactivity off Port Said.

It was at that time that I suffered one of the greatest disappointments in my life, and I can still recall the absolute tears of rage and mortification that I shed. A night or two after our arrival at Port Said, unluckily for me, I had kept the middle watch, from midnight until 4 a.m. Very shortly after 4 a.m. a signal was made to the ships in harbour to land a Naval Brigade for service at the front, the force to be ready to start in two hours' time. The officer of the morning watch took the signal to the Captain, who at once gave the necessary orders. By right of seniority I should have been selected, but when the Captain was informed that I had just turned in after night duty, he decided not to disturb me and sent a lieutenant who was my

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junior instead. When I appeared next morning, about eight, I was told the news, and I fairly tore my hair out with vexation. I insisted on seeing the Captain, and he quite agreed that, without meaning any harm, he had treated me badly ; but no reparation was possible, for it was too late, the Naval Brigade being already some miles up the Canal in the tug that was conveying them. Philosophy does sometimes fail to bring comfort, and mine for the moment became a negligible quantity. I did succeed in getting up to Cairo a little later for a short time, after its occupation by the British troops, but in the days of one's youth it seemed a bitter disappointment not to have been at Tel-el-Kebir, and not to have marched into Cairo as part of the victorious army.

The *Superb's* portion of this Naval Brigade was landed in such haste that nothing had been provided for the officers and men of the force in the way of camp equipment, not so much as a kettle. When they arrived at the front the Chief Petty Officer reported this fact to the Lieutenant in command, and they put their heads together as to what steps to take. The C.P.O. was an old warrior who had served in the Naval Brigade at Perak, so by his advice the officer made himself scarce for an hour or two, and when he returned he found all things in readiness for supper, a large kettle swinging over the fire, and a general air of comfort. He subsequently asked his C.P.O. how he managed to provide all these necessaries, and this was the answer : " Well, sir, I don't exactly know, but I *do* hear that there is a . . . row in the Scots Guards Camp ! "

## CHAPTER V

### FROM GALATZ TO SOUAKIM VIA LONDON

SHORTLY after the return of the Fleet to Malta, Sir Beauchamp Seymour, who had been created Lord Alcester for his services in Egypt, returned to England, Vice-Admiral Lord John Hay having arrived to take over the Mediterranean Station as Commander-in-Chief, hoisting his flag in the *Alexandra*, with Captain Harry Rawson for his Flag-Captain and the Honourable Hugh Tyrwhitt as Flag-Lieutenant. Hugh Tyrwhitt, who had been in the *Britannia* during my time there, was one of my greatest friends. Alas! he died in 1907, and his death brought an untimely end to what was already a distinguished career in the Navy. Shortly before his death, when still only of the rank of Captain, he had been offered the Indian Command; ill-health compelled him to decline it, and he died shortly afterwards on board a steamer on his way to Egypt, to which country he had been ordered by his doctors. As a Captain he had held some very important posts, having been in turn Flag-Captain to Sir John Fisher, when Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean; had commanded the *Renown* when the present King paid a visit to India as Prince of Wales, and was subsequently Naval Private Secretary to Lord Cawdor when First Lord of the Admiralty.

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Lord Cawdor brought his great experience of business (he had been a most successful Chairman of the Board of the Great Western Railway) to the service of his country, and was generally acknowledged, at any rate by the Navy, to have been one of the very best First Lords of his generation. He was far from being an advertising politician ; but with his sound judgment and his great administrative capacity, his death was none the less a great loss to England. During his reign at the Admiralty it was several times my good fortune to meet him at little dinners given by Hugh Tyrwhitt, at which Sir John Fisher and I were the other guests, and the amount of naval "shop" that was discussed in the course of one of these pleasant evenings is more easily imagined than described.

The rest of my time in the *Superb* was uneventful enough, and we were all beginning to look forward to paying off and a little leave in England, when my personal plans were completely changed by the arrival of a very small craft, the *Cockatrice* by name, at Malta. This curious little river vessel had left her station up the Danube for a refit at Malta, and her first and only lieutenant having been invalided, the vacancy thus occurring was offered to me. I was rather curious to see something of the Balkan States, and anyhow it meant a very pleasant winter at Malta with only a tiny river craft to look after, instead of being a hard-worked watch-keeper on board an ironclad. I was quite right about the winter at Malta ; it was a very pleasant one. There happened to be some particularly nice visitors at Valetta, any work

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connected with the repairs that were being executed by the Dockyard was easily got over in the forenoon, after which time I was as free as air, and ready to take part in anything going on that was likely to be amusing, whether ashore or afloat, for, having hired a little cutter yacht, I could take small parties round by sail to picnic at some of the interesting places outside the harbour, and, moreover, during that particular winter, the Opera Company was well above the average.

In the spring the *Cockatrice* had to get round to her headquarters on the Danube where she represented Great Britain on the Danube Commission. This Commission was a legacy from the Treaty of Paris, all the Signatory Powers having agreed to be represented by a *stationnaire* of some sort up the river, their main object being to see that the Russians did not divert the course of the stream, so that large steamers would be compelled to use the St. George's mouths which emptied themselves into the Black Sea in Russian territory, instead of the Kilia mouths which debouched at Sulina.

A voyage from Malta to Constantinople was quite a serious undertaking for the little *Cockatrice*. So near the water were our scuttles (as the small windows which give light and air are called on board a man-of-war) that even up a river it was generally necessary to keep them closed, as the smallest ripple would splash water into them. This is only mentioned to give an idea of how unseaworthy a craft she was, and no blame to any one, as she was entirely designed

## From Galatz to Souakim via London

for river service. The elements were kind, and we never encountered anything more serious than a fresh breeze, and arrived at our first port of call, Constantinople, without a mishap of any kind. The *Cockatrice* was well known at Constantinople, as she went there regularly for a refit every year,—it was only on very rare occasions that she went to Malta. Our little ship was anchored at Kadikoi, which is over on the Asiatic side, and I was quickly introduced by my messmates to the pleasant Levantine Society that is the feature of that neighbourhood, and is so well described by Claude Farrère in *L'Homme qui Assassina*. We were most hospitably entertained by the occupants of the numerous villas, and the time passed very agreeably. Indeed, I found Kadikoi such a pleasant place that I believe I only once troubled to go over to Pera, and that was to attend a ball which was given at our Embassy and to which it was rather a matter of duty to go. I found diplomatic society, however exalted it might be, with “their Excellencies” and their “*chers collègues*” (for apparently not even the humblest member of a small Legation, is ever alluded to by a member of any other Legation, or Embassy, in any terms other than “*Mon cher collègue*”), very dull as compared with some of the humbler, but sometimes exceedingly attractive inhabitants of Kadikoi.

Our next move was through the Bosphorus, perhaps the most beautiful strait in the world, and up the Black Sea to Sulina, and thence up the river to Galatz, where we duly tied ourselves up, and

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re-assumed our business as one of the line of *stationnaires* of the Signatory Powers.

The Danube, even as high up as Galatz, is certainly an imposing stream and is still some three or four miles in breadth. It was there that a large portion of the Russian Army crossed in the 1877-8 campaign, and a difficult operation it must have been. For the rest, it is only necessary to say that the town is, or was, thoroughly Oriental. One of the main roads ran parallel to the river bank, close to where we were secured, and to give an instance of the extreme Orientalism existing there, the following is a typical example. It used to interest us much to watch the numerous carts that passed along that thoroughfare, one and all in turn subsiding into an enormous hole in the road, day after day and month after month, for the simple reason that it never occurred to the Eastern mind to fill the hole up. The mosquitoes up the Danube have to be experienced to be realised, but their attentions were discounted by our mode of life, which consisted mainly in sleeping a considerable portion of the day and sitting up the greater part of the night. There was a small, but very hospitable, colony of English merchants there, and it became the invariable custom for a number of them to lunch on board every day. This was convenient, as the *Cockatrice* lay close to their places of business. After this early luncheon we used to drive up to their villas, which were situated on the further outskirts of the town, and there we settled down for the rest of the day. A prolonged siesta was the first opera-



## From Galatz to Souakim via London

tion ; a large, cool, dark room being infinitely preferable for that purpose than the stuffy little cabins on board the ship. After the siesta there would be a couple of hours strenuous lawn-tennis, then a very late dinner, and finally a prolonged visit to one of the music-halls of the town, which began their evening's business about 11 p.m. and did not bring it to an end until any hour in the morning, and finally back to the ship for two or three hours' sleep before the "labours" of the next day began.

While stationed at Galatz I took the opportunity of visiting Bucharest. I have never been there since ; but in those days it was a most attractive little capital, somewhat like Brussels in appearance, with charming shady boulevards. There was an excellent hotel, and I was fortunate in being able to make the acquaintance of Mr. and Mrs. White, he being then our Consul-General there. I was fated to meet him later when Sir William White, British Ambassador at Constantinople. During his long tenure of office in the Turkish capital he succeeded in raising British prestige, which had woefully declined for some years, to a higher level than it probably had attained since the days of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, the great Eltchi.

To spend a few months up the Danube was interesting enough, but life there soon began to get wearisome and unprofitable from a professional point of view, so I proceeded to cast about for a change. The only way that suggested itself was to apply to the Admiralty for permission to return to England, with the object of going through the long course at

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Greenwich and Portsmouth, necessary for qualifying as a Gunnery Lieutenant. My Captain was good enough to support my application, so in the autumn of 1883 I found myself back at Greenwich again as one of a class of about a dozen lieutenants who were aspiring to become gunnery experts. I soon found out that I had mistaken my new profession. Most of my comrades were comparatively fresh from school, having only been at sea for one year, whereas I had five years' service to my credit. I found that, after my long absence from anything in the way of school-work, high mathematics were no joke, and it seemed probable that when the examination time came, after labouring very hard at very uncongenial work, I should inevitably find myself at the bottom of my class. Consequently, I candidly admit that I was looking about for some fresh job all the time I was at Greenwich. Meanwhile, London was close by, and, feeling pretty sure that I should never get to the examination stage, I spent most of my time there, and only turned up at Greenwich for the lectures I was bound to attend.

One way and another I spent a very pleasant winter, and a good deal of it was passed at a very amusing little club that was established for a short time at 87, St. James's Street, where whist was played for moderate points, and where, moreover, I met a number of very pleasant people. 87, St. James's Street was then a very curious house and stood on the site of the new post-office buildings. Mr. Tom Wallace, the well-known wine merchant, occupied the basement. He was a conspicuous figure in London, especially in

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St. James's Street, for he was in the habit of sitting in a chair on the pavement in front of his business premises, smoking his cigar there, and exchanging courtesies with his large circle of friends, who were almost sure to pass that particular corner at some time in the morning or early afternoon.

On the ground floor there was a Starting Price Betting Office, one of the very first of its kind to be inaugurated in London, and on the first floor was the Whist Club before alluded to. I was accused of assisting the members of that institution to sit up till unconscionable hours, for when it got very late (or rather very early in the morning) the most reasonable thing for me to do, seemed to consist in sitting up until the first train could convey me to Greenwich in time for a mathematical lecture, and, naturally, I was not anxious to sit up alone, and play patience !

It was there that I first made the acquaintance of a lifelong friend of mine, Mr. Cecil Clay. He was one of the sons of the well-known Major Clay, who was for many years Radical Member for Hull, and was counted as the greatest living authority of his day on the science of whist. His son Cecil was a worthy successor to him ; not only a fine player, he was, as he still is, a delightful man both as a companion and one of the wittiest of raconteurs. In those days he lived in a charming little house in Park Street, where I have certainly been to the most amusing Sunday luncheon parties that I can remember. Hostess and host were both the perfection of courtesy and kindness, and all the cleverest and most agreeable people in the

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dramatic profession were to be met there. I will mention only two of the habitués—who, alas! have both passed away, but were then young and bubbling over with wit and gaiety—Herbert Tree and Charles Brookfield. They were both constant guests, and those of my contemporaries who were fortunate enough to have met them in their irresponsible youth, will remember what a pleasure it was to be with them, and to take a part in all the clever chaff that used to pass between them. But, somehow, this amusing life in London did not amalgamate very well with high mathematics, and it became more and more evident to me that a change would be welcome.

In February 1885 it became necessary to send a large force to Souakim. For this large force adequate sea-transport was needed, and to my great good fortune, a staunch friend of mine, Captain John Fellowes (subsequently Admiral Sir John Fellowes) was selected as head of it. The Admiralty could not possibly have chosen a better man. He was full of resource, full of the wisdom of the serpent, was a glutton for work himself, and had the knack of extracting the last ounce of work out of his subordinates. I lost no time in going to him, and he at once applied to the Admiralty asking that I should be appointed as one of the transport officers to serve under him. My relative, Lord Alcester, was back at the Admiralty as First Sea Lord, and once more I had to interview him in his stronghold. This time he really was annoyed. He pointed out that in one year I had been something like six different kinds of

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Lieutenants, that the Admiralty had had enough of me, and I really believe (kindest of men though he was) that his principal reason for acceding to my request, and Captain Fellowes' application, was the vague chance that, in the Red Sea, a severe sunstroke might settle me and my business for ever.

Having obtained my point, I was in the seventh heaven of delight, and before carrying out the first order I received from the Admiralty, which was to go over to Kingstown, I went to pay a farewell visit to my friends at 87, St. James's Street. Tom Wallace, previously alluded to, assured me that he had made a close study of Egyptian warfare (I suppose from the strategic corner of St. James's Street and Pall Mall!), and that it was absolutely essential that any officer called on to serve in that trying climate should be suitably equipped in the way of wine. So the kind man fitted me out then and there with six dozen of excellent champagne and three dozen of remarkably sound port, on the understanding that if I came back I might pay for it at my leisure, and, if anything untoward happened, it obviously would not matter to me and very little to him. Another kind friend insisted on my standing in with him in a bet he had taken on a horse which was expected to win the Grand National, so I started for Ireland feeling that anyhow my campaigning kit would compare favourably with that of any one else, consolidated as it was by nine dozen of wine and a bet on the great Steeplechase.

Another farewell visit that I paid was to the Transport Department of the Admiralty, where I tried to

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glean some information about my duties. All I could get out of them was that, for the time being, I was appointed transport officer of the *Lydian Monarch*, a vessel that had been hired to convey a regiment of Lancers to Souakim or elsewhere, that I was to embark these troops at Kingstown, but when I tried to find out what authority was vested in me when on board a hired transport, nothing could I discover. In fact it was conveyed to me in a general way that my duties and responsibilities would *solvitur ambulando*, and with these vague directions I was obliged to be content.

To Kingstown I accordingly went in the night boat, and I must say that Ireland, which I was visiting for the first time, fully kept up its reputation for "diversion," for anything like the comicality of the scenes which I witnessed, when engaged next day in the embarkation of that distinguished Cavalry regiment, would need the pen of a Charles Lever to do them justice. On arriving on board the *Lydian Monarch* the first thing in the morning, I received a telegram from headquarters at Dublin, to the effect that a dismounted party would arrive from the barracks at 8 a.m. to make any further preparations which they might find necessary for the embarkation, and that the regiment would arrive about 11 a.m. About 9 a.m. the dismounted party arrived under the command of a very young subaltern. One of the first pieces of information of which I was in need, was whether the regiment was bringing lances or not. I had been told in London that they probably would not, but it was necessary to know, for they are very dangerous tools

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on board a ship if not properly stowed. I well knew their propensities for getting in the way and putting people's eyes out from my personal acquaintance with that ancient weapon, the boarding pike, which was still part of our equipment on a man-of-war. When neither the youthful subaltern in charge of the party, nor any of the men under his command, could provide me with this very elementary piece of information, I began to fear the worst, and rather expected that the embarkation would be attended with some few difficulties. About three-quarters of an hour after the appointed time the regiment arrived, and if I, and the sailors of the *Lydian Monarch* rocked with laughing at seeing so many drunken men, it was nothing to the rocking that the Lancers were doing in their saddles before they had been successfully dismounted. Being convinced that nothing in the way of work was to be expected from the men of the regiment, I succeeded in borrowing a working party of bluejackets from the guardship to help tie up the horses, which is always rather a ticklish business. We got on famously with our work for some time, but, unfortunately, there was so much whisky about that the bluejackets were, very soon, all more or less drunk too. By this time the day was closing in, we were anxious to sail before dark, and the situation was not particularly promising. The Military Authorities in Dublin had meanwhile been told how things were *not* progressing, and presently the Commander-in-Chief in Dublin and his Staff arrived on the scene. Fortunately the horses were at last all on board (poor brutes! some of them had been standing

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with their saddles off in the snow for hours, for, in addition to our other difficulties, there was some inches of snow on the ground), and the next thing was to discover where the men of the regiment were. It was rumoured that a good many of them had left the immediate vicinity of the ship, and had wandered off, still being thirsty, to the numerous public-houses in the neighbourhood. Mercifully, a trumpeter, who was fairly sober, could be produced, and presently a swaying line of dismounted Lancers formed itself on the quay opposite the ship. There were a good many absentees, but the Commander-in-Chief decided to send the ship to sea, so away we went, and, in justice to a very fine regiment, I may mention that eventually the so-called absentees were all found on board the ship. One of them, I remember, did not turn up for three days, he having been buried during the whole of that time under a heap of kit bags, and when rescued was very much more dead than alive from a combination of suffocation and sea-sickness.

Unfortunately, there was a considerable clamour raised about what was described as a disgraceful scene, and the usual lurid descriptions were published of what really was a very trifling affair. The Commanding Officer had, perhaps, been a little over good-natured in letting his men out of barracks the night before they embarked, and very naturally the men had celebrated the occasion in the usual way. The rest was due to Irish hospitality, and to the sentiment that existed in those days in an Irish mob (a sentiment which, alas! owing to politicians of all



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kinds, exists no longer)—the love of the Irish for a soldier, especially if he happened to be an Irish cavalryman.

By way of making the story of the embarkation more sensational still, some enterprising Dublin journalist calmly took upon himself to sink the *Lydian Monarch* with all hands a few hours afterwards in the Irish Channel, and, as it did happen to blow very heavily at the time, a good deal of pain and anxiety was caused to those who had relatives and friends on board her. However, this lie was contradicted pretty soon, and we had the pleasure, on arriving at Souakim, of hearing that the delinquent had been imprisoned for circulating a mischievous story for which there was no foundation. We, out there, thought that hanging was much too good for him ; but on reflection it was probably only a sense of dramatic fitness that impelled him to start the rumour, and, moreover, people have no right to believe any sort of rumour when a war is on, not more than one in a hundred being ever well founded.

We had hardly got fairly started on our journey before we picked up a real gale in the Channel, and I very soon discovered what fine material there was in the regiment. The ship was rolling very heavily, and nearly all the officers and men were prostrated with sea-sickness, and, moreover, had not yet found their sea-legs. As far as the crew was concerned, like all merchant ships, she only carried just enough men to do the necessary duties connected with the ship, and had certainly none to spare to look after

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the cargo, so it fell to the lot of two or three of the officers of the regiment, and perhaps half-a-dozen non-commissioned officers, who had managed to overcome their sea-sickness, and myself (because I had nothing else to do), to look after the horses. A great many had been cast in their stalls, owing to the very amateur fashion in which they had been tied up, and it was no light job to get the poor struggling animals on to their legs again and secure them properly with the ship rolling heavily. It was an all-night business; those few soldiers worked like heroes, and I, though I knew little about horses, could make myself useful, for a sailor does know how to tie a knot. It was therefore to the credit of all concerned that we never lost a horse at the time, though later on a few succumbed to violent pneumonia, brought on, I suppose, by the sudden change from severe cold to the appalling heat of the horse deck.

Two of the officers who did such good work all through that night I still occasionally meet. One was Captain Wenjy Jones, a fine horseman and a well-known owner of race-horses, and the other, then Lieutenant Sinclair, having retired from the Army and adopted a political career, after commencing as Assistant Private Secretary to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, is now Lord Pentland. He has, in his time, occupied several important posts, and has lately returned to England after serving his country for seven years as Governor of Madras.

It was not until we had nearly reached Gibraltar that the gale abated, and we were able to settle down

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in comparative comfort and take stock of our surroundings. When the weather was fine enough our precious horses were walked up inclined platforms to the upper deck, where they could get some light and air, and where, moreover, the men had room to groom them. They certainly needed strapping, for, having left Ireland as hairy as polar bears, and been suddenly translated into a warm climate, they literally shed their coats in handfuls.

On arriving at Port Said, I was set one of the most disagreeable tasks that ever came my way. Owing to the ridiculous fuss that had been made about the embarkation at Kingstown, the War Office Authorities were seized with one of their occasional spasmodic fits of virtue, and suddenly found it necessary to hold an inquiry into the conduct of the two Lieutenant-Colonels of the regiment ; one having been left behind with one wing, while the other was commanding the portion ordered on active service. I received a telegram from the Admiralty ordering me to land the Lieutenant-Colonel in command, so I found myself in the position of having to go to a man who was old enough to be my father, much my superior in rank, and who had actually served in the Crimea, and tell him that he was to leave the ship. Whatever may have been his merits or demerits, it always seemed to me that he was treated with the grossest discourtesy by the Authorities, in his position of an officer commanding the wing of a regiment ordered on active service, and on the eve of taking the Field. Naturally, I had to obey orders, and landed he was, but I have

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always wondered whether he was not wrong to take such an order from a junior officer belonging to another service, and whether he would not have been wiser to ignore such an irregular communication altogether, and to have gone to Souakim with the troops under his orders.

A few days afterwards the *Lydian Monarch* arrived at Souakim and the regiment disembarked, and a very fine show they made. The officers and men were, of course, delighted to be quit of the ship, and to be on active service, and the horses, thanks to the fact that we had been able to move them about, were in wonderful condition, considering that they had been cooped up on board for the major part of three weeks.

Having now arrived safely at Souakim and delivered the goods entrusted to my charge in the shape of the regiment, it may be convenient to say something of that almost forgotten campaign, the Souakim Expedition of 1885. The more it is considered in the cold light of history, or from what remains in the memory of a spectator and humble participant, the more absolutely am I convinced that, to use a modern expression, the whole Expedition was designed to be nothing but political "eye-wash." The fact is the public were extremely indignant at the fall of Khartoum and the death of Gordon. Their indignation was considerably, if illogically, accentuated by the harmless fact that the Prime Minister, Mr. Gladstone, had gone to the theatre the very night the news of Gordon's death was received. Lord Salisbury, in the course of a debate

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on the announcement that the Government had decided to break the power of the Mahdi, had stated, what certainly looked to be the whole truth and nothing but the truth,—namely, “that Gordon had been sacrificed to the squabbles of a Cabinet and the necessities of Party Politics.” And what probably decided the dispatch of the Expedition, more than anything else, was the fact that a few days afterwards the Government only escaped defeat on a vote of censure on the Soudan policy, moved by Sir Stafford Northcote, by the narrow margin of fourteen votes. Altogether, things were not going at all happily for the Government, and so “eye-wash” of some kind was absolutely necessary, and I believe that those of us who were left till the last, save for the troops that remained to garrison the town of Souakim, one and all realised that nothing had ever been intended, and that all our labour and hardship had been only to keep a tottering Government in power for a little while longer. It is easy to show that nothing was intended, for exactly twelve months before, in March 1884, the hot weather had compelled the withdrawal of the troops from Souakim, although the route to Berber was then open ; yet the Authorities were commencing an Expedition and sending *troops from England* at exactly the same time of the year at which they had brought a half-finished campaign to a close, *with troops on the spot*, only one year before ! Of course, if, in the course of the fighting that would be sure to take place round about Souakim, Osman Digna’s men could be badly beaten and Osman himself captured, then

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they might reasonably assume that the Expedition had not been in vain, but it was pretty well known that Osman was an extremely elusive person, and anything but a likely captive. But enough has been said of the political emergencies of the moment and the sordid details connected with them. A British Army just taking the Field forms a far purer and more attractive spectacle.

As soon as the various transport officers arrived with the troops that had been put under their charge, they were employed entirely in duties connected with the port. We were about eight all told, under the orders of Captain Fellowes, Principal Naval Transport Officer, Commodore More Molyneux being the Senior Naval Officer who was in command of a squadron of small ships mainly drawn from the East Indian Station. We slept and messed on board a British India boat that had brought troops from India and had been reserved for the purpose, but except for a certain amount of sleep and extremely regular meals, we were never on board her. Captain Fellowes, and his Second in Command, Commander Morrison, who had commanded the *Helicon* at Alexandria and had been promoted, directed our labours. Two of the lieutenants did the work of harbour masters and brought the transports in and out of the coral reefs that formed the passage into the little harbour of Souakim. Their work was never-ending, from the time the sun was well up until shortly before nightfall. Even they, with all their skill and experience, could not take ships in and out when the sun was low, for the

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conning of the ships had to be done entirely by eye, and when a low sun was glimmering on the water it became impossible to see the edges of the reef; and on the rare occasions when, owing to the great pressure of work, it was necessary to go on when the sun was setting, we were almost invariably faced with a ship ashore on the reef, and a long day's work with tugs would ensue, to grind her off.

The rest of us were in charge of gangs of natives who did the work of unloading stores and of landing all sorts of transport animals, from camels to the little Indian bullocks that had been sent for the Indian transport. We toiled from sunrise to sunset under a blazing sun, and it was certainly a strenuous life. Nevertheless, I personally enjoyed my time immensely up to the moment when it began to dawn upon me that the whole Expedition was an imposture, and that the more stuff we landed the more we should have to re-embark again. The gang of which I usually had charge consisted of Egyptian prisoners, who were daily marched down to their work by an armed party of Turkish soldiers. I used to love the procedure of the armed guard. Being practical men and also remarkably lazy ones, the men of the guard invariably made the prisoners carry their rifles!

Shortly after our arrival I succeeded in annexing a stray pony which I found wandering about the beach, apparently belonging to no one in particular. At the same time I secured the services of a beach-comber in the shape of a retired soldier, also found on the beach, and him I made my groom.

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There was any amount of forage littered about, so with a pony tethered to my tent and a man to look after him, I could always, when there was a spare moment, ride out to the lines and see what was going on.

On the 20th March, a very few days after we arrived at Souakim, General Sir Gerald Graham, who was Commander-in-Chief, ordered a reconnaissance on Hashin to be made in force, Hashin being a collection of huts about seven and a half miles from Souakim. I managed to get a day's leave and rode out with my friends of the 5th Lancers, but as my pony was not capable of keeping up with the big English horses of the Lancers, I left them after a short time and attached myself to the Guards' Brigade, amongst whose officers I had various friends. Inside the Guards' square I found General Lord Abinger, who had commanded a battalion of the Scots Fusilier Guards in the Crimea ; he had contrived to come out to Souakim, and had ridden out to be with his old regiment. Another friend of mine in that square, as a spectator, was Lieutenant Alfred Paget, who was serving on board a gun-vessel in the harbour. He, like myself, had got a day's leave to go out and see the fun, and had attached himself to the Scots Guards, in which regiment his brother, now General Sir Arthur Paget, was serving. At one time it looked as if there was going to be a real action, for some 150 Soudanese, with the greatest gallantry, charged the Guards' Brigade. Naturally, the fire with which they were received was more than they could stand, and those who were not shot down bolted and



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fled. It seemed to the spectator that the action was somewhat futile, for though some zeriba posts were established, the works were dismantled again, the place was abandoned a few days afterwards, and, as far as the day was concerned, the force having marched some seven miles out were marched back again, and we reached our base about six in the evening.

There were a certain number of casualties from what I judged to be long-range rifle fire, and, packed as the square was with transport, it presented a wonderful target even to very inferior marksmen. As Lord Abinger remarked at the time: "he had often heard of men shooting so badly that they could not hit a haystack, but nobody could miss a farm-yard."

Two days afterwards the action known as McNeill's Zareba was fought. I was not able to see anything of it. At the time it became a source of much controversy, but anyhow it was not altogether without results. For though we lost an enormous number of transport animals, 900 camels alone being killed, the Soudanese lost very heavily, over 1000 bodies being left on the field.

We laboured on throughout the rest of the months of March and April, landing stores, now supplemented by the necessary materials for the much-discussed Souakim to Berber Railway. Some advance was made with that railway; at one time it reached as far as Otao, eighteen miles from the base, but when, early in May, Lord Wolseley arrived on the scene, it became apparent to us all that the end was approaching.

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Gradually the navvies were withdrawn and sent back to England; many store ships, with railway material that, mercifully, had not been unloaded, were sent home. The Commander-in-Chief left on the 17th of May, and by the end of that month all the troops, with the exception of the Berkshire Regiment and a few Indian troops, who were left behind to garrison Souakim, had departed.

Captain Royle, in his book on the Egyptian Campaigns 1882 to 1899, mentions in a footnote that Osman wrote to the Madhi that "God struck fear into the hearts of the English and they went away." And small wonder if Osman was able to boast in 1885, as he had previously done in 1884, that he had driven the British out of the country.

Captain Royle in another footnote gives the extra cost of the expedition as over two millions, and the cost of the Souakim—Berber Railway (including pipe and water lines), which, as mentioned before, was actually laid for eighteen miles, as over £865,000. This cost was incurred over and above the normal charge for the maintenance of the troops concerned. In the interests of economy it is pleasant to know that a small portion of the eighteen miles of line was picked up and re-shipped, to be used afterwards for some years as a light railway at Shorncliffe Camp, to take the men down to the sea to bathe.

Early in June the work of the Naval Transport came to an end. I remember well the last evening I spent there. I walked round the scene of our four months' hard labour with my chief, Captain Fellowes,

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and thought that never had the forage which had fallen into the water, and the general debris on the beach, smelt more abominably. It was not for nothing that my sense of smell was so acute, for next morning I was down with fever. It was bad luck to be knocked out just as the work was finished, but so it was, and the climate of the Red Sea in the month of June is not the best in the world for a speedy recovery. However, I was packed up in a horrible little transport that was bound for Suez, and after a very long passage managed to reach Cairo. There was an old Indian doctor on board in charge of the odds and ends of troops and invalids, who had served all his life in India, and thoroughly understood the treatment of fever. His method, if drastic, was certainly efficient. Every two hours he used to appear with a huge tumbler of champagne and quinine and insist on its being swallowed. For the whole week that I was on board I was more or less insensible from the strength of this mixture, but after a couple of days in Cairo in a decent bed I was quite well again, though much pulled down, and was able to proceed home overland by way of Venice.

Barring the natural resentment we all felt at having laboured for months in the sun in unloading stores for an Expedition that was never intended to succeed, I personally have otherwise nothing but pleasant recollections of Souakim. Some of the finest men in the world were out there. I found many old friends, and made some new ones, one of whom remained a great ally of mine until his death two years ago. I refer

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to Lieutenant Alfred Paget, who died as Admiral Sir Alfred Paget. He also deserved the title of the bravest of the brave. When not on duty at Souakim he used to amuse himself by going into the dense bush outside our lines for the purpose of shooting sand grouse and gazelle. The bush was supposed to be crawling with Soudanese, but the old proverb of "where there is no fear there is no danger" held good in his case, and he was never interfered with. Years afterwards he was Naval Attaché at Washington during the American-Spanish War, and of course managed to see as much fighting as was possible. When the war came to an end, at a big dinner at which he was one of the guests, after the usual patriotic toasts had been honoured, the General Officer presiding at the dinner asked all present to charge their glasses to drink the health of the bravest man they had met during the campaign. No one had any idea whose name was to be coupled with this toast. The name was that of Captain Alfred Paget, Royal Navy, Naval Attaché at Washington. Surely one of the most graceful compliments that ever was paid to a British officer! and none who knew him could doubt how thoroughly it had been deserved. In the recent war he sank his rank of Admiral, and (until bad health compelled him to give up), served as a Commander of various patrol vessels and mine-sweepers. He died very suddenly at the age of sixty-seven.

Shortly after arriving in England I looked in at 87, St. James's Street, to see my old friends. Thinking to enlist their compassion I informed them that,

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owing to hard work and fever, I had lost twenty pounds, upon which I was told that twenty pounds could be easily lost in less than an hour there, and that, very rightly, was the only sign of sympathy that I could extract from them.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE CHANNEL FLEET AND MEDITERRANEAN STATION

AFTER a short leave I was appointed to the *Minotaur*, the Flagship of the Channel Squadron, and found myself once more as a watch-keeping lieutenant at sea, very pleased at having successfully eluded an examination in high mathematics at Greenwich.

My time in the *Minotaur* was one of the happiest of the whole of my service afloat. She flew the flag of Vice-Admiral Charles Fellowes, one of the most popular admirals in the Navy. My Souakim employer, John Fellowes, was Flag-Captain, and amongst the lieutenants were my old friend, Jimmy Startin, previously alluded to, and an old Red Sea comrade, Oliver Young by name. Oliver was a great character. Very good-looking, standing well over six feet, and of gigantic strength, he was passionately fond of fighting whenever a decent opportunity occurred; but at the same time he was no bully, and never exercised his great skill and strength except in a good cause. There were many amusing stories about him, and one of the best was the following:—

At one period of his career he was appointed as Junior Lieutenant to a gunboat in the Mediterranean, whose First-Lieutenant had the reputation of being the most disagreeable Commanding Officer in the Service,

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and one who always made life as unpleasant as possible to the unfortunate beings who were compelled to serve under his orders. Oliver, when he joined, was perfectly aware of this fact. On joining the gunboat, when pacing the deck with his new Commanding Officer, who, of course, had not yet had time to show the cloven hoof, Oliver began to expatiate on the joys of serving on a small craft, to his mind the only life in the Navy that was really agreeable. He went on to say that as long as everybody lived in harmony no life could be pleasanter. He mentioned that he had been received in the most charming way by his new mess-mates, and felt certain that he was going to be extremely happy in his new post. Then he pensively added: "Of course, it is only one's own fault if anybody on board makes himself disagreeable; nothing is easier, on a dark night, than to catch hold of the delinquent and just drop him overboard, and that settles the matter." The First-Lieutenant said nothing, but being a little man, hardly reaching up to Oliver's shoulder, he thought a great deal, and for the rest of the commission treated his big subordinate with the greatest consideration.

Not long after the *Minotaur* days, Oliver left the Service and went into Parliament. But he never really recovered from a bad sunstroke that laid him low at Souakim, and, to the great regret of his many friends, both ashore and afloat, he died at a comparatively early age. Another old *Minotaur* friend was Sir Charles Cust, then a midshipman, now Naval Equerry to His Majesty.

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We were extremely well off for lieutenants in the flagship, so the watch-keeping was far less onerous than in the *Superb*, the result being, that leave ashore was much easier to obtain. Nearly the whole winter was spent up the Tagus, and of Lisbon and its surroundings I have the most pleasant recollections. We had a wonderful Opera Season, with those incomparable artists, Mesdames Patti and Scalchi as prima donna and contralto, the primo tenore being the great Massini, one of the finest tenors of his days. We arranged a very comfortable omnibus box at the Opera for ourselves, and as an enterprising native had started an establishment where roulette was nightly played for the special benefit (?) of the officers of the Fleet, and as there was pigeon-shooting at the Sporting Club every Sunday, we certainly had plenty of distractions. It was at the Sporting Club there, that I first had the honour of making the acquaintance of King Carlos, who was so foully murdered years afterwards in the streets of his capital. He was a fine pigeon shot, and I was destined later on to see him shooting in Norfolk, where his skill with the gun became quite a topic of conversation.

But perhaps the happiest recollections of all were of the frequent visits we used to pay to Cintra, where we were treated by the English hotel-keeper and his family with the greatest kindness, and, moreover, on what can only be described as the "most favoured nation" terms. Among the many beautiful gardens in which we were allowed to stroll about was that belonging to the Villa of Monserrate, which had originally belonged to Beckford, the author of *Vathek*. It had been sub-



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sequently acquired by the family of the present Sir Frederick Cook. The present baronet, I believe, still retains the title of Vicomte de Monserrate. I remember the guide always used to explain: "Dis de villa of Vicomte de Monserrate, Mr. Cookey English!"

But there is no need for me to write at length on the beauties of Cintra. Many have written about it; many more have seen that lovely mountain of verdure that springs from what is apparently an absolutely arid plain. To me it simply remains as one of the most beautiful places I have ever seen, and one where I spent many happy days.

But life on board the *Minotaur* was very far from consisting entirely of amusement. Although we continued to use Lisbon as our headquarters, the Squadron constantly went to sea for short cruises and firing-practice. Moreover, sail-drill went on with almost the same regularity as when I joined the Service. The *Minotaur* had three full-rigged masts, to say nothing of two light masts further aft, and I, to my great delight, was in charge of one of the three. She also possessed a very fine clear upper deck, so, when not competing with other ships of the squadron, we could compete one mast against the other, to our great satisfaction. My mind still dwells with pleasure on the days of the old sailing frigates, and even on those of the rigged ironclads that succeeded them. The *Minotaur* was to end sail-drill so far as I was concerned, as, after leaving her, I never served in a rigged ship again.

After a very pleasant winter, we started on a cruise,

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the first port of call being Gibraltar. Our Admiral had latterly been far from well, and on the way to Gibraltar was taken seriously ill. Shortly after we arrived at Gibraltar there was a sudden collapse, and he died, deeply to the regret of the officers and men of his squadron. The *Minotaur* was lying alongside the Mole, and for the first time since the *Victory* lay there with the mortal remains of Nelson on board, an admiral's flag was to be seen flying half-masted in that historic bay. His funeral having been ordered to take place in England, the *Minotaur* proceeded to Portsmouth with the utmost dispatch. The funeral of a Flag-Officer, dying on service, is an impressive affair, as becomes the rank of the deceased and the extreme rarity of the occasion, there is something moving in the spectacle of the hoisting out of the coffin, while the flag flutters slowly down, not to be hoisted again until a successor comes on board to take over the command.

Our new Admiral turned out to be Sir William Hewett, V.C., a very distinguished officer, who had won his Victoria Cross as a mate in the Crimea. He had been lately commanding the naval forces on the East Indian Station, and during the first Egyptian campaign had been responsible for the occupation of Suez and the operations that were terminated by the middle of August 1882 to complete our occupation of the Canal. In February 1884, after Baker's defeat at El Teb, he had landed a Naval Brigade at Souakim for the protection of the town, and had accompanied Sir Gerald Graham when he fought a successful action

## Channel Fleet and Mediterranean Station

there, a fortnight later. Greatly to our satisfaction, Captain Fellowes remained on with him as Flag-Captain.

In the days of which I am writing the ignorance of the British public of everything regarding the Navy can only be described as colossal. Of course at great naval ports, such as Chatham, Portsmouth and Plymouth, the Navy was well known, but outside those three areas lived a huge public who had never seen a man-of-war, and hardly ever seen a sailor unless he happened to be on leave, and in plain clothes. The public took not the slightest interest in anything that concerned that Force, which (in the words of the special prayer that is read daily on the quarter-deck of every ship in the Service) enables the British public—in other words “the inhabitants of our Island”—to live in such security that they “may in peace and quietness serve Thee our God.” I am completely unaware if it is generally known that the insertion of this Prayer amongst other forms of prayer to be used at sea, in our Liturgy, was due to the action of the Long Parliament. The gorgeous language and rhetorical style of the whole Prayer is worthy of those great days, when England was so mighty abroad. Oliver Cromwell, one of the finest soldiers of the world, was keenly alive to the importance of Sea Power, and always maintained a strong Navy.

I suppose the Admiralty thought it was nearly time that the public should see something of one of the Forces for which they paid taxes, and consequently the Channel Squadron was ordered to cruise round the

## Looking Back

coasts of England and Scotland, besides which it was conveyed to those in command that every facility was to be given to enable sight-seers to visit the various ships of the Fleet to their hearts' content. At some ports, Glasgow in particular, the tourists came literally in thousands, and of course converted the ships into temporary pigsties and bear gardens ; but any trifling inconvenience of that sort was more than amply repaid by the universal kindness and hospitality that we received everywhere. The officers were invited to shoot over moors, of which, up to that time, they had only dreamt, and the men were lavishly entertained by all sorts of municipal authorities, and kind people in the neighbourhood.

I personally, was in luck's way, as the shooting part of the business was generally put into the hands of the Flag-Captain, and, being an old friend, perhaps I got rather more than my fair share. Anyhow, I can remember a first-rate grouse drive over one of Sir Michael Shaw Stewart's best beats at Ardnagowan, and, later on, when the Fleet lay at Cromarty Firth, a party of us stayed with Ross of Cromarty, at Cromarty House, and had a capital day's mixed shooting. The Fleet was also magnificently entertained at a ball during our stay in the Firth, the great magnates of the district, including the then Duke of Sutherland, the grandfather of the present Duke, figuring amongst the hosts. Later on, whilst lying in the Firth of Forth, a party of us went to Selkirk, staying a night at the hotel there, for the purpose of shooting over one of the low-lying moors that the Duke of Buccleugh had placed at our disposal.

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Without exception it was the best mixed day's shooting in which I have ever taken part. It was early in October, and towards the end of the day we were just off the moor itself, beating a small cover for pheasants, and then I saw a sight which personally I have never seen since. The beaters had included in their drive not only the cover before mentioned but also a large stubble field. Being late in the evening, the black game and grouse from the moors had got down to the stubble to feed on the stooks. The result was that, driven to the guns, and all in the air at the same time, were to be seen black game, pheasants, grouse and partridges.

A little later on we were anchored off the Norfolk coast, and the last shoot of the trip was from Yarmouth, where that splendid old sportsman, Mr. Fellowes of Shotesham, provided the sport. The Flag-Captain was a relative of Mr. Fellowes, and once more I was fortunate enough to be of the party. We were given a fine day's partridge-driving by the Squire of Shotesham, and personally I am glad to have known, if only for a few hours, a man who, in his day, was not only one of the best shots in the kingdom, but who also had the reputation of being able to ride a half-broken three-year-old that was in the process of learning its future business as a hunter, better than any one else in this country.

The visit to Yarmouth having terminated, the squadron was presently back at Portsmouth again, and during the winter certain changes were made among the officers, notably in the case of the Captain. It had been arranged that Captain Fellowes was to go out to the Mediterranean as Flag-Captain to Admiral H.R.H.

## Looking Back

the Duke of Edinburgh, who had been selected for the important post of Commander-in-Chief of that Station. So, at the end of 1885, he left, much to our regret, and was succeeded by Captain Bouverie-Clark. On board the *Minotaur* we soon found out that, sorry as we might be to lose our old Captain, we had really lost nothing by the exchange, for his successor was one of the most charming men I ever served with.

Vice-Admiral Sir Bouverie-Clark, as he now is, had managed to see as much active service as had been possible in the days of his youth, for, as a midshipman, he had been present at the bombardment of Sveaborg in the Baltic during the Crimean war, had later on greatly distinguished himself by his gallantry when employed on the East Coast of Africa in the suppression of the Slave Trade, and was also an officer in the Naval Brigade that was landed during the New Zealand War in the early 'sixties. He was finally Director of Transports at the Admiralty for a period of five years, from 1906 onwards.

The remaining six months which I spent in the *Minotaur* were uneventful, but another change was about to be made, as in July 1886 I was appointed as First-Lieutenant to H.M. Dispatch Vessel *Surprise*, then a brand-new ship.

The *Surprise* and her sister ship, the *Alacrity*, were built to replace respectively the old dispatch boats *Helicon* and *Vigilant*, which had been serving for years on the Mediterranean and China Stations. Commander Charles le Strange, a very old friend of the *Sultan* days, was in command of the *Surprise*. He had recently



GROUP ON BOARD H.M.S. "SURPRISE"

Lt. Hon. S. Fortescue      H.R.H. Duchess of Edinburgh      Com. Hon. M. Bourke  
Admiral H.R.H. Duke of Edinburgh      Lady Mary Fitzwilliam





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become an Equerry to H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh, who had already taken over the command of the Mediterranean Station.

The *Surprise* was a fairly useful vessel in many respects and could have been made much better had not the Admiralty thought fit to arm her with four or five  $4\frac{1}{2}$ -inch guns, which she really was unfit to carry; the weight might well have been utilised in other directions. The accommodation aft for distinguished passengers was very good, and when in harbour, as far as they were concerned, she was a very nice yacht; but at sea, when steaming at any speed, the vibration was so terrific, that very few of them could stand being aft, and they generally used to come on the bridge and camp out there, which was not always very convenient to the officers who were carrying out their duties. However, the sea trips were generally short, and on the whole she answered very well, and only disappeared from service a few years ago. Having commissioned her, I was of course on board during her steam trials. With picked coal, and, moreover, with (what is more important still) picked stokers, she succeeded in going about eighteen knots on the measured mile, and under the same favourable circumstances did quite well on her six hours' full-speed trial, averaging nearly sixteen knots. But we were to be bitterly disappointed in her performances later on. Without adventitious aids she turned out to be a very moderate steamer and not the best of sea boats. The first distinguished passenger we were ordered to embark was the Duke of Connaught. His Royal Highness

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was about to start for India, and wishing to curtail the length of his journey, decided to travel to Marseilles overland, from thence to be conveyed to Malta in the *Surprise*, where he could hit off the P. & O. steamer which was to take him to his destination. It became a question of accurate timing, as the P. & O. boats were in the habit of staying but very few hours at Malta. Consequently, the question arose of the number of hours it would take the *Surprise* to go from Marseilles to Malta. The Captain and I put our heads together, and though we were much too old hands at the game to place very implicit reliance in full-speed trials as conducted by the Admiralty, we thought we could safely guarantee an average speed of thirteen knots, which seemed to leave a very fair margin up our sleeves. About the end of August we left the port of Marseilles with our Royal passenger on board, steaming gaily some fourteen and a half knots. The heat was very great, and the stokers, though very willing, were mostly young hands, the coal was very far from being picked, so the speed of the ship, in spite of every effort, gradually got lower and lower, and we finally crawled into Malta at the ignoble speed of about ten knots, a good many hours late. It was a very mortifying début to make on our station, and it was a long time before we heard the last of it.

People interested in the Navy, who read the official accounts of the trials of new ships that always used to be published in *The Times*, may gather from this sad experience what a difference there is in actual practice between the performances that are published,

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and what is apt to be realised later on under normal conditions. (Eye-wash again !)

From 1886 to 1888, during my term of service on board the *Surprise*, the Mediterranean Station was at its zenith as regards strength and importance. It had been looked upon for many years as the Blue Ribbon of the Navy, and as regards the person of the Commander-in-Chief, it naturally gained additional éclat from the fact that no less a personage than H.R.H. Vice-Admiral the Duke of Edinburgh, the second son of Queen Victoria, was Commander-in-Chief, with the local rank of Admiral. His Royal Highness had hoisted his flag in February 1886 in the *Alexandra*, and in addition to her had seven of the most modern of our armour-clad ships under his command, with a considerable number of small craft, principally employed on service in the Red Sea. The Admiral and many of his Captains have joined the majority, but amongst others who are still with us, are the present Admiral Sir Compton Domville, then Captain of the *Temeraire*, and subsequently Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Station; Admiral Sir Henry Stephenson,\* now Usher of the Black Rod, then commanding the *Dreadnought*, had under his orders our present King, serving as a Lieutenant on board that ship; Admiral of the Fleet Sir Hedworth Meux, then Commander Lambton, in command of the *Dolphin* sloop; another Admiral, now the Marquis of Milford Haven, was, as Prince Louis of Battenberg,

\* Since these lines were written, Sir H. Stephenson is another of my old friends who has passed away.

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Commander of the *Dreadnought* ; while prominent among the Lieutenants serving in the different ships were the late Admirals Sir George Warrender, and Sir Frederick Hamilton, and the late Captain the Hon. Hugh Tyrwhitt. Admirals Sir Cecil Colville, Sir Colin Keppel and Sir James Startin, all of whose names have already occurred in these notes, Midshipman David Beatty of the *Alexandra*, now Admiral of the Fleet Earl Beatty, are still, I am rejoiced to think, very much alive.

Malta, where I was to spend a great deal of my life for the next two years, was very gay. The Duchess of Edinburgh passed the whole of the winter there. The Governor had temporarily made over the palace of San Antonio, with its wonderful orange gardens, to the Duke and Duchess during their stay at Malta, so it was there that I first had the honour of making the acquaintance of Her Imperial Highness and her children. Her two eldest daughters were then only about eleven and twelve years of age, but already gave promise of great beauty ; indeed, the eldest, the present Queen of Roumania, was, and still is, one of the most beautiful and attractive women in the world. The Duchess herself, if I may take the liberty of saying so, was, and is, a very remarkable woman. For the only daughter of the Emperor Alexander (in those days the greatest potentate in the world), it was in some ways rather a step downwards to marry a second son, even though he was the son of Queen Victoria ; and, moreover, to be in a certain sense merely the wife of an Admiral when the Duke was employed

## Channel Fleet and Mediterranean Station

on the duties of his profession ; but she certainly succeeded, in her position as wife to the Commander-in-Chief, in making herself extremely popular with the Naval Officers at Malta. The dinners at San Antonio were infinitely more agreeable and less stiff than the sort of entertainments which were generally given at the various Admiralty Houses that I have known, and a command to dine there was not only an honour but a very distinct pleasure into the bargain.

Her Imperial Highness, like most of her compatriots, adored the South. She was devoted to Italian art, and lost no opportunity of seeing everything that was worth seeing in Italy and Sicily, and were I to catalogue all the interesting places that the *Surprise* visited in the course of two years, sometimes in company with the rest of the Fleet, and sometimes on detached cruises "on her own," the result would be like nothing in the world so much as a portion of "Baedeker" on Italy.

But before saying anything more about trips, the main interest of which consisted in seeing some of the wonders of Italy, I must write of two or three cruises that were nothing if not official.

The first important duty which devolved on the *Surprise*, very shortly after her arrival on the station, was to convey the Admiral, in his dual capacity as a son of Queen Victoria and also as Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean, to pay an official visit to the Sultan. This visit was a very interesting one, and though I do not pretend to any inside knowledge of the motives which inspired it, or made its recurrence

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necessary, the following year, I have a shrewd suspicion that what was evident to any spectator, was not very far remote from the truth. The late Sir Edward Thornton, who was then our Ambassador to the Sublime Port, had served his country with great distinction and held many important posts. He had been Ambassador both at Washington and Petersburg, but none the less it is possible that, being a remarkably straightforward English gentleman, that hotbed of intrigue and lies, the Turkish Capital, was not exactly the place for him. At any rate, it was noticeable, even to an outsider like myself, that the Duke's reception was distinctly of a cold nature. The last function of the visit consisted in a dinner at the Yildiz Kiosque, at which the Duke was the guest of the evening, most of his officers, I being one of the number, being included in the dinner party. There was considerable delay when the Englishmen arrived at the palace, and finally the Sultan sent a message to say that he was unwell and unable to be present. There was nothing for it but to dine, and it certainly seemed to me as if the honours of the house were done by Monsieur Nelidoff, the Russian Ambassador, who was known to be all-powerful at that moment, and having been there for a good many years, was the natural doyen of the Corps Diplomatique. Apparently, the Government at home were distinctly dissatisfied with the reception that had been accorded to an English Prince, who was also holding a very high official position, and the upshot of it was that Sir Edward Thornton was withdrawn and Sir William White, to whom allusion

## Channel Fleet and Mediterranean Station

has already been made, was appointed in his place. The Duke, to make the outgoing Ambassador's departure more dignified, placed the *Surprise* at his disposal, so, later in the year, towards the end of October, we found ourselves in Turkish waters again. The Ambassador was still at his summer residence at Therapia, and embarked from there with Lady Thornton and his daughters. His departure was certainly impressive enough, for all the "*chers collègues*" came in their state caïques to see him off, and the multitude of floral offerings reminded me of nothing so much as a very expensive funeral. Anyhow, one is glad to think that a very distinguished public servant, under such circumstances, had at any rate a more fitting conveyance than an ordinary mail steamer, though I am not sure that for the long passage, as it was to Marseilles, a mail steamer might not have been a more comfortable ship in which to travel.

Next year the *Surprise* again conveyed the Duke to Constantinople on a similar mission, and this time there was no mistake about the way in which he was received. We had hardly anchored in the Golden Horn, and the usual official callers had barely arrived on board when a huge caïque, with one of the Sultan's Aides-de-Camp, came alongside laden up with every sort of thing—sheep, Turkish sweetmeats, countless cigarettes and cases of champagne—with a message to say that not only was the Duke the Sultan's honoured guest, but that His Majesty wished every officer and man serving on board the *Surprise* to consider himself as a guest as well. The Sultan was, on this occasion,

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present at the dinner at Yildiz and all went well.

Sir William White had lived the greater part of his life in the Middle East and thoroughly understood how to handle the Turk. A diplomatist of that nation once told me the following story which I believe to be absolutely true. On one occasion, during Sir William's reign at Constantinople, the Grand Vizier had come to see him on some business, and the interview had not been a very peaceable one. The Grand Vizier was insisting rather peremptorily on his point when he was suddenly interrupted: "Monsieur le Grand Vizier, je vous defends de me parler sur ce ton là—à la porte!"—and "à la porte" the Grand Vizier went, to return next day in a very chastened spirit to make his submission.

Some of the *Surprise's* cruises are worth mentioning. One of the earliest, with the Duchess on board, after commencing at Naples extended itself to Leghorn and Genoa, from the first of which ports Florence could easily be reached. At Naples in those days the Consul was Mr. Neville-Rolfe. He was intended by Nature to be a Norfolk Squire and to live at his place, Heacham Hall, but fate and falling rents decreed otherwise, so he took up his residence at Naples, where he was Consul for many years. Naturally a keen lover of art, he had in addition made a close study of the late Greek, and early Roman periods, and a more delightful guide to Naples it was impossible to meet. Under his auspices, the Duchess, and we of the ship who were privileged to accompany her, saw Naples in



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a most interesting way. Excavation work was going on (as indeed it nearly always is) at Pompei, and for the benefit of such a distinguished visitor a very promising portion of a Pompeian house was excavated. Talk about sport! Nothing is really more exciting than digging, and I can remember the breathless way we hung over the digger when his delicately handled trowel had obviously met with something worth exhuming. The something was generally a fragment of one of the inevitable amphoræ that are dug up literally by the dozen, (as indeed befits vessels that once contained wine,) and are so common as to be valueless. The result of the investigation that we witnessed was very disappointing, like many another day's sport. The only thing of the smallest interest that we discovered was an ivory make-up box that probably had belonged, some eighteen hundred years ago, to some Pompeian beauty. Baiæ was also visited. It was easy for the *Surprise* to run round and anchor in the bay there, and in fine weather there was no difficulty in landing passengers on the beach in the immediate vicinity of that splendid series of temples.

It is difficult to imagine a more agreeable place for a ship to winter in than was Malta at that time, especially in the *Surprise's* case when a long stay there could be broken by cruises to Sicily and the mainland of Italy. Polo was our principal amusement, and besides a number of keen naval players, among whom must be included our present King, then Prince George of Wales, there were the officers of two or three very sporting regiments, (the Gordon Highlanders in particular,) who

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took an active part in the game, the result being that we were all hard at it two or three times in the week. Fortunately for me, the *Surprise* being looked upon as a sort of tender to the flagship, I generally made one of the *Alexandra* team in ship against ship, and fleet against garrison, matches. I am afraid in those days I was heathen enough to prefer polo to art, and so, much as I liked the cruises, I have to confess that it was a pleasure to get back to Malta and my ponies again. The pony racing, too, was capital fun. Hedworth Lambton, who had then, and still retains, his family's love for the sport, had some good ponies, and many of the officers of the garrison went in for racing very seriously ; any betting that was necessary, could be done on the Indian system of the selling lottery.

But in addition to ponies the Navy had a very valuable racing possession, which amounted almost to a monopoly, namely the best light-weight jockey in the island, in the person of Midshipman David Beatty, who, being of a riding family, had been well brought up by his father—the Major of that name. Major Beatty knew, and no man better, not only all about the animal, horse, but how he should be ridden, and his son had profited to the full by the lessons he had received as a small boy.

And so the winter slipped pleasantly away. The summer of 1887 was made memorable in England by the celebration of Queen Victoria's Jubilee. It was, of course, necessary for the Duke of Edinburgh to be present in England during the period of the festivities, so in June the *Surprise* conveyed him to Marseilles *en*

## Channel Fleet and Mediterranean Station

*route* to London. The *Surprise* was directed to remain at Marseilles until his expected return in a week's time. Meanwhile, the Fleet was ordered to the Balearic Islands, where he could rejoin it and continue the summer cruise which had just begun. The port of La Joliette where we lay was somewhat malodorous and stuffy in the month of June, so, as soon as the Admiral had left the ship, the Captain and I decided to take a few days' leave, he being bent on going to Paris, whilst I selected Monte Carlo. I duly returned the night before the *Surprise* was timed to sail, and, arriving on board heard, rather to my surprise, that the Captain had not yet appeared. However, as he had talked of going to Paris I came to the conclusion that he had arranged to meet the Duke there and would travel back with him. The *Surprise* was made ready for sea in the morning to move out the moment the Admiral was on board, and the officers were duly fallen in to meet him at the gangway, when it was noticed that the Captain was not in the boat. As he stepped on board the Admiral's first question was the very natural one: "Where's the Captain?" Of course no answer was forthcoming; the only things to do were to inform the Consul in case there had been any foul play, and to acquaint the Admiralty, both of which were done.

The *Surprise* at once proceeded on her way, and I received an acting-commission as Commander, pending the time when a new one could be appointed and join. Of course it was very pleasant to be in command, and I could only hope that the Admiralty would be a long

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time considering who they could appoint to supersede me ; but meanwhile we were all greatly distressed about our missing Captain. Personally, I was devoted to him. Clever and agreeable, with a strong artistic sense which he had inherited from his father, the Squire of Hunstanton, who had been himself no mean frescoist in his time, I am deeply indebted to him for giving me my first introduction to the great painters and sculptors of Italy, of whose work he had made an intimate study, and a more interesting and amusing cicerone never existed. It turned out that instead of going to Paris he had betaken himself to Avignon, to visit the numerous antiquities there. The weather was very hot, and a sunstroke had been followed by brain fever. Many days passed before his family succeeded in tracing him, and, though he recovered, and served again as Commander of an ironclad in the Mediterranean, he was never quite the same man again. It was not many years later that I was one of the mourners at his graveside when he was buried in the churchyard that lay close to his beautiful old home in Norfolk.

The Admiral, having rejoined his Fleet and been transhipped to his flagship, continued the summer cruise ; but the *Surprise* was ordered off to Cadiz to be placed at the disposal of our Ambassador to Spain, the late Sir Clare Ford. The King of Spain had decided to open a maritime exhibition which was to be held at Cadiz, and there being a tremendous run on all the hotel accommodation there, the Duke, with his usual kindness, lent his dispatch boat to the Am-

## Channel Fleet and Mediterranean Station

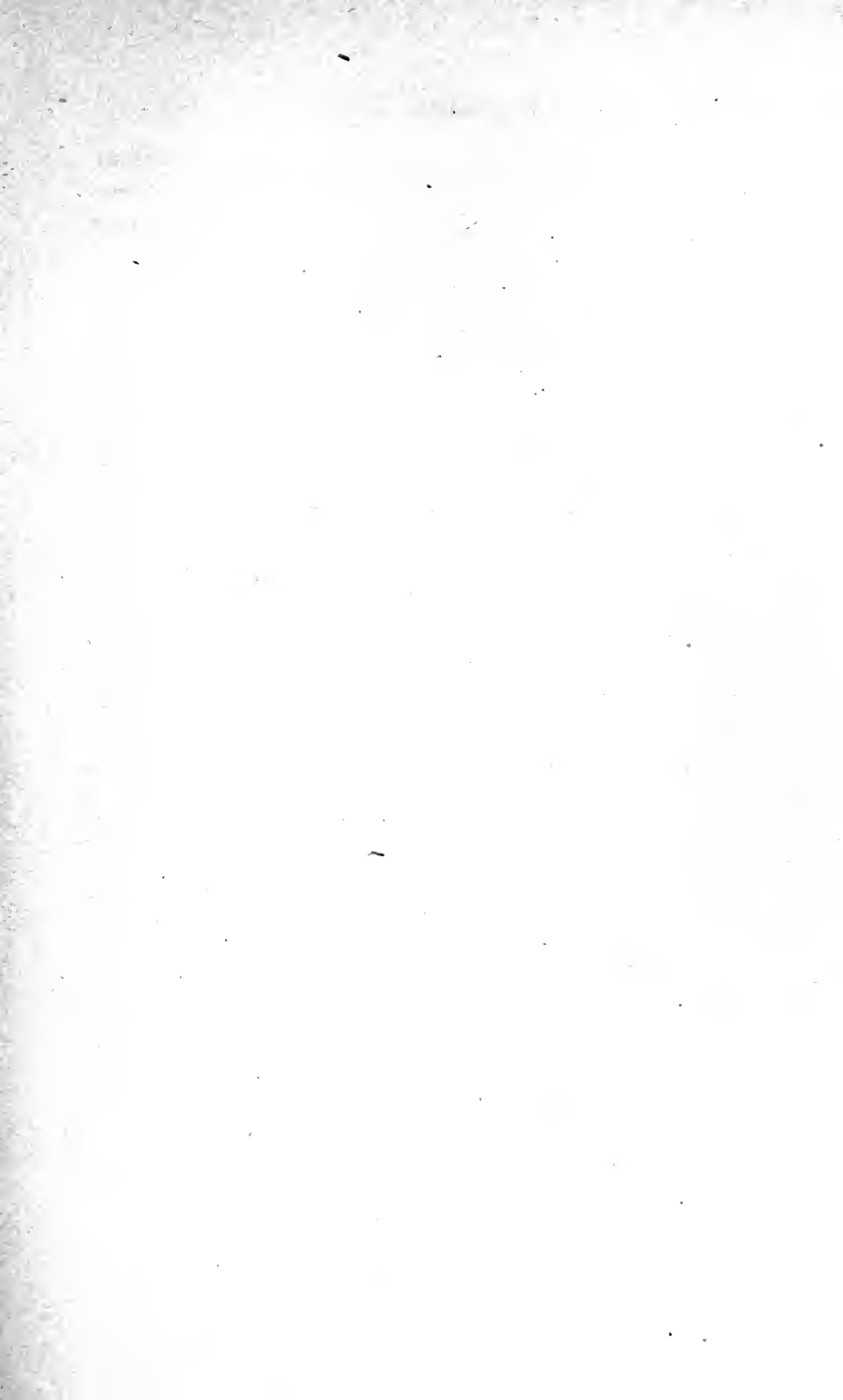
bassador to be used as a temporary residence. Accordingly, Sir Clare and his son, Mr. Johnny Ford, took up their abode on board for a few days, while the festivities were taking place. The rest of the personnel of the Embassy had, I believe, billeted themselves on the many hospitable Englishmen connected with the Xeres wine trade, who lived in the neighbourhood. Sir Clare and his son were both very agreeable guests, and I continued to see a good deal of Johnny (as he was always called) until the time of his death, a short time ago. He served for some years in the Diplomatic Service, but his health broke down completely, owing, I have always heard, to some mysterious ailment which he was unfortunate enough to contract whilst serving at our Legation in Persia. He was very clever, and a well-known figure in the more artistic side of London Society. Sir Clare, at Madrid, was very much the right man in the right place, for he knew the country well; his father had lived there many years, and was responsible for that delightful book, *Wanderings in Spain*, which I have always heard was the precursor of all the Murray Guide Books. Would that all guide books were written with such a light and amusing pen.

The "Festa" at Cadiz came to an end like all other "Festas," and so did my brief term of command, for in the first days of August our newly appointed Captain, Commander the Honourable Maurice Bourke, superseded me, and I reverted to my old duties of First-Lieutenant. Again Providence had been kind to the *Surprise*, as our new Captain was one of the most charming and beloved of men. At one time his career

## Looking Back

was almost a synonym for good luck. Everything had gone well with him. Very good-looking, with all the charm of the best sort of Irishman, one of the smartest and ablest officers afloat, he seemed inevitably destined to hold in turn every high command that the Navy in those days could offer. And then came a run of the most persistent ill-fortune. Not long after I left the *Surprise* she was badly in collision with a merchant steamer. It was not in the very remotest way the fault of the Captain, but at the same time it was an unpleasant incident. A very few years afterwards he was Flag-Captain to Sir George Tryon, when that terrible *Victoria* and *Camperdown* collision occurred, which cost so much loss of life, and, moreover, so much loss of reputation. Again, poor Maurice Bourke could not be blamed, but none the less he was the Captain of the ship in fault. He was unlucky for the third time later on, when Senior Officer in the *Newfoundland*, though the mishap to his ship was trifling. Unfortunately, his health had suffered greatly by the long immersion he had undergone, and the shock he had sustained, at the sinking of the *Victoria*, and he died, alas! at a comparatively early age. If it is ever true to write of a man, that he died regretted by all who knew him, I think it might be written of him. To me he was the kindest of friends and captains, and I was one of the very many who mourned his loss sincerely.

One of our new Captain's earliest jobs was to convey the Duke and Duchess to Venice, and we lay, I think, for nearly a fortnight off the Lido. It really was an ideal way of visiting Venice, and though I had been





GROUP ON BOARD H.M.S. "SURPRISE" AT VENICE, 1887

Marquis of Lorne  
Lt. Hon. S. Fortescue  
Hon. Mrs. Monson  
H.R.H. Duke of Edinburgh  
Com. Hon. M. Bourke  
H.R.H. Princess Charlotte of Saxe-Meiningen  
H.R.H. Prince George of Wales  
H.R.H. Duchess of Edinburgh



## Channel Fleet and Mediterranean Station

there before, and have seen it many times since, it certainly was one of my happiest remembrances of that most entrancing of cities. To begin with, the surroundings of the Lido make an ideal berth for a yacht. Being outside the mouth of the Grand Canal, there is plenty of air, and the open water is clearer and cleaner than that in the narrower parts of the canal system. It is not only a convenient place from which to go sight-seeing, but it is near the famous bathing-place. Moreover, there was a very pleasant party on board. The guests were Prince George of Wales, Princess Charlotte of Saxe Meiningen, and the late Duke of Argyll ; Lady Monson, then the Honourable Mrs. Monson, being in attendance on the Duchess.

Another very delightful trip the *Surprise* made was to the Riviera, to enable the Duchess to see something of her numerous relations and friends who were wintering there. Cannes, Nice and Monte Carlo at that time literally swarmed with Russians. It seemed as if half the Imperial Family had quartered themselves on that sunny coast. The Russian aristocracy, like any other conglomeration of individuals, may not have been a faultless institution ; but, individually and collectively, I have always found the members of it the most agreeable people in the world. Free from prejudice, very cosmopolitan, speaking every language with equal facility, and entirely (to use an American expression) "without frills." No foreigners I have ever met are so easy to get on with, for they have the knack of putting even the shyest and most insular of Englishmen at his ease, and it is an additional comfort

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to Englishmen, who, as a rule, know no language except their own, to be dealing with people who speak our language like natives. It was at Cannes that I first came much into contact with Russians, but since then I have been attached to several Russian Missions that have been in London, and even now I have a few good friends left who have managed to escape from the Bolsheviks. I remember being attached to the Russian suite of one of the Royalties who came on a Mission here. There being no room at Buckingham Palace, they were quartered at the hotel of that name, but of course were expected to take their meals at the palace, together with the suites of the other missions who were representing their various countries. I thought it my duty to go to the hotel every day to see if my friends required any attention, but I might just as well have saved myself the trouble. The invariable answer to my questions as to whether they would like to dine or take luncheon at the palace, or required carriages to take them about, was a polite one to the effect that they could quite well look after themselves, and as far as conveyances were concerned they infinitely preferred hansoms to royal carriages. The principal reason why the men of the upper classes in Russia are so easy to get on with, is, that they are, with rare exceptions, gentlemen, and it is as uncommon to meet a vulgar snob among them as it would be to meet a gentleman among the same number and class of Germans.

But I must return to Cannes. No sooner had the Duchess arrived at Cannes than she was surrounded by

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her relatives, who not only entertained her, but were more than kind to the officers on board. I remember a dinner party given for her at the Villa Venden, then the property of the late Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, who had married the Grand Duchess Anastasie of Russia, sister to the Grand Duke Michael, who has lived for so many years in England, and is so well known and popular here. Among many other distinguished guests was the Duke of Mecklenburg's sister, the Grand Duchess Vladimir, who is also very well known in London and Paris. The Duke of Mecklenburg, who was compelled by ill-health always to winter on the Riviera, was, though a German, a gentleman, an almost unique case so far as my experience is concerned. It has been my misfortune to meet a great many Boches in my time, but I can truthfully say that one of the only gentlemen that I ever met amongst them was our host of that evening.

After dinner there was dancing, which went on until very late, and eventually we, the officers of the *Surprise*, got on board our ship in the dawn, thinking that anyhow after three or four hours' sleep there would be a lazy morning. But we were reckoning without our hosts. At eight o'clock in the morning the Duchess of Mecklenburg and her sister-in-law were alongside to tell us that they had persuaded our Duchess to take them all round to Monte Carlo in the *Surprise*, and that meanwhile they wanted some breakfast, so these undefeated ladies, who could not possibly have been in bed before four o'clock, were four hours later making themselves extremely agreeable to their guests of the

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night before in the tiny wardroom of the *Surprise*. But apparently, however lightly Russians may take life (they perpetually use the word "nitschevo," which corresponds exactly to the Spanish "mañana," and practically means that "nothing matters"), they certainly do not waste it in sleep! Even now I can recall the luncheon party a few hours later at the Hôtel de Paris. Besides the Royalties, there were present a number of agreeable people of every nationality, so what with the brightness of the surroundings, the gaiety of the party, and the number of different languages in which the general conversation was carried on, there resulted a sort of babel, that was very amusing and almost bewildering to the ordinary young naval officer.

On another occasion when the *Surprise* was in these waters the little ship was anchored in that lovely harbour of Ville-franche, midway between Nice and Monte Carlo, and for the moment we happened to have no distinguished visitors on board. Our Boat-swain, Mr. Cunningham (he is such an old friend of mine that I am sure he will forgive me for relating a story about him), had, I thought, been cooped up too long on the ship, for so keen a worker was he that he would remain for months on board without ever going ashore. With great difficulty I persuaded him to come to Monte Carlo with me on the plea that he would see a new side of life that would enlarge his mind (this was certainly true!), and on the understanding that I would give him dinner and not desert him. I duly introduced him to the gambling-rooms

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and gave him dinner, and then, as usually happens at Monte Carlo, we managed to miss each other and I lost sight of him. Of course he could not speak a word of anything but English, but somehow or another, after a series of adventures, he managed to find his way back to the ship just in time to get the anchor up next morning, and all was well. He was a splendid sailor, and it was a great pleasure to meet him again many years afterwards, first as Chief Boatswain of the Royal Yacht, and still later as Lieutenant Cunningham at Osborne College, where he directed the Seamanship Instruction of the Naval Cadets. But though he rose to those giddy heights I feel convinced that he never forgot his trip to Monte Carlo.

Yet another of the *Surprise's* cruises to the Riviera has to be mentioned. Shortly after the New Year of 1888 our little ship anchored off San Remo, the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh being both on board. They had come to visit (and unhappily their visit turned out to be a final one) the Crown Prince of Prussia who was spending the winter there. He left San Remo shortly afterwards to become German Emperor for a reign of three months. The Crown Prince was too ill to return the visit in person, but I can remember the Crown Princess arriving on board and the manifest pleasure that it gave her to find herself once more on board a British man-of-war. Well might the odious people with whom she had been fated to live, call her, in derision, the "Engländerin"; we English, who have grown to know the Germans better, can now appreciate the fact that what

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was intended as an ill-natured sneer was, virtually, a compliment. By the middle of June her husband, the man who, had he lived, might possibly have changed the fate of Europe, was unfortunately dead ; to be succeeded on the throne by his son, that half-megalomaniac, half-mountebank, who, as I write, has taken refuge in a foreign country from those who were once his subjects.

Before temporarily quitting the topic of the German Royal Family, I must mention that some time afterwards, when suffering acutely from one of the numerous German Invasions of Cowes which had become annual visitations during Regatta week, I prophetically offered to take £100 to £1 that I should live to see the German Empire broken up, and it is a lasting regret to me to feel that, now the cataclysm has come, I have altogether forgotten the layer of the bet, who, more than likely, is now not even alive !

Another Mediterranean summer was passed pleasantly enough in cruising, the greater part of the time in company with the Fleet, and then, in early September, I heard, to my great joy, that I had been appointed to the Royal Yacht *Victoria and Albert*. This meant not only certain promotion at the end of two years, but also a very pleasant time in England.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE ROYAL YACHT

At the age of thirty-two, except for my term of service at Greenwich and for a few short turns of weeks or months, I had hardly been in England since I first went to sea as a midshipman, so I was naturally delighted at getting a good spell at home before going abroad again as a Commander, with the prospect of attaining Post rank before I was forty. At that time, I had not the smallest intention of doing anything but serve steadily on in the Navy, with a fair chance of eventually hoisting my flag; however, as every philosopher knows, nobody has any idea of what may be in store for him, and instead of further spells of foreign service it turned out that I had practically returned to England for ever.

The officers of the Royal Yacht were, by tradition, ear-marked for promotion, the Sub-Lieutenants, who were appointed for one season, which practically amounted to only a couple of months, were duly promoted at the end of that time, and generally packed off to sea very soon, as the long half-pay period which existed when I was a young Lieutenant had mercifully come to an end. The two Lieutenants of the Yacht

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remained for two years, and were then promoted, whilst the Commander became a Post-Captain at the end of three years.

And now to say something of my new brother officers, and the ship,—or rather ships,—in which we served. I joined the Royal Yacht in the autumn of 1888 at Portsmouth, where I found my old Admiral, Sir J. Edmund Commerell, installed with his family at Admiralty House as Commander-in-Chief. I was delighted to have the opportunity of renewing my acquaintance with him and making that of Lady Commerell and their daughter. My old Commander of the *Narcissus*, the late Admiral Sir John Fullerton, was in command of Her Majesty's Yacht *Victoria and Albert*, with the *Alberta*, *Elfin*, and *Royal George* as tenders. He remained in charge of Queen Victoria's Yachts as Captain and Admiral from 1884 to the day of Queen Victoria's death, and the last duty he performed afloat was when, in charge of the tiny *Alberta*, he brought the mortal remains of the Great Queen from Osborne, where she died, to Portsmouth on the way to her last resting place at Windsor. He was, for some years afterwards, a Groom-in-Waiting to King Edward, and subsequently an extra Groom-in-Waiting to King George, and died a little over a year ago at his lovely little home at Hamble. Hamble lies up its own little river, which empties itself into the Southampton Water ; it is now a fishing village, but, during the old wars, was a famous ship-building place, and many were the line-of-battleships that were launched from the slips there, of which traces can



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still be seen. It was an ideal place for an old sailor to end his days in.

The *Victoria and Albert* was my old Madeira acquaintance, and, still as beautiful as ever, and though some thirty years of age when I joined her, nothing more perfect in the way of "lines" had yet been produced by any Naval architect. Our Commander was Richard Poore, now Admiral Sir Richard Poore, and the fourth baronet of that name. In after years, besides being Second-in-Command of the Channel Fleet, he was twice a Commander-in-Chief, namely in Australia and at the Nore. The other Lieutenant was Gerald King-Harman, a splendid specimen of an Irishman, and brother to the well-known Member of Parliament of that name. He, poor fellow, knowing that he was suffering from a mortal disease, did his best to break his neck out hunting, all to no purpose; he died shortly after his promotion in 1889.

In those days the *Victoria and Albert* was only inhabited by a small party of caretakers except when she was actually on some cruise, or when the Queen was paying her summer visit to Osborne, during which time the Royal Yacht lay at Cowes in full commission. During the winter stay of the Court at Osborne and during the greater part of the year the officers lived on board the *Royal George*, the old hulk that had been the Royal Yacht in the days of George IV and King William, and all communication with Cowes was carried on either by the tenders, *Alberta* and *Elfn*, or by picket-boat. I loved the old hulk. We were very comfortable, as the officers messed in what had

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been the Royal apartments. She was tiny, but had been built as a miniature copy of the frigates of her day, and had been full rigged. I believe that the last time she was in use as a Royal Yacht was in 1842, when Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort paid their first visit to Scotland. On that occasion the Royal Party embarked on board the *Royal George* at Woolwich, and were towed round in her to the port of Leith. I am not surprised, however, that Queen Victoria preferred to make the return voyage on board a steamer belonging to the General Steam Navigation Company, where Her Majesty found that the accommodation was better and more spacious than on board the *Royal George*.

During the Queen's winter residence at Osborne no leave was given, as it was never known when we might be required, and when the Royal Yacht lay at Cowes, in the summer, the officers were not allowed ashore until it had been finally ascertained that Her Majesty had no further commands for that day; but when the Court was not at Osborne we had a very easy time. The two Lieutenants used to take it in turn to go on leave, one of them having to live on board the *Royal George*, but as soon as Morning Prayers had been read there was little or nothing more to do, and there was no trouble about attending such Race Meetings as Sandown and Kempton, which, being on the South-western Railway line, were easily reached, as indeed was London. At that time I belonged to the Naval and Military Club, and a very cheerful place it was, especially for a sailor. There was one corner of the

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huge smoking-room,—which is still, I believe, called Besika Bay Corner,—where one was sure to meet one's old comrades and their soldier friends who had garrisoned Malta in the late 'seventies and early 'eighties. And so the time passed agreeably enough, interspersed, as it was, with a good many trips across the Channel. In the middle of November the Prince of Wales embarked on board the Royal Yacht and was conveyed to Flushing to meet, the then, recently widowed Empress Frederick. Her Imperial Majesty arrived on board with her three daughters and crossed to Port Victoria, where she was met by Queen Victoria and most of the members of the Royal Family, and travelled with them to Windsor. The winter season, commencing, as was general, in the middle of December, was a busier one than usual, for the Empress Frederick had accompanied her mother to Osborne, and there was a great deal of running to and fro to convey the various members of the Royal Family backwards and forwards.

In the middle of February 1889 the Queen left Osborne, and some ten days later the Empress Frederick crossed in the yacht to Flushing, with her daughters, on her way home. In early March Queen Victoria embarked for Cherbourg *en route* to Cimiez. The *Victoria and Albert* was escorted across the Channel by a veritable procession of yachts, including the *Osborne*, *Alberta*, *Enchantress* (the Admiralty Yacht), and the *Galatea* (the Trinity House boat). Her Majesty returned to England in April.

Our next trip was at the end of June when we were

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sent to Antwerp to embark the Shah. I remember the late King of the Belgians came to Antwerp to see him off, so I suppose that Oriental Potentate had been officially visiting Belgium before coming to England.

The Shah was attended by Sir H. Drummond Wolff, then H.M. Minister at Teheran, and Sir H. Rawlinson, who were with him during the whole of his visit. He also had an enormous retinue of Persians for us to embark. Some of them, such as Ali Asmer Asgher Khan, Amin us Sultan, the Grand Vizier, and Prince Malcom Khan, the Persian Minister, and a few others, were no doubt very distinguished men ; but the tail end of the suite seemed to me to consist principally of what the Bluejackets used to call "scallawags."

On the 1st July we duly arrived at Gravesend, where the Prince of Wales boarded us, to welcome the Shah, and then up the Thames we went and the real fun began. The river, of course, swarmed with excursion steamers, and the one idea of the excursionists was to try and keep alongside the Royal Yacht, and as near as possible, so as to get a sight of the Shah. This congestion of passenger boats, all overcrowded with sight-seers was extremely dangerous, and as the smallest collision would have sunk any of those lightly-built craft, an accident would have resulted in an appalling loss of life. As usual the men in charge of these boats behaved very badly and took great risks, but it meant a harvest for them in the shape of tips from their passengers, and human nature being what it is, it would be ridiculous to blame them, and as,

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moreover, thanks to good luck, no accident happened, there was no harm done. The Royal party eventually landed in a sort of glorified steam-launch at Westminster Steps.

In the middle of July, the Queen went, as usual, to Osborne, but her visit there was broken by a journey she had to make to London to enable her to be present at the wedding of Princess Louise of Wales and the late Duke of Fife on the 27th. Two days after Her Majesty's return to Osborne, the Royal Yacht conveyed the Shah there to take leave of the Queen, and thence to Cherbourg. Meanwhile, a large Fleet had assembled at Spithead, under the command of Sir J. Edmund Commerell, Commander-in-Chief at Portsmouth, so that the Shah on his way to Cowes might be enabled to see something of the British Navy. I am bound to say that he did not appear to be in the least impressed. He firmly declined to come on deck, and obviously disliked the noise of the salute. In fact, he took no notice of the Fleet whatever. My old friend, the late Mr. Bennett Burleigh, the well-known War Correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, had by some mysterious means managed to smuggle himself on board the Royal Yacht. I have an idea that the late General Sir John McNeil, then on board as one of the Queen's Equerries, had rather connived at his presence, for he and Sir John had been old cronies and campaigners together. However, being there, he behaved with the most commendable tact, and had not ventured near the saloon where the Shah had ensconced himself, and consequently had to rely on second-hand information. I, being on duty,

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was in the immediate vicinity, and so was duly pumped by my friend.

“What a splendid sight the salute was! I am sure the Shah must have been greatly impressed. What did he say?”

As I have already written, the Shah paid no attention whatever to the Fleet, but, thinking that he ought certainly to have made some sort of remark, I gravely answered that His Majesty had said: “Wah, Wah, Allah is great, and the English are a mighty nation,” which I thought would do just as well for the readers of the *Daily Telegraph* as anything else. I am rather afraid that Mr. Burleigh was too old a hand to be caught, and greatly doubt whether the imaginary ecstasies of the Shah were ever published.

That particular season at Cowes was an interesting one, for it was in 1889 that the Kaiser made his first descent on Cowes in the shape of a visit to his grandmother, Queen Victoria. He arrived on August 3rd, and with his usual arrogance, or perhaps to save himself from paying their board in Germany while he was in England, he brought over an immense and entirely unnecessary suite. Osborne, and all its little dependencies, were strained to the utmost to house this swarm of locusts, and even then an overflow party had to be put up on board the Royal Yacht. This was the first occasion that I had ever come into contact with any number of Germans, and I have heartily disliked them ever since. To my mind, even on a pre-war standard, there is nothing good to be said about them. I detest all their ways and works,

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their eternal bows, and clicking of heels, and the equally eternal shaking of hands, and impertinent inquiries about one's digestion. Moreover, they have the odious habit of leaving sheaves of visiting cards in all directions. We were thirteen officers on board the Royal Yacht, and when our unbidden guests insisted on leaving a card apiece upon us it literally made up one or more packs to be littered about. In view of our present experience of them, I think that I can congratulate myself on a certain amount of prescience in the detestation with which they, one and all, inspired me so many years ago.

Other visitors, temporarily lodging on board the Royal Yacht, were Admiral of the Fleet Sir Geoffrey Hornby, who was in attendance on the young Kaiser during his visit, Sir Henry Keppel and Captain Stephenson, both of whom were in attendance on the Prince of Wales.

The whole visit was not only an interesting one, but made a very picturesque show from a naval point of view. The Emperor arrived in his yacht with an escorting squadron of the German Fleet (then very much in its infancy), one of the squadron, a cruiser named the *Irene*, being commanded by his brother, Prince Henry. There was a huge Fleet at Spithead, and Cowes was, if possible, more full of yachts than ever, and in addition there were anchored in the roads a few British battleships and torpedo-boats, one of these small craft being commanded by H.R.H. Prince George of Wales. The Prince and Princess of Wales were, of course, on board the Royal Yacht at Osborne,

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at the usual moorings just inshore of the *Victoria and Albert*.

The Prince of Wales went out in the *Osborne* to meet the Emperor and his squadron, and, on his way, his yacht was most shamefully mobbed by a horde of excursion steamers that had been hired for the occasion by the holiday folk who very naturally infest the Isle of Wight and South Coast at that season. The Commander of the *Osborne* only succeeded in keeping them off at a less dangerous distance by threatening to pump water over them with the steam fire hose.

The Prince went on board the Kaiser's yacht as soon as she arrived, and later landed at Osborne to be with the Queen when the Emperor arrived at Osborne House. The usual Cowes Regatta was in full swing during the week or so that the visit lasted, and such crowds filled the streets that there literally was barely standing room in the queer little town. The only functions I remember were a parade review of the German seamen that was held in the grounds at Osborne, a dinner party that was given by the Queen to the officers of the German Fleet on board the *Victoria and Albert*, and a review of the Fleet by the Emperor. As concerns the review, the Kaiser and his brother, Prince Henry of Prussia, came on board the *Victoria and Albert*, where the Prince and Princess of Wales and all the members of the Royal Family at Osborne had already established themselves, and the yachts then proceeded to pass through the lines of the Fleet at Spithead. The ships were "manned" in the usual way and salutes were fired. The Royal Yacht then



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anchored in the vicinity of the *Howe*, which battleship was flying the flag of the Commander-in-Chief, Sir J. Edmund Commerell, to enable the Admirals and Captains to come on board and be presented to the Emperor. It was a fine show for those days, and the Fleet, including, as it did, thirty-eight First Class Torpedo-boats, was flying altogether one hundred and twelve pennants. I remember well the ill-concealed envy exhibited by the Kaiser, his brother, and their surroundings, for in those days the German Navy was a very small affair. Meanwhile, Queen Victoria, on the little *Alberta*, steamed through the lines of the German Fleet, an operation which did not take long, as they numbered just under a dozen, great and small.

The dinner on board was beautifully done by the servants who were sent from Osborne for the purpose, and during its progress I, as one of the least important of the hosts, found myself seated between two German officers, more or less of the same insignificant rank as myself. In the process of making conversation during the long dinner and evening, I did glean one piece of information that delighted me. Somehow, the topic of Marryat and his naval novels cropped up, and to my great astonishment I discovered that these Germans could have passed a very searching examination in Marryat, and had Mr. Midshipman Easy, and the immortal Boatswain, Mr. Chucks, at their finger-ends. When I expressed surprise at this, they confessed that, having no naval literature of their own, they had to fall back on ours. There was yet another surprise in store for me later on, when I was to see these perfect

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examples of officers and gentlemen (?) filling their pockets with the cigars that were handed to them to smoke! However, all these little incidents are specimens, I suppose, of what their admirers call "German thoroughness."

After the German Invasion had come to an end, Cowes began to empty itself, and the Royal Yachts and the guardship (there was always a guardship in the roads when the Queen was at Osborne), were left in almost solitary grandeur, and now that there was room to move about freely, Cowes became quite a pleasant place. Our duties were not very exacting. There were occasional return trips to Southampton and Portsmouth to bring over or take back the Queen's visitors in one of the tenders, and every other day it was my duty to walk up to Osborne, take luncheon with the household and ascertain whether her Majesty had any commands.

About the middle of September the Court moved to Balmoral, the Queen crossing as usual in the *Alberta*, and we officers took up our quarters again on board the *Royal George*, the great bulk of the ship's company, as usual, going back to the dockyard to work as riggers. And so ended my first season at Cowes as a Lieutenant of Her Majesty's Yacht.

In December, when the Court as usual moved to Osborne, leave came to an end, and the constant trips across the Solent conveying Her Majesty's numerous royal guests,—including, amongst many others, the Empress Eugenie,—kept us busy until the return of the Court to Windsor in the middle of January. A month later the Royal Yacht embarked Her Majesty

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for her usual spring visit to the Continent, and at the end of April we were at Flushing again to embark the Queen on her return to Windsor.

Our next trip was on a rather more extended scale, as in the middle of July we were ordered to embark the Empress Frederick, and her two (then) unmarried daughters, Princesses Victoria and Margaret, and convey them to Gibraltar, where they proposed being transported to the *Surprise* for conveyance to Athens, the reason for the visit being, I believe, the expected accouchement of the other daughter, the Duchess of Sparta, a lady of whom, as Queen of the Hellenes, the British public has heard a good deal since. By the 2nd of August we were back at Cowes again for the usual summer season, and two days later the Kaiser arrived in the *Hohenzollern*, accompanied by the inevitable Prince Henry. This visit was of a more private nature than the one of the year before, and, I expect greatly to the relief of all concerned on this side of the North Sea, only lasted for four days. During a part of the season there was an Austrian squadron lying at Spithead, commanded by an Admiral Hincke, the Archduke Karl Stephan being in command of one of the ships of the squadron, the *Kaiser Franz Josef*. While this squadron was in the vicinity of Cowes, Queen Victoria inspected it by steaming between the lines in the *Alberta*.

About the middle of August the Empress Eugenie arrived at Osborne on a visit to the Queen, and thereby hangs a tale :

The Queen had decided to have some private

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theatricals and *tableaux vivants*, organised at Osborne during the Empress's stay there, and on the evening the performance was given a few notabilities in the neighbourhood and some of the officers of the Royal Yacht had the honour of being invited. The day before the entertainment took place I received a sudden order to go to Osborne, and on arriving there was told that one of the dramatis personæ had suddenly been taken ill, and that I was to take that gentleman's place. Mercifully there were no words to learn, and I only had to dress up and form one of the representants of the various pictures. The three most elaborate displays, with which the performance ended, were a series of large set-pieces representing Twelfth Night (in a general and not a Shakespearean sense), Queen Berengaria interceding with King Edward for the Burghers of Calais, and the Garden Scene from *Faust*. All these pictures were very beautifully "dressed," and the great Mr. Clarkson arrived from London to make up the faces of the performers and arrange their wigs. In "Twelfth Night," Princess Louise Marchioness of Lorne, Princess Henry of Battenberg, Lady Feodor Gleichen, and one or two other ladies were amongst the revellers, to say nothing of more than an equal number of men. This one I saw from the front, and though very pretty, I remember thinking it was a little crowded. In the next I took a part, and so can give no opinion upon it. Princess Louise again was in the Tableau, and made a very beautiful Queen Berengaria; the late Sir Henry Ponsonby, in a magnificent suit of armour from Windsor, was the King; Lord Stamfordham, then Colonel Arthur Bigge, was

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one of the Burghers ; Colonel Sir H. Legge, then Captain Harry Legge, and I were amongst the knights in attendance, and Mr. Victor Biddulph, who died quite recently, wonderfully made up as to tonsure, was the attendant priest.

In the Garden Scene from *Faust*, Princess Beatrice took the part of Marguerite, with Lady Southampton as Martha ; Harry Legge was Mephistopheles, whilst I, in my capacity as an understudy, had to represent Faust. I am afraid that this tableau was not altogether a success, for as soon as the curtain went up, I heard the Empress Eugenie, who was naturally seated next to the Queen, ask in a very audible voice, “ Mais, qui est, donc, ce petit Faust ? ” The unfortunate “ petit Faust ” in question shook to such an extent with suppressed laughter that the whole stage quivered, and the picture in general could only be described as wobbly.

After the performance there was a great supper for the dramatis personæ and the guests in general, and I am bound to say that, though I went to Osborne with considerable trepidation, I finished up by spending an extremely agreeable evening.

A week or two later, at the end of August, the Queen left for Balmoral, and the following week I was promoted to the rank of Commander.

And so, in September 1890, after about twenty years' service as boy and man, I became, for quite a considerable time, a free agent, as a Commander on the munificent half-pay of eight shillings per diem,—and a very pleasant time it was. In the spring of 1892 I had been fortunate enough to be elected a

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member of the Turf Club,—in those days, to my mind, much the most agreeable Club in London. The Turf Club was then, perhaps, at its very best. Socially it was extremely pleasant, the majority of the members being principally engaged in amusing themselves. All the best of the racing men belonged to it, and nearly all the men prominent in sport of all kinds made it a place of rendezvous, whilst in addition, it was much patronised by the leading Foreign Diplomats, and our own Politicians of the best sort. A good deal of whist was played there, and nothing was more usual than to cut into a rubber where the other players might well be a Foreign Ambassador, some notable Politician, and the youngest-joined Guardsman, so altogether it was eminently many-sided. Though, from its name, most people had an idea that no conversation ever took place there except on the one topic of racing, nothing was further from the fact. When such men as the late Duke of Devonshire, Lord Russell of Killowen, and Lord James of Hereford (to mention only a very few) were constantly,—indeed almost daily,—to be met there, it was pretty obvious that there were other interests as well as racing connected with the Club, and that it was something more than merely a place for idle men of fashion. In those times it was a very late establishment, for, on most nights, returning from balls and parties, a number of us would put in there for an hour or so before going to bed.

Another very delightful Club that had just been established, though one of a very different nature, was

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the unfortunately short-lived Amphitryon Club in Albemarle Street. It was started by a number of well-known men, prominent amongst whom were the late Lord Randolph Churchill, the Marquis de Soveral, and the present Lord Chaplin. Though on the lines of the best sort of French Café, it was a Club to the extent that there was a small entrance fee and subscription, and a ballot for members. The Maître d'Hôtel, one Emile Aoust, had been at Bignon's and thoroughly understood how to provide his clients with the best of everything. As well as the restaurant downstairs, there were several apartments upstairs, where large and small private dinner parties could be given, and had it only been really well managed it might have lasted for ever. Unfortunately Emile, though he thoroughly understood food, knew nothing about finance, and after about five years of existence the Club had not much to show except debts. Consequently the establishment had to be wound up, and a grievous pity it was. It was a delightful place for dinners or luncheons, and, moreover, members were allowed to entertain ladies there for meals, so it was an enormous convenience for the real Londoner. The worst of Emile's system was that his prices were rather too varied. The regular habitués were not at all badly treated, for, though it was very expensive, the best food *is* very expensive, so there was not much to complain of ; but occasionally, when dealing with members who did not understand his ways, his prices were really rather remarkable. I remember that he succeeded in losing the custom of a very good client by charging him sixteen shillings for

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a solitary baked apple. No doubt the apple was the very best of its sort, but even then, it was rather more than any man could stand who might happen to notice this detail, half-way down the long bill for a dinner for some eight or ten guests. However, with all his faults, Emile was a real artist, and I am by no means the only one of his old customers who constantly deplores the fact that he is no longer with us, and that the Amphitryon Club is a thing of the past.

Whilst on the subject of London Clubs, it was about this time that I was fortunate enough to survive the ordeal by ballot and be elected a member of the Beef-steak Club. The activities of that charming little establishment have been terribly hampered by the paternal legislation rendered necessary by the war, but when I first joined, it used to begin to fill at a much later hour than that at which it now empties itself, in these supperless times. In the past it had been essentially a Night Club, the Annual General Meeting being held about midnight, that being the sort of hour when the majority of members used to arrive. Perhaps it was at its gayest and best when, after a first performance at some popular theatre, the "first-nighters" used to flock in to discuss the new play that had just been produced, and join up with the members who had remained on after dinner. I can hardly remember any place where I have heard such "good talk" as I have there, and "good talk" of the most varied kind, ranging from frank Bohemianism to the political history of England in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The sort of typical gathering that occurs to my memory when



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still at our old home, where the new portion of Charing Cross Hospital now stands, would be composed somewhat as follows; and though many of them have joined the great majority, I am sure that they are not forgotten by their old Club-mates. To give them the names by which they were best known:—Archie Wortley, the principal founder of the Club; the “Pelican,” the name to which Pellegrini was expected to answer; Arthur Blunt; Corney Grain; the “Beetle,” otherwise Harry Kemble; Johnny Giffard; that most delightful of men, Joe Knight, then dramatic critic of the *Morning Post*, and also a great bibliophile; and Joe Comyns Carr, perhaps the wittiest of them all. These have all passed away, but amongst the habitués of the early 'nineties there are still left such men as Willie Elliot, Harry Higgins, Cecil Clay, Marshall Hall, and one or two others. I forget exactly when we moved into our new premises in Green Street, Leicester Square, but it must have been a good many years ago, and I do not know that the “talk” in the new house is not as good as it was in the former one, when the survivors of the old gang are reinforced by Leonard Courtney, John Scott Montagu (now Lord Montagu of Beaulieu), Seymour Hicks, Perceval Landon, Charles Whibley, and, until his death, the deeply regretted Harry Cust, perhaps the most brilliant man in England.

Another popular personage in London Society who died recently and was a great frequenter of the Beefsteak was the late Count Benckendorff, for many years Russian Ambassador in London. He did not often leave London, and there was hardly a night that he did

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not come in for an hour or so for a cigar and a chat before going to bed. He was always a very kind friend to me, and I knew him pretty well. He made himself extremely agreeable at the Club, and besides being a wonderful linguist (he really spoke English like an Englishman), he was a mine of information about every sort of subject, and I am convinced would have taken "full marks" for any "English History Examination Paper," if he ever saw such a thing. Outside his own family, I am sure that in no coterie was his death more sincerely mourned than in that, composed of the members of the Beefsteak Club.

In the course of that winter I managed to get a little hunting. Lord Manners, who had married one of my cousins, a Miss Hamlyn Fane,\* had been lately Master of the Quorn, and was then living at Cold Overton, the well-known Leicestershire hunting-box. With the aid of a few hirelings and the kindness of my host I succeeded in condensing a good deal of sport into the ten days' visit. It was at Cold Overton that I first made the acquaintance of the present Mrs. Asquith, then Miss Margot Tennant, who was hunting from there for the season. Our host always hacked to the meet, and used to place a dog-cart at the disposal of Miss Margot and myself. With such a companion the long drive to the various meets which we attended formed quite an agreeable part of the day's sport. In those days Miss Margot Tennant was as brilliant a

\* Alas! since these lines have been in the printer's hands, that dear friend of my youth, my much-beloved cousin—Constance Manners—has passed away from us.

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performer over the country as she was a conversation-  
alist, and her very numerous friends will, I am sure,  
fully endorse this statement.

My half-pay time came to an end in the spring of 1891, when I joined the Staff of the Naval Intelligence Department. This Department was quite new, and Captain Cyprian Bridge, my old Commander of the *Audacious*, the then Director, was only the second to hold the appointment, the first holder of that office having been Captain Hall. Curiously enough his son, Rear-Admiral Sir Reginald Hall, M.P., was one of the most conspicuous successes of the late war when in charge of that same Department. So completely civilian-ridden was the old Whitehall building then, that this very important Department was looked upon as a part of the Civil Service of the Admiralty, in spite of the fact that its Director was either an Admiral, or a very senior Captain, who had working under him two more Captains as Assistant-Directors, four Commanders as Naval Staff, and four Marine Officers as Marine Staff. When I went there first, I expected to find the work extremely interesting; but, as in all other offices, it soon turned out that it mainly consisted in a sort of regular routine. Indeed, during the two years which I spent there, I can only remember three or four really illuminating jobs which came my way. Towards the end of my time there, my particular business was to look after the Navies of France and Russia, as regards ships in commission and reserve, and building programmes. This entailed a great deal of reading of French newspapers and magazines,

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but with Russian literature I could not cope, and everything had to be translated for me. Lord Fisher was then on the Board as a Rear-Admiral, and in that capacity I suppose had to assist in the preparation of the Estimates. I remember being told to supply their Lordships with a statement of the combined strength of the Navies of France and Russia, against which had to be shown, ship by ship, our own Navy. I was given the hint that, the object being to wring more money for more ships out of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I was to make out as formidable a list as I could of our then possible enemies. Naturally, I did as I was told, and no old lame duck was too obsolete to be trotted out for the occasion. Personally I was convinced that the device was too transparent to deceive a child, let alone such an old political hand as was Sir William Harcourt, the then Chancellor of the Exchequer. To my secret delight, my precious report came back with the Chancellor's own annotations on it, and very much to the point they were. I felt that with all the knowledge of those Fleets that I had at the moment, I could not have made a better selection of the obsolete and useless vessels than did the Chancellor with his blue pencil.

It is curious in these days to remember that in the early 'nineties our bugbear was a combination of France and Russia against us, especially from a Naval point of view, the German Navy being then still almost negligible.

One fine morning, on seating myself at my table, I found a new and rather formidable-looking volume

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awaiting me, to be dealt with in the ordinary course of the day's work. It turned out to be Mahan's *Influence of Sea Power on History*, and though the book itself had been completed at least a year before, I fancy that mine was almost the first copy to reach England from America. It being my duty to read it, I commenced at once, and except for a pause at luncheon time, never put it down until I had devoured the whole work. This task having been performed, I at once went to see my Chief and told him that, whether he could spare the time or not, it was absolutely incumbent upon him to read it himself, as, in my judgment, the general theory that the book inculcated was so admirably expounded that it was of the greatest value to any one who was entrusted with a portion of the care of the defences of the British Empire. My Chief complied with my request, and that great work and its successors have become classics, not only for the navies of the world, but also for the general readers of all nations.

All this time I was rapidly developing into a complete Cockney, and thank Heaven I have been a confirmed one ever since. Out of office hours there were pleasant luncheons either at the Amphitryon or at one's friends' houses, and a possible week-end visit, though week-end visits in those days were few and far between, the fashion for them having hardly come in.

The very pleasantest dinners I can remember, were then given in a corner house of Great Cumberland Place by one of my kindest friends, Consuelo Duchess

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of Manchester. She had not only a passion for entertaining, but was a wonderfully successful entertainer. When I first made her acquaintance, she was no longer very young, but still a very pretty woman (in her youth I believe she had been quite lovely). But what is almost as attractive as beauty is wit, and that she possessed. Quick as lightning, seeing the humorous side of everything, she also had a fund of American and Cuban stories which used to delight us all. The usual London dinner party generally breaks up about 11. Hers often lasted till the small hours, for when the early birds amongst her guests had taken their flight at about the usual time, the rest of us gravitated towards the piano, and there our hostess used to enchain us literally for hours, for she was an admirable musician, and when not playing would be telling us stories. The last two or three men in the party were usually turned into the street in a little group about three in the morning. One of her recipes for a successful London dinner party I well remember. She said there were three indispensable ingredients—a Duchess, a Beauty, and a ham! Alas! she died long before her time in 1909, and, short as is the memory of the world, her friends still miss her, not only out of genuine affection, but because, with her the gaiety, if not of nations, at any rate of a large section of London cosmopolitan Society, became partially eclipsed.

Another very kind hostess of mine about that time was Lady Georgina Curzon, who died shortly after the termination of the South African War.



*Photo: A. Debenham, Cowes]*

ON BOARD THE ROYAL YACHT "VICTORIA AND ALBERT"

H.M. Queen Alexandra

H.M. King Edward





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In those days she and her husband, the present Lord Howe, entertained principally at the charming little villa residence, Woodlands, that they had made for themselves in the neighbourhood of Uxbridge. Lady Georgina, who was a very fine whip, as well as a good horsewoman, used to delight in driving a coach-load of friends to all the neighbouring race meetings, such as Kempton, Sandown, Windsor and Hurst Park, all of which were within comfortable driving distance from Woodlands. The parties were not exclusively for racing, for, looking over an old photograph book, I came across a group which included, amongst others, Jean and Édouard de Reszke. Indeed, I am not sure that I did not meet these accomplished brothers for the first time at her house. Later on, when her husband, the present Lord Howe, had succeeded to the title, they entertained on a very large scale at Gopsall, where I was also a constant guest.

Lady Georgie, as her friends always called her, was a real personality. She combined great physical energy and strength (she was a most fearless rider to hounds, and no day in Leicestershire was too long for her) with the brains and driving-power of the Churchills. She threw herself into the work of running the Yeomanry Hospital that was started during the South African War with the same boundless energy that always characterised her. Principally owing to her exertions it was most successfully conducted, and though she was really in failing health at the time, nothing would induce her to give up her work,

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and she died shortly after the Peace was signed. No more gallant spirit ever existed.

Early in March 1893, the late Rear-Admiral Stephenson, who has been mentioned before in these Recollections, hoisted his flag as Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Station at Portsmouth, the *Royal Arthur*, then a brand-new cruiser, being his flagship. Somewhere about the end of the month, I received a message from Prince Louis of Battenberg, who was then Naval Adviser to the Inspector-General of Fortifications, informing me that the Prince of Wales desired me to go to Portsmouth in attendance, as His Royal Highness was losing his regular Naval Equerry in the person of Admiral Stephenson. The occasion was the inspection of the *Royal Arthur*, before that ship sailed for the Pacific. I duly got myself into uniform and met the Prince at Victoria Station. Prince Louis of Battenberg also went down. He had been Second in Command to the Admiral when the latter commanded the old *Dreadnought*, so it was quite in the fitness of things that he should travel to Portsmouth with the Prince to wish his old Captain good-bye. After the inspection, just before getting into the train to return to London, Prince Louis told me, to my intense surprise, that His Royal Highness had deputed him to tell me that he wished me to join his Staff as one of his Equerries-in-Waiting. So complete was my ignorance of anything connected with Court appointments that I told Prince Louis that, while being greatly honoured, I felt obliged to decline as I was compelled to go on steadily at

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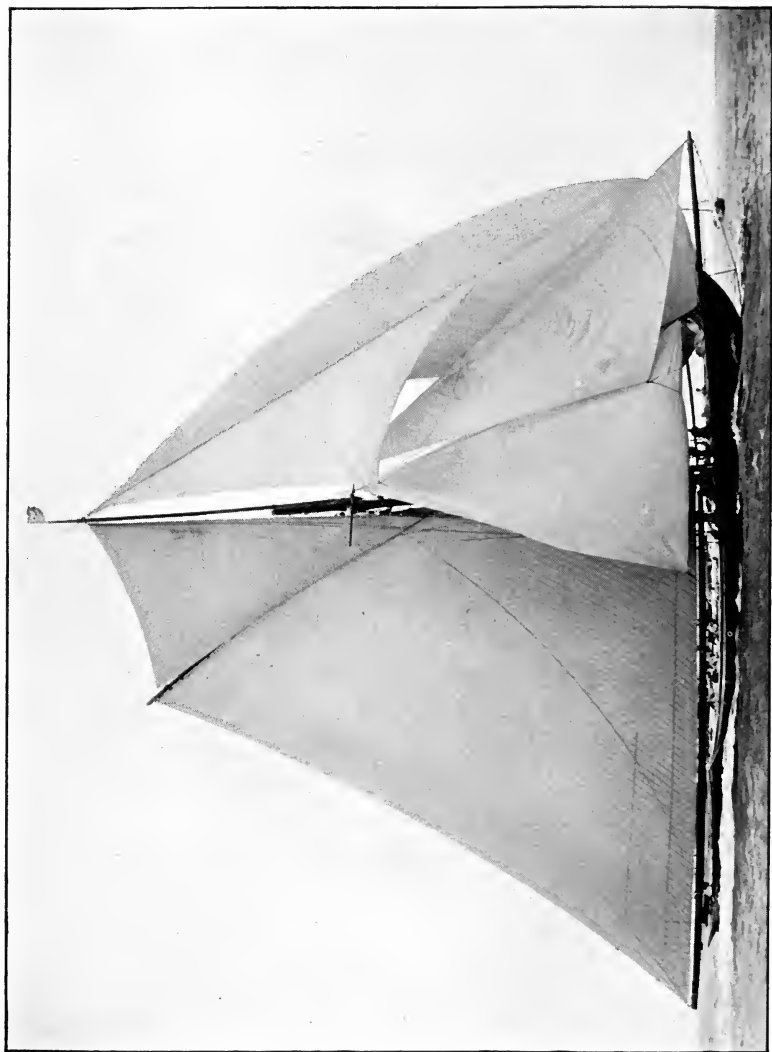
my profession, being too poor to leave the Service and live permanently in England. I then learned, what I had no notion of until that time, that the post of Equerry carried a salary with it, which, in addition to my half-pay, would be quite equal to anything I could earn as Commander in the Navy, and that the Prince was quite content that I should remain in the Navy, and if necessary serve again in order to keep my name on the active list. Naturally, having learnt this, my only cause for hesitation vanished into thin air, so, to my great delight, I was duly appointed as Equerry-in-Waiting, and left the Admiralty, where I had served for about two years.

For the next seventeen years, until the day of his death—to me the saddest day I have ever known—I remained on his Staff as Equerry, and took my regular turn in waiting; and was thus a personal servant to the kindest and most considerate of masters that ever a man was fortunate enough to serve. From the late King and his family, during all those years, and in the years that have passed since, I received, and indeed still continue to receive, such unfailing kindness that I do not propose even to dwell on it; it would be hard to write on the subject without expressing a gratitude that, on paper, might almost appear fulsome.

## CHAPTER VIII

### EQUERRY TO THE PRINCE OF WALES

I CAME into waiting on the Prince of Wales for the first time in May 1893, and one of the interesting minor events which happened during that month was the début of the famous cutter yacht, *Britannia*, who sailed her maiden race with her illustrious owner on board. It was not very easy for the Prince, with all his multifarious engagements, to find two spare days in the middle of the London Season, and indeed he was very seldom able to be on board his yacht except during the Cowes week, and in the early spring when visiting the Riviera. But the *Britannia's* début at the Royal Thames Regatta was really something of an occasion, for at that time very great public interest was taken in yacht racing, and for three or four consecutive seasons the number of big racing cutters was abnormally large. Additional importance was attached to her behaviour in her first race, owing to the fact that the *Britannia* was known to be almost on the same lines as the *Valkyrie*, which later in the year was to race on the other side of the Atlantic for the America Cup. We had two good days' racing on the Thames, and after very close finishes the *Britannia* beat the *Valkyrie* two days running. These two yachts encountered each other on many occasions; it was a near thing



*Photo: Kirk, Cowes]*

“BRITANNIA” RACING AT COWES



## Equerry to the Prince of Wales

between them, but on the whole the *Britannia* was very slightly the better boat of the two.

Whilst on the subject of Yacht Racing, for those who are interested in that sport, it may as well be stated here that the *Britannia* was probably the most successful large racing cutter ever put into the water. Built on the Clyde by Messrs. Henderson, designed by Watson, and in the charge, as she was during her racing career, of a very strong combination of talent in the person of Mr. Willy Jameson and the late John Carter her skipper, she competed (and on the whole had the best of it), against one older crack racer the *Iverna*; five boats of her own year, namely the *Valkyrie*, *Satanita*, *Calluna*, *Vigilant* and *Navahoe*; (these two last were American boats, the *Vigilant* having been the successful defender of the America Cup); and two later English boats, the *Aurora* and *Ailsa*. It was not until the German Emperor's large cutter, *Meteor*, appeared on the scene, four years later, that she had to give up her pride of place, and could be said to have been definitely outbuilt, and after all *Meteor* was also of Watson design, and was in fact a merely enlarged *Britannia*.

I was in waiting again in August when the Prince and Princess of Wales were in residence on board the Royal Yacht, *Osborne*, at Cowes. There were some six or seven days' hard racing under the auspices of the Royal Yacht Squadron, the Royal London Club at Cowes, and the Royal Victoria Club at Ryde. The Prince, at this holiday season, could race to his heart's content, and all the best-known

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habitués of Cowes, female and male, were in turn invited on board the yacht; and as, in addition, the whole Royal party of the *Osborne* were almost invariably sailing in the *Britannia*, it can be easily supposed that she carried more passengers than did most racing yachts; but this fact certainly did not interfere with her sailing qualities, for she was wonderfully successful.

At the end of the Ryde week the Prince left Cowes for his usual cure at Homburg, and I was left in charge of the *Britannia* while she was completing the round of the Regattas on the Western Ports. This arrangement took place for two or three years running, and, as far as I was personally concerned, nothing could have been more delightful. The Prince, with that extraordinary consideration that he always displayed towards the members of his Staff, used to allow me to take a companion with me. One year it was the late Lord Hardwicke, then Lord Royston, who was my shipmate. On another occasion it was my friend, Hugh Tyrrwhitt. It was immense fun. As soon as the Solent Regatta came to an end the whole fleet of racing yachts, big and small, used to start under cruising canvas to the westward, for the Regattas held successively at Weymouth, Torquay and Dartmouth, to finish the season at Plymouth. At each place the town and neighbourhood was *en fête* for their Regatta week, which was for them the greatest week of the year. Various cruising yachts used to accompany the fleet. Lord Ormonde (who, sad to relate, has died since these lines were written), then Vice-Commodore of the Royal Yacht Squadron, used generally to



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come round with his family and a few friends. The *Iverna*, Mr. John Jameson's yacht, usually carried not only Mr. Willy Jameson, *Britannia's* head jockey, but also his charming wife, Mrs. Jameson, the sister of Field-Marshal Earl Haig.

The result of all this was that at the end of a long day's racing, one could have the cheeriest of dinners on board the various yachts, and in fact there were few pleasanter ways of spending the month of August. The Regattas usually came to an end early in September just in time to enable one to go to Yorkshire for the Doncaster Races.

Doncaster Races for some years running meant, as far as I was concerned, being one of a very pleasant party that used to assemble yearly at Escrick, the late Lord Wenlock's place not far from York, as the guests of the late Mr. Jack Menzies and his wife, who, a few years ago, married, for her second husband, one of my colleagues, Colonel Sir George Holford.

Naturally, the composition of the party varied slightly from year to year, but there was always a certain number of the same people, especially as regards the men, for the really keen racing men never missed the St. Leger. It is too sad a task to give their names, for so many of them, like our host, are no longer with us; but pleasanter racing parties there never were, for the women and men that filled the house were all really keen. It was a long day for the ladies. We had to leave Escrick soon after eleven to catch the special train that conveyed us to Doncaster, and it used to be nearly seven o'clock by the time we got

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back. Those were days of high betting, and when, as occasionally happened at Doncaster, things were going badly for backers, the Escrick lot was one of those that contributed pretty largely to the coffers of the Ring ; but whether it was a winning or losing week, nothing ever marred the cheeriness of the party.

Amongst other hospitable houses from which I have "done" Doncaster Races were Rufford Abbey, Lord Savile's beautiful home ; Tranby Croft, the late Mr. Arthur Wilson's place, not far from Hull ; and Wiseton, belonging to that fine soldier, General Sir J. Laycock.

Another month that I was very apt to be on duty was October, and I think that perhaps on the whole it was the pleasantest "wait" of the whole year, entailing, as it did, a couple of weeks at Newmarket. I really loved the life there. The Prince of Wales had his own little apartment in the Jockey Club Rooms, so there was no place where he could be more absolutely free. He generally managed to get a good deal of his correspondence done before his early morning ride, and after breakfast in the Jockey Club Room, he had another couple of hours at his disposal before Racing. The Newmarket breakfast was a very pleasant meal in that big, quiet room looking on to a well-kept lawn, and consumed with the perfectly miraculous appetite that is given by a canter over the Heath. There were generally two or three other members of the Jockey Club at breakfast, who had been similarly engaged, and one of them was almost invariably the late Lord Suffolk. He was always primed with the latest racing information, which he had succeeded in gleaning

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during his morning walk, and, moreover, he was a wonderfully good *causeur* (I really do not know the exact equivalent in English, for "talker" does not convey quite the same idea). I always considered him to be one of the most agreeable men I ever met, and those who have read some of his short stories, mostly on the subject of Racing, will remember that his writings were distinguished by a remarkably pleasant style and a great charm of expression. There happen to be two admirable specimens in the Badminton Book on Racing.

Sometimes the mornings before racing were spent in partridge-driving in the neighbourhood; but more often shooting took place on the Monday or the Saturday of the Cesarewitch and Houghton weeks, and generally the intermediate week was spent in a like manner in the neighbourhood of Newmarket. I remember being in attendance during a visit that the Prince paid to Mr. Willy Jameson at Stowlangtoft. Always a good shoot, in that particular year the Manor fairly swarmed with partridge. But the whole of the country round Newmarket lends itself to sport, and especially to partridge-driving. Within a very small radius, which in these days of motors would literally entail only a twenty minutes' drive, Stetchworth, Six Mile Bottom, Chippenham, and Cheveley could all be reached, and as far as the quantity of game was concerned, one place would be nearly as good as the other. Six Mile Bottom was perhaps the best partridge-driving ground of all, for the belts over which the birds were driven were so substantial and well

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placed ; the late Duke of Cambridge had it on lease for many years, and generally made Newmarket his temporary abode when shooting over the Manor. His Royal Highness was always very keen about the sport, and with the aid of one of the most perfect weight-carrying hacks that I ever saw, could get about from beat to beat without too much fatigue.

But to leave the neighbourhood and return to the little town of Newmarket itself, another feature of the Race weeks were the dinner parties given at the various houses in the town. The old fashion of dining at the Jockey Club Rooms had rather died out, principally owing to the ladies having taken to patronising Newmarket to such a great extent, so the Prince was in the habit of dining out regularly during his sojourns there, and was a constant guest at the houses of the late Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, the late Sir Daniel Cooper, the late Lord and Lady Cadogan, and the late Mr. Leopold de Rothschild. Mrs. Leo, as she was always called by her many friends, of whom I am glad to be a very old one, and her husband lived at Palace House, so called as a part of it was the original dwelling of King Charles II when he frequented Newmarket, and they used to give a big dinner every Wednesday night there during the Racing Season. Wednesday was a good selection, for it was generally the day of the most important race of the week, and there would be met, from the Prince downwards, all the principal racing men present at the meeting, with the exception of those who were busy entertaining parties of their own. From what I have written it can be easily understood

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how pleasant a month October was for the Equerry-in-Waiting, and in the old book of Caricatures, that lay in the Equerries' Room at Marlborough House, and was later moved on to Buckingham Palace, was to be seen a cutting from an illustrated paper of a snapshot done of myself, seated on a shooting stool with loader and dog in attendance, in the act of lighting a large cigar, with the legend underneath it : "An Equerry at *work*."

Another month's duty that fell pretty frequently to my turn was December which, commencing as it did on the Princess' birthday (1st December) entailed a large Birthday Party at Sandringham. On these occasions the guests consisted entirely of old friends, and year after year the Princess' most intimate ones, such as Lord, and the late Lady Ripon, Lord and Lady Gosford, and the "little Admiral," the late Sir Harry Keppel, were amongst those who used to meet there. Occasionally there would be a special dramatic performance, but there was always Gottlieb's band to play in the evening, and for the men there was excellent covert shooting during the day.

For several consecutive years, commencing with 1894, I was in attendance on the Prince in the month of March and the beginning of April at Cannes. He generally lived on board the *Britannia*, and, as the Riviera Regattas were in full swing during those weeks, there was plenty of yacht racing. The open-air life that could be lived at Cannes was invaluable to him after the long winter that generally ended up with part of January and practically the whole of February in London. Cannes was a very

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pleasant place then, and there were endless dinner parties and gaieties of all sorts, and the Society was eminently cosmopolitan. To begin with, the whole Riviera bristled with Royalties. Queen Victoria was for several years in succession at Cimiez in the neighbourhood of Nice. The Emperor and Empress of Austria were more than once at Cap Martin. The King of the Belgians was constantly in his yacht at Ville-franche, and was beginning to build himself a villa on that lovely promontory of Cap Juan that forms the eastern side of the harbour. Russian Grand Dukes abounded. The Duke and Duchess of Mecklenburg-Schwerin still continued to spend their winters at Cannes ; the Grand Duke Michael, then recently married to Countess Torby, had settled himself at the Villa Kasbec, close to his sister's Villa Venden. Countess Torby's father, Prince Nicholas of Nassau, with his wife and daughter, Countess Merenberg and Countess Adda Merenberg, were generally to be found at one of the numerous hotels in the town. Lord Salisbury had also built himself La Bastide, overlooking the little harbour of Beaulieu, where he usually spent a few weeks surrounded by his family, and the President of the French Republic, President Faure, who, since his official visit to St. Petersburg, had become in his secret heart, as well as in his own person, "plus Royaliste que le Roi," generally took an opportunity of paying a visit to Queen Victoria. I had the honour of being introduced to Monsieur le President on three separate occasions. Since his famous visit to Russia he had, greatly to his own satisfaction, taken upon himself

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what he conceived to be the true "Royal Manner," but unfortunately he did not possess the other inherent appanage of Royalty, viz. the "Royal Memory." So three times running, at comparatively short intervals, on presentation I was most courteously greeted with the same formula, (no wonder that I learnt it by heart!), "Commandant, enchanté de faire votre connaissance; il y a longtemps que vous êtes auprès de son Altesse Royale?"

In addition to these great personages that I have mentioned, three charming old ladies,—who were irreverently nicknamed in Paris "La Vieille Garde," the three great beauties of the latter days of the Empire, the Princesse de Sagan, the Marquise de Gallifet and the Comtesse de Pourtalès,—were always there, and a number of Frenchmen, such as Vicomte Charles de Rochefoucault, Comte Boni de Castellane and le Vicomte de Rochechouart; the latter was President of the French Yacht Club, under the auspices of which we constantly raced. A good many English people had permanent villas there, Lord and Lady Brougham, for instance, in their Château Eléanore, famous over the whole Riviera for its beautiful gardens and wonderful roses, and the late Mr. and Mrs. Robert Vyner at Château Ste. Anne. Of Americans, too, there were a good many "hardy annuals," the late Mr. Ogden Goelet and his family passed several winters there, principally on board the yacht, *White Lady*, whilst Mr. Anthony Drexel, in the *Margarita*, and the late Mr. Gordon Bennett, spent more of their time at the Monte Carlo end of the coast. When

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reigning Monarchs, to say nothing of the President of the country itself, are foregathering on some forty miles or so of sea coast, it is pretty obvious that men of importance of various nationalities are apt to find it necessary to pass a few days in the same atmosphere, and it was at Cannes that I first began to notice how the Prince invariably made a point of making the personal acquaintance of the many distinguished foreigners who happened to be out there, even if only for a few days as birds of passage, and I was to see, later on, when I was in attendance on him as the Sovereign, how invaluable these personal acquaintances were. Half-an-hour's conversation with a man is apt to give a greater insight into the character than reams of correspondence, and this was especially the case with the Prince of Wales, who was endowed either by nature or training, or more probably by a mixture of both, with a memory that really was prodigious. As an example of this memory, I recollect on my first journey with him to Cannes, when he had got out at some wayside station to stroll about during the five minutes' wait, some very obvious English gentleman bowed, and evidently rather expected to be recognised. His bow was of course returned, but on re-entering the railway carriage, the Prince at once asked me if I knew who the man was. I had never seen him in my life before, and so could be of no assistance. After the train had started again, I could see that the Prince was trying to place the individual, and suddenly, at the end of a quarter of an hour or so, he triumphantly exclaimed: "I knew that I should get hold of his



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name. He is a Mr. ——, and he was presented to me just fourteen years ago at a function at which I was present." He then proceeded to state what the function was, and where it had taken place. He had never set eyes on the man in question since!

After leaving Cannes, a few days were generally spent in Paris on the way home to see the newest plays, and England was reached about the middle of April, and from that time I was off duty until the Cowes season came round again in the month of August. In 1894 the *Vigilant*, which had successfully defended the America Cup against Lord Dunraven's *Valkyrie*, had arrived in the Roads. She had already met *Britannia* in several races on the Clyde when the latter had been very successful, and she was now to race with her at the headquarters of English Yacht Racing. One of the best races I ever witnessed was that between these two crack cutters and *Satanita* during the Squadron Regatta week at Cowes. The Prince was on board, and I am nearly sure that Prince George was also there on that day, and so remarkable a race was it that I am tempted to quote from what I wrote about it some years ago for one of the Badminton series:—

" . . . The yachts (*Britannia*, *Satanita*, and *Vigilant*) were to start to the eastward and sail round the Isle of Wight; and on this occasion *Britannia's* Royal owner and several of his friends were on board. *Satanita* began well, and was leading off Bembridge; but at the back of the island the breeze became paltry, and *Satanita* dropped back, while *Britannia* and *Vigilant* were engaged in a battle-royal. After getting round St. Catherine's and heading for the Needles, *Britannia* picked

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up a fresh breeze off the land, and was leading by some lengths, with the *Vigilant* tearing up astern of her. *Vigilant* gradually forged ahead, and came up inshore of *Britannia*, on her weather. The obvious course was to luff up and prevent her from forcing a passage; but, unhappily, there was not sufficient depth of water, so up went the *Britannia* on a shoal, and in another moment *Vigilant* took the ground also. The latter had now all the best of it, as by pulling up her centre-board she was able to get off almost at once, and away she went for the Needles with *Britannia* left on the shoal. It was a good ten minutes before *Britannia* was floating again, and by that time *Vigilant* had gained a couple of miles. However, a yacht race is never lost until it is won; and owing to the wind falling light and a useful fluke or two, by the time the Needles were passed the two yachts were neck and neck. The wind had fallen light again, and what there was blew from the westward, so it was a case of up helm and set spinnakers. All on board were now full of hope, as running in light winds *Britannia* was rather the faster of the two; so with a gentle westerly breeze and a fair tide to take them along, the two rivals headed for the mark-boat at Cowes. But hope had almost to be abandoned when it was seen that instead of *Britannia* having the advantage, *Vigilant* was streaking away as if she were in tow, while *Britannia* dropped farther and farther astern. *Vigilant* eventually won in hollow fashion by eight minutes.

“Mr. W. Jameson and Carter had their suspicions about the cause of *Britannia*'s sluggishness, so next day she was sent over to Southampton to be docked, and then the cause was apparent. The result of her grounding was that a quantity of her copper-plating instead of being polished and smooth, was standing out in rolls, and, moreover, large pieces of rock were actually sticking out from her lead keel. No wonder poor *Britannia* could not sail! On the other hand, *Vigilant*, thanks to her centre-board keel, had got off the rocks quite uninjured. However, the disappointment and damage done were alike transitory, and two days later she was sailing as well as ever again. At the end of the Solent Regattas, *Vigilant* retired from the contest. She had sailed seventeen times against the *Britannia*, and of those races *Britannia* had won eleven out.

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right. The rest of the season of 1894, except in mixed races, resolved itself into matches between *Satanita* and *Britannia*, of which *Britannia* won the lion's share."

The year 1894 was an interesting one to me as regards horse-racing, for a colt from Sandringham Stud, that good horse Florizel II, came to the fore as a three-year-old. Being very fond of racing, I took a great interest in the horses bred at Sandringham, as, having seen them in the earliest infancy before they went to Richard Marsh to be trained, it was a great pleasure to follow their subsequent careers. Florizel, who was too backward to do any good as a two-year-old, began his winning career as a three-year-old, at Ascot, when he won a couple of good weight-for-age races, and, later on, at Goodwood and Newmarket he won again.

But the year 1895 was more interesting still, both as regards yachts and thoroughbreds. The *Ailsa*, a new cutter belonging to Mr. Barclay Walker, came out to Cannes in the March of that year, and made the yacht-racing there more strenuous than ever. She was a worthy antagonist to *Britannia*, and on the Riviera, where the wind is apt to be light, had rather the best of it, but later on in England the *Britannia* more than held her own. In the early summer the Prince was again racing on the Thames, and pulled off a pretty double event, for, on anchoring after a winning race against *Ailsa*, a telegram was brought on board the *Britannia* announcing the fact that Florizel had won a nice race the same day. I think it was the big handicap at Gatwick or Manchester. Ascot of the

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same year was really a "Royal Ascot," for Florizel won the Gold Vase, and that great horse, Persimmon, an own brother to Florizel, made his *début* as a two-year-old, and won the most important two-year-old race of the meeting, the Coventry Stakes, in a canter.

But life did not consist entirely of racing and yachting; on the whole the greatest pleasure that I had in those days was, I think, the Opera. Covent Garden was perhaps at its zenith about then. I can still remember my first visit to that House when I was a little boy nine years old. Patti was then at the height of her fame and beauty, and I was lucky enough to hear her sing in *Dinorah*, with Graziani as the Hoel. Meyerbeer is quite out of fashion now, but to a child, loving music as I did, it was heavenly, and I know that I was so excited by it that I never slept a wink the whole night through. Later, whenever I had a chance on the rare occasions that I was in London, I used to manage to go to Covent Garden, or Her Majesty's Opera House in the Haymarket, which were both going at the same time, with Patti as the bright particular star at Covent Garden, and Christine Nilsson at Her Majesty's. Some of the castes were very remarkably good then. I remember *Don Giovanni* being splendidly given at Covent Garden, with Patti, Tamberlik and Faure in the principal parts, and of course I heard Nilsson as Margherita in *Faust*, perhaps her best rôle; and, somewhat later, I heard that marvellous singer, Melba,—Dame Nellie Melba, as she now is,—when she sang once or twice at Covent

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Garden before she made her triumphal successes at Brussels and Paris. Having become famous in Paris, of course she became indispensable to Covent Garden, and, thank Heaven, her lovely voice is still to be heard there, and I am proud to be able to count myself as one of her friends. But it was only when I was fortunate enough to become a member of the omnibus box that I developed into a confirmed habitu . There were plenty of other distractions available, but I was faithful to my love of music and was there most nights in the week, hearing delightful operas in the greatest comfort. The omnibus box was designed for eight subscribers, but the other amusements of London generally cut the nightly number of occupants down to three or four, and sometimes indeed I was the only one present, and to listen to good music in solitary comfort, seated in a capacious arm-chair, is one of the pleasantest things I know. Then, too, Covent Garden was fashionable in the best sense of that detestable word. The boxes were extraordinarily becoming to pretty women, and through the season they were filled, on most nights, with all the beautiful women of the time, looking their best in their most becoming dresses and diamonds, especially if there happened to be an important party to follow. The late Sir Augustus Harris treated his subscribers and his public extremely well ; but I am inclined to think that the Syndicate that succeeded him did even better. Before taking leave of Sir Augustus Harris, a rather amusing incident indirectly connected with him happened at one of the early Masked Balls that he

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inaugurated at Covent Garden. An old friend of mine, the well-known Member of Parliament, Colonel Claude Lowther, had a box on the Grand Tier at one of these entertainments, and surreptitiously introduced into it a wonderful dummy figure made up as Sir Augustus. When the dancing was at its height, a sudden commotion brought the dancing to a standstill, and there in the forefront of one of the boxes was to be seen a terrific combat between Claude Lowther and Sir Augustus, Claude evidently getting very much the best of it. The dancers in the parterre were in agonies of suspense, as Sir Augustus was deservedly a great popular favourite, and their suspense changed into horror when they suddenly saw him taken bodily off his feet and flung out of the box on to the dancing-floor. So realistic was it that the police rushed up to the box, and before the joke could be explained Claude Lowther was conducted over to Bow Street, which was exactly opposite. I never shall forget the shout of laughter that went up when the dummy was discovered on the floor none the worse for its fall.

But to turn to the musical side of Covent Garden, what a number of fine artists I heard there during the many years I was a subscriber! The brothers de Reszke, Maurel, Ternina, Van Rooy Plançon (who was, perhaps, the best *basse chantant* we ever heard), Caruso, Vandyck, Sammarco, Mesdames Destinn and Edvina, and last, but by no means least, Dame Nellie Melba. The four last-mentioned artists have all been singing during the past two seasons. When the *Ring*, and Wagner generally, was given, with Richter as

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conductor, and with some of his Manchester musicians reinforcing the orchestra, without in the least posing as an expert, the performances to my mind were infinitely better all round than they were at Bayreuth. One very good reason being, that the very astute Frau Wagner greatly preferred a cheap artist to an expensive one; and even to my untutored taste Richter was a far greater conductor than Siegfried Wagner, whose only recommendation, I suppose, was that, being his mother's son, he was very cheap indeed! As to individual performances, to my mind the two greatest artists of the Operatic Stage during my time were two men, Chaliapine and Jean de Reszke. The former, besides his magnificent voice and physique, was not only a very great actor, but was, I think, in Russian Opera, unsurpassable. I believe that he never sang at Covent Garden, but I heard him at Monte Carlo and many times at Drury Lane. One of his great rôles outside Russian Opera was Mephistofle, in Boito's opera of that name. I can see him now as his Satanic Majesty, with all his subjects crouched round him, dominating the stage in almost the exact pose of Rodin's "Penseur." Jean de Reszke, who I knew very well, was probably at his best and greatest in three very different parts. He was incomparably the best Lohengrin I ever saw or heard on any stage, and the same appreciation applied to his Tristan. But I believe that in his secret heart and in the heyday of his career, his favourite part was Romeo. *Roméo et Juliette*, as rendered by him and Melba, with his big brother Édouard (as Frère Laurent) duly marrying

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them, some fifteen or twenty years ago, used to fill Covent Garden to its very roof. It is the fashion nowadays to decry Gounod's music as being too sugary, and obvious, and all the rest of it ; but, none the less, sung as it was by those great artists it used to delight a great many of us.

About this time I was anxious to put off the date at which I would inevitably be forced to retire from the Service, so I applied to the Admiralty for employment during the yearly manœuvres that were about to take place, and, the Prince having given his consent to my absence, I was appointed to the *Theseus*, then a comparatively new class of cruiser, for the duration of these exercises. The new system of mobilisation which had recently come in, consisted in the necessary officers and crews being marched bodily on board the ship, which, up to that time, was lying at a home port with nobody on board but the Chief Engineer, the Warrant Officers, a few stokers, and a small number of marines, who were employed as caretakers. The scheme must have been extremely well worked out, as can be shown by what actually took place in practice.

At eight o'clock I and the rest of the newly appointed officers went on board ; the men were marched on board from the barracks or receiving ship, with their bags and hammocks. Provisions were at once drawn, and by noon the entire ship's company had been stationed as regards Fire, Action, Boats and Watches, and had been piped to dinner. Chatham was the parent port of the *Theseus*, and before nightfall, the Captain having arrived on board during the day, the



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ship had been unberthed and moved into the river, all ready to receive her ammunition the next day. By the following evening we were anchored at the Nore and reported ready for service. It is true that a ship commissioned in this way could not really compare in efficiency with one that had been on service for some time, but every day saw an improvement in general smartness and discipline, and in a week's time a mobilised ship could, if necessary, have fought a very respectable action.

It was now some nine years since I had served in a real man-of-war at sea, and I remember being greatly impressed with the great improvement that had taken place in the acquirements of the officers and men during that period. The Captain, Charles Campbell, was an old friend, he having been Flag-Lieutenant to his relative, Rear-Admiral F. Campbell, in the old flying-squadron days ; but, barring the Captain, the rest of the officers were absolute strangers to me, as, indeed, I was to them. I, however, found them to be, without exception, thoroughly competent, and one and all gave the same loyal and devoted service to me, that they could have given to a superior officer whom they had known and served under for years. Before joining up with the rest of the Fleet for manœuvring purposes the *Theseus* was ordered to escort a small squadron of torpedo-boats that had been ordered to Gibraltar. These boats were towed in turn, as they were unable to keep the sea under their own steam for more than a few hours. We had a good deal of bad weather on our way out,

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which necessitated our going into Vigo, and incidentally a good deal of trouble with our small craft ; but eventually we delivered them safely at their destination, and rejoined the Fleet for a month's exercise.

The manœuvres having come to an end, the *Theseus*, after being inspected by the Admiralty, was paid off into the First Class Reserve again, and so ended my last term of service afloat. Having left the *Britannia* at the end of 1870, I had served at sea, on and off, for some twenty-five years, and before taking leave of the Navy, so far as these Reminiscences are concerned, I must write a few lines about the state it was in in those days.

My service was performed during a period of comparative slackness, if such a term can ever be applied to the Royal Navy. The fact is, it was a time of profound peace. Since 1815 the Navy had seen no active service on a large scale. In the middle period of the nineteenth century there had been good work to do in the suppression of piracy and the slave trade. There had been bombardments, such as those of Acre, Algiers, Sveaborg, Sevastopol, Cronstadt and Alexandria,—more or less futile, as all bombardments of land forts by ships must be. There had even been a Naval action at Navarino. Small numbers of men had been landed as Naval Brigades all over the world in all the great and small wars that we waged in places as far apart as the Crimea, India and New Zealand. Later on there had been a small modicum of active service to be seen by a fortunate few in Egypt, and in South Africa during the Zulu campaign. At the time of the

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South African War in 1889, there were again small Naval Brigades landed, and when there was a danger of European complications, in view of the number of troops that we had to send to Africa, the sea route was efficiently, if very quietly, patrolled. The fact was that during the greater part of the time that I was serving there was no great competition possible. The German Navy hardly existed. For some years after 1870, the French Navy had been allowed to decrease. The Russians only used to build spasmodically. It was only shortly before 1890 that the Admiralty had seriously to consider their building programme against the possible combination of the French and Russian Navies, which was then a formidable possibility: and it was owing to that possibility mainly that the great improvement in general efficiency that I noticed when I joined the *Theseus* had taken place. From that time onwards the Navy has never looked back. Successive Governments may not have supplied it with anything approaching the necessary ships and stores, but the senior officers of the Navy have trained the officers and men under them, and brought them to that high state of efficiency and discipline which has been so apparent to the whole world during the war which has just come to a conclusion; and that same efficiency and devotion to duty has,—I think as an old sailor,—been handsomely acknowledged, not only by the country at large, but by those who are privileged to speak for their country, from the Sovereign downwards. Personally, I am full of pride at having, at one time, had the honour to belong to that noble

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Service, and of having served with what is, perhaps, the best corps of officers, with the best lot of men under them, in the world.

In my experience, the only time when Naval Officers are ever likely to fail is when they are working at the Admiralty. The fact is that constant service at sea is apt to narrow their outlook from a most important point of view,—I mean that of a man of the world. Brought up in a profession where a rigid discipline has to be, and is, maintained, they are too apt to be rather obsessed by the First Lords of the Admiralty, and the other functionaries with whom they are brought into contact, and are inclined to treat them all with a good deal too much subservience. It is rather instinctive for an officer who has served all his time at sea to look, with a certain amount of veneration, on his superior officers, and consequently to be inclined to be overawed by a name that is placed in the Navy List as being, after the Sovereign, the Head of the Navy. The post of First Lord of the Admiralty was always a much coveted one, and on the whole it is only just to say that it has been generally held by politicians of considerable weight and experience. A certain amount of glamour of sentiment is supposed to surround it, vividly enhanced by the temporary possession of an extremely well-appointed yacht, on board of which the female relations and friends of the various First Lords could take up their abode in the summer, and cruise at their own sweet will, at the expense of the long-suffering British tax-payer.

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The year 1896 was a very important year's racing for those who were interested in the Sandringham Stud, for it was in 1896 that the Prince of Wales had his first really successful year on the Turf—that great horse Persimmon accounting for the Derby and St. Leger and Jockey Club Stakes at Newmarket, while Thais won the One Thousand Guineas. I saw the Derby from what used to be known as the Paget Stand, of which institution I was a member for many years, and for those who do not know Epsom, it is as well to mention that the actual winning-post touches the edge of that stand, and the horses are often within an arm's length of the "Booth" (as it used to be called), when they passed the post. It is exciting enough at any time to see the finish for the Derby from that point of vantage, but when, as in 1896, there is a desperate race between two really first-class horses, as were Persimmon and St. Frusquin, and the race is eventually won by the Prince's horse all out by a neck, the excitement really becomes indescribable. I cannot truthfully say that I have never heard such cheering, for I am glad to say that I was to hear it again when Minoru won the Derby in 1909. But Minoru was, after all, only a leased horse, whereas Persimmon was a Sandringham-bred colt, and an own brother to Florizel, a winner of good races. Anyhow, the enthusiasm of the public knew no bounds, and the Prince's Derby achieved the greatest popular success that ever was seen on a racecourse.

In August of that year I was on duty as usual at Cowes, and about the middle of the month I was

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ordered to attend the Princess on a journey to the Continent. Her Royal Highness, with Miss Charlotte Knollys who was Lady in attendance, went to visit her brother-in-law and her sister, the Duke and Duchess of Cumberland, at their beautiful Castle of Gmunden, which is not far from Ischl, and is surrounded by magnificent scenery. Personally, never having seen that part of Europe before, I was delighted with the beauty of the surroundings. After a week's stay there the Princess went to Bayreuth, when her party was completed by the appearance on the scene of the late Lady Ripon, Miss Yznaga (the sister of the Duchess of Manchester) and the late Sir Reginald Lister. The *Ring* was being given as usual there, and in some respects very beautifully given ; but I still think, as I have mentioned before, that the artists, as a lot, were very inferior to those I heard a few years later at Covent Garden. None the less, Bayreuth has a certain atmosphere of its own. Unlike London, there are no distractions of any kind in that funny little town, so absolutely undivided attention can be given to the music. After the Bayreuth week was over, I attended the Princess to Copenhagen, visiting *en route* Nuremberg and the Chiem See, where the palace,—that extraordinary freak imitation of Versailles, built by the late King of Bavaria,—was the objective of the visit. After spending one night at Copenhagen, I travelled straight through to Wemmergill, where I was the guest of a very old friend, Lord Westbury, for a week's grouse-driving. Wemmergill, as all shooting men know, is one of the very best of the Yorkshire and Westmoreland moors, and there, with a very cheery shooting party, I had an excellent week's sport.

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The year 1897 was principally remarkable for the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria, and the festivities that took place in London in honour of the occasion. I had been in waiting in the spring at Cannes, where the Prince had, as usual, taken up his residence on board the *Britannia*, and at all the Riviera Regattas there was good sport in matches against *Ailsa*, but the breezes had ruled light, and on the whole the *Ailsa* had rather the best of the numerous contests. It was *Britannia's* last year of racing. It was considered not worth while to compete against the much newer *Meteor*, so the old boat took no part in the English Regattas, except at Cowes, when, starting three times, she won two races, one of which was a match round the Isle of Wight for the German Emperor's Challenge Shield, in which contest she defeated Mr. C. D. Rose's *Aurora*. Her wonderfully successful racing career being thus terminated, she became permanently relegated into the cruiser or handicap class, and was used for many years by her owner for sailing about in the Solent with reduced canvas and a very much reduced crew. The Jubilee year was another good year for the Sandringham horses, as Persimmon won the Ascot Gold Cup in a canter, and the Eclipse Stakes at Sandown. Moreover, two useful two-year-olds, Little Dorrit and Mousme, won a couple of nice races each. '97 ended Persimmon's career as a race-horse; he probably was at his very best when he won the Ascot Cup, and he retired to a palatial loose box at Sandringham, where he became the sire of over a hundred winners.

One of the marked features of the Diamond Jubilee Season in London was the Fancy Dress Ball given at

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Devonshire House. All London Society was there, headed by the Prince and Princess of Wales, and it certainly was a very beautiful sight. Devonshire House lends itself extraordinarily well to a great entertainment, for the reception rooms are very fine, another feature being the marble staircase; so low are the steps and so gradual the ascent, that it really is more like an inclined plane than a staircase. It was an extraordinarily pretty spectacle for any one standing on the big landing of the first floor, to see the endless string of guests, in their various costumes, proceeding up to be received by their hostess and host at the top of the stairs. A great many of the dresses were very beautiful, and a record of them still exists, for a number of the Duchess' friends presented her with an album containing as many reproductions as could be collected of the photographs and sketches that were taken of the various guests in their costumes.

Later in the year, after Cowes, the Prince and Princess decided to go to Bayreuth, and I was in attendance during the visit; but one visit to Bayreuth is very like another, and as far as I was concerned the only novelty was that *Parsifal* was given as well as the *Ring*. In those days *Parsifal* never was given except at Bayreuth, but that particular portion of the Wagner Legend has died out, and since then it has been performed both in London and New York. It was the fashion to rave about that opera, but I fancy now that it is no longer sacred to Bayreuth; the public in general have discovered that, fine as it is, the *Ring* and *Tristan* are a very great deal finer. So long as





SEYMOUR FORTESCUE

As Moroni's Lawyer (National Gallery Collection), Devonshire House Fancy Ball, 1897



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*Parsifal* could only be given at Bayreuth it was a great attraction to the musical public, and brought a number of people there, who, but for it, would probably not have taken that troublesome journey. This large influx of visitors of course meant money, a commodity the value of which was thoroughly understood and appreciated by "Frau Cosima," for there was a good deal of the successful "Barnum" about that remarkable old lady, now deceased. After the Bayreuth week, the Princess went on to Copenhagen, and I attended the Prince to Kronberg to enable him to pay a visit to his sister, the late Empress Frederick. The Empress had certainly succeeded in building herself one of the finest modern residences I ever saw, and Kronberg was full of the beautiful things that she had collected, all moreover arranged in excellent taste. After a short visit, the Prince went to Homburg, and I returned to England in time for Doncaster Races.

## CHAPTER IX

### ON THE HEADQUARTER STAFF IN SOUTH AFRICA

EARLY in 1899 I travelled with the late Lord Clarendon, who was at that time Lord Chamberlain, to Coburg, to represent the Prince of Wales at the Silver Wedding of his brother, the Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, Lord Clarendon having been selected by Queen Victoria for a similar purpose. We spent about a week there, at the Castle, while the fêtes connected with that anniversary were in progress. It was a great pleasure to me to have this opportunity of seeing their Royal Highnesses, who had been so kind to me when on the Mediterranean Station, and talk over our mutual recollections of the numerous cruises of the old *Surprise*. The night we arrived we were both invited to dine with the Royal Family, and extremely pleasant it was ; but for the rest of the time there were endless Court functions and banquets, and I found living in a small German Court, cheek by jowl with the German Court officials, one of the most disagreeable experiences that I can recollect. However, by pleading that I had acquaintances in the town,—which was not strictly true,—I managed to escape from most of the dreary household luncheons, finding it infinitely preferable to eat by myself at the extremely moderate

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hotel that was all the town of Coburg could boast of in the shape of a restaurant. Under these circumstances, it was eminently true that the "dinner of herbs" at that very bad inn was better than the "stalled ox" at the Schloss.

But soon more interesting events were to take place, for before the end of the year the South African War had begun. After what was known then as the "black week," when, in the course of a few days, the British public received news of three very distinct reverses, I came to the conclusion that it was impossible for a man of my age to remain in England if by hook or by crook he could possibly manage to get out to Africa. The only plan I could think of was to try to get there on the Staff, as Naval Aide-de-Camp, on the plea that there was a considerable Naval Brigade being formed to work a battery of 4.7 guns to emulate what had already been achieved by their comrades in Natal. I applied to the Prince for aid, and, as usual, not in vain, for, when Field-Marshal Lord Roberts was appointed to be Commander-in-Chief in South Africa, through His Royal Highness' kind offices the Field-Marshal allowed me to be appointed as Naval Aide-de-Camp on the Headquarter Staff. As it turned out, my duties consisted in doing pretty much the same work as the other Aides-de-Camp, the bulk of which was deciphering and enciphering telegrams; for though when on the march I kept as much in touch with what was called the "Cow-Gun Brigade" (the name being, of course, derived from the team of eighteen bullocks that dragged the guns along), I never could discover that they were

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in want of anything except ammunition, the fact being, I suppose, that if any particular article was lacking they immediately proceeded to try to annex it, and in general they succeeded, much to the delight of the Quarter-Master-General, who told me that they formed the only unit that never gave him any trouble.

Apropos of the "black week," long after I had returned from South Africa, one of Queen Victoria's gentlemen told me an interesting story on the subject. When the bad news arrived, Queen Victoria,—though she had much too fine, and well-trained a sense of proportion to feel in the least nervous,—thought that nevertheless she would like to consult some Military Authority who had a knowledge of South Africa. Accordingly, the late Sir Evelyn Wood was summoned to Balmoral. When he presented himself he was addressed somewhat as follows :—

"Sir Evelyn, I have sent for you to consult you about the campaign in South Africa, but, mind, I will have no croakers here." I have always thought that there was something deliciously Elizabethan about this prefatory remark. All this is, I fear, a digression ; but to revert to the end of 1899,—the main point for me was to get out to South Africa somehow, and that I succeeded in doing.

Lord Roberts sailed with his Staff on board the mail steamer just before Christmas, calling at Gibraltar on the 26th of December to pick up Lord Kitchener, who had been brought there direct from Egypt in a cruiser. He duly arrived on board on that date, accompanied by

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his two Aides-de-Camp, Lieutenant Walter Cowan, R.N., and Captain James Watson. Cowan is now Rear-Admiral Sir Walter, having done excellent work during the late war, and indeed after it, in the Baltic, while Jimmy Watson has made a career for himself in Egypt, where, amongst other things, he was on the personal Staff of the late Khedive, and I fancy still rejoices in the rank of Watson Pasha. Both of these best of good fellows became friends of mine, and I am glad to say we still occasionally meet.

Next to my Chief and Lord Kitchener, the man who gave me the greatest impression of outstanding ability was the late Colonel Henderson. He was, I think, appointed to the Commander-in-Chief's Staff as Head Intelligence Officer, and a better appointment never was made. He was a really scientific soldier in the fullest sense of the word; as a literary man he had written one of the very best military books ever printed in his *Life of Stonewall Jackson*; as a lecturer at the Staff College he had delivered some most interesting and instructive lectures on military subjects,—indeed so clear and well-written were they that, when published, even a sailor like myself could understand and appreciate them. Moreover, he was a most charming companion, and always ready (if asked) to give others the benefit of his great erudition. Unfortunately, even then his health was failing. So ill was he that in a very short time he had to give up riding and take to a Cape cart, and, sad to relate, before the campaign was ended he had been invalided home to England, and died a year or two after his return. He was very kind

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to me, and,—perhaps because he was a great admirer of my brother John's *History of the Army*,—he often gave me of his best in conversation. It used to be my delight on board the steamer to get hold of him after dinner and induce him to talk.

There was a considerable sprinkling of Germans and Dutchmen among the passengers, most of whom were probably spies ; but any designs they might have entertained of making some sort of raid on the Chief's day-cabin in the hopes of getting hold of his papers, was frustrated by the fact that we had a gunboat's crew on board, going out to relieve men whose time had expired on some small craft on the South African Station. These men were at once made use of as sentries, and so we were able to post a permanent sentry on Lord Roberts' cabin door, as well as permanent orderlies, to be at his beck and call.

The voyage out was quite uneventful, and our steamer duly arrived at Cape Town on January 10th. The Commander-in-Chief took up his quarters in a very decent little house that had been reserved for him, and I personally settled down close by at the Mount Nelson Hotel. There was not much for the Aides-de-Camp to do while there, for the real work of the Headquarter Staff was the preparation for the advance to Bloemfontein, the entire transport service being reorganised and increased by Lord Kitchener. A few days after our arrival I was sent down to Simon's Bay to inquire into some complaints that had been lodged by the Boer prisoners who were confined on board a transport that was anchored there. The



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complaints were absolutely frivolous and hardly worth inquiring into, but were rather amusing as giving an insight into the character of that curious creature whom the British Tommy invariably talked of as "Brother Boer." Their principal grievance was that they were overcrowded. On inquiry I found out that the transport in question had brought 1200 British troops from England, and whenever it was the least rough all the lower main-deck ports had to be closed, and naturally the ship was under a full head of steam all the time she was making her passage through the tropics. Probably under those conditions the heat and want of air was very trying, but war is war, and discomforts must be expected. The Boer prisoners on board numbered only 440; every sort of ventilation could be freely opened while the ship swung round her anchors, and of course no steam was up. So I explained to the Boer officer who was the spokesman that what was good enough for 1200 British troops at sea was luxury for a handful of prisoners in harbour. He was a decent fellow, and agreed with me that there was no real cause for complaint, but went on to say that Boers were accustomed to the freedom of the veldt and felt the confinement very keenly. It then devolved on me to explain that our prisoners at Pretoria, living behind barbed wire, were also, not exactly, having the time of their lives. This seemed to come quite as a revelation to him, and of course I reported that they had nothing whatever to complain of, and the matter dropped.

I had one or two more trips over to Simon's Bay to report on the 4·7 guns that were being fitted out there

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as a battery of mobile siege guns, to be used in the field, and manned by the Naval Brigade.

Another little suburban trip I made was to Stellenbosch. (The name later became, used as a verb, a polite form of speech for denoting the fact that some unfortunate official had proved incompetent, and had to be got rid of.) When I went there it boasted of a large remount establishment, the animals being mostly Argentine cobs and Cape ponies. I succeeded in getting hold of two very useful ones, the Cape pony in particular turning out to be a treasure. I had accompanied Lord Kitchener and some of his Staff, who were, I expect, inspecting the establishment from the point of view of transport.

Altogether we were just about two months at Cape Town, and very weary we all were of the place and right glad when the orders came at last to go to the front! The pleasantest incidents in the life there was the constant meeting of all sorts of old friends, who generally turned up for dinner at Groote-Schurr, which, at that time, had been lent by Mr. Cecil Rhodes to Lady Edward Cecil and Lady Charles Bentinck, who were very busy at war work in the town close at hand. Then every day fresh arrivals turned up from England; my cousin, Lady Bagot, (then Mrs. Joycelyn Bagot), and Lady Henry Bentinck had come out to look after the Portland Hospital; the present Lord Derby, then Lord Stanley, arrived on the scene as Press Censor,—and all one's friends that came down from the front, either wounded or for a few days' leave, generally turned up at Groote-Schurr, where open house was kept by

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Cecil Rhodes for his temporary tenants and their friends.

The only other work we Aides-de-Camp had was to cipher and decipher the telegrams that poured in all day, which were not finally disposed of until nearly midnight, and two of us were generally on duty with the Chief when he was inspecting or going for a constitutional ride in the cool of the evening.

But on the 6th of February our stay at Cape Town came to an end, and the Headquarter Staff left by train for the Modder, and then events succeeded each other pretty quickly. On the 11th Lord Roberts' flank march began. As concerned the Headquarter Staff, we moved first to Ramdam, and by the 15th were at Jacobsdaal, where we received the good news that French had relieved Kimberley. On the 17th, Cronje was held up at Paardeberg, and on the 19th Lord Roberts and his Staff arrived there.

I am not going into details about the action at Paardeberg. After what we have experienced lately, I suppose no soldier, nowadays, would do otherwise than agree that it would have been worth while, even at the expense of a considerable quantity of casualties, to have bundled Cronje out of his laager without further delay. Even if a good many men might have been sacrificed in such an assault, they would have been few compared to those who perished later of the germs of typhoid probably picked up during that ten days' wait at Paardeberg. The river being full of dead animals, the water the men were drinking was poisonous. Now, the British soldier is a thirsty animal (and,

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indeed, as far as the infantryman is concerned, he has every right to be, when, as in Africa, he was carrying a heavy kit under a burning sun and enveloped in clouds of dust). The result was that the men were, more than probably, absorbing typhoid germs during the whole of their stay there.

When the Headquarter Staff arrived there on the 19th there were rumours of an immediate surrender. There must have been further parleys of which I knew nothing, for a few days later I was sent under a white flag to the Boers' laager with a letter addressed to the Boer Commandant. After I had crossed the drift held by the Boers, I was received by them with perfect civility, and duly delivered my letter, to which, apparently, there was no answer, as I did not bring one back, but I remember well the difficulty I had in getting my horse to cross and recross, so piled up was the river at this fording-place with dead and putrefying animals. A very few days later, on February 27th, I was riding in the same direction again, this time to accompany one of the Generals on the Headquarter Staff, Prettyman by name, who was sent out by the Chief to bring Cronje in. I suppose it was on the strength of this casual acquaintance that Cronje, after his surrender, very much to my disgust, elected to annex my own particular shelter in the Camp, for the use of himself and his old wife, who was the living image of the late Dan Leno when made up for the Christmas pantomime; but it was only for a short time, as he and his 4000 fellow-prisoners were sent down to the Cape next day, most of them *en route* for St. Helena.

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The next day we had the news of the relief of Ladysmith, on the anniversary of our defeat at Majuba Hill, with all the disgraceful memories of the peace that had been patched up after it. Now at last the disgrace had been wiped out. Well might the Boers say that, after Paardeberg and Ladysmith, we had robbed them even of their Majuba Day.

We were soon on the move after Cronje's surrender, and by the 12th of March had occupied Bloemfontein. We met with but few difficulties on the road, the only serious trouble being to keep supplies going, and ensure a sufficiency of water. There was one not inconsiderable action on the way, which was fought at Dreifontein, and I was lucky enough to see rather more of it than usual. I had been sent on to select some quarters for the Chief, if there happened to be any available, and had succeeded in finding quite a decent farm, for the moment occupied by our wounded, which would answer the purpose; so my job being completed, and the rest of the Headquarter Staff being many hours behind, I went on with some of my friends among the special correspondents to watch the fighting. I remember that Mr. Gwynne (then, I think, the special correspondent of Reuter, now the well-known editor of the *Morning Post*) and I settled ourselves down on the top of a very comfortable little kopje, at a convenient distance on the flank of our advance, and watched some of the infantry of the Sixth Division take the Boer position. The Boers were holding a line of kopjes within easy view from where we were ensconced, and were keeping up a hot fire on our advancing troops—who were attacking

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in the most orthodox way in short rushes, and making use of all the cover available. When our troops had fought their way close up to the Boer line we distinctly saw a Boer show himself on the sky-line with his arms up in an obvious attitude of surrender. The attacking force, thinking that it was all over, at once showed themselves, and were received by a heavy volley at close range, which killed and wounded a number of them; the rest, without a pause, rushed on, and in a few minutes the position was captured. As always, the British soldier showed the greatest magnanimity, and instead of bayoneting the Boers, as they had a perfect right to do for what certainly appeared to be a distinct act of treachery, they contented themselves with making prisoners of all those who had not succeeded in bolting off on their ponies. The little action at Dreifontein was a very considerable success, and might have been an important one, were it not that, as usual, the underfed and overworked cavalry horses were so exhausted that a pursuit was rendered impossible.

Two days later, on March 13th, Lord Roberts entered Bloemfontein. During the early morning of that day I had been sent forward to see if I could find some halting-place where the Headquarter Staff could breakfast, and was fortunate enough to find a very comfortable farm for that purpose, which, as it turned out, belonged to a brother-in-law of Steyn's. The lady of the house, who was quite a nice woman, received us very amiably, but told us that the Boers never expected we should have left the river and marched in the way we did, as they were persuaded that the route we took would

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result in the army inevitably perishing of thirst, so waterless was that bit of country. I expect the margin was narrow, but events justified the selection made, and all was well. Just as the Headquarter Staff rode into the town, a column arrived, so Lord Roberts and his Staff halted and pulled out of the way to allow the Grenadier Guards to march in. It was a magnificent sight. The men, after a terrific march, caked with dust, parched with thirst, and literally in rags, swung past their Chief with their heads erect, and all the air of conquerors. For the moment all fatigue seemed to have left them, and they marched as if they were returning to their barracks after an hour's exercise in Hyde Park.

Bloemfontein for the first week or so was quite a pleasant change after about six weeks on the march through a very thirsty country. We began by being billeted in the sort of Government House usually occupied by Steyn and his family. It was quite a good and well-built house, and four of us occupied a large room on the second floor, which we believed to be Mrs. Steyn's bedroom. I remember we came to the conclusion that the lady in question must have been somewhat primitive in her toilet arrangements, for nothing in the shape of washing utensils were to be seen; such a thing as a bath, for instance, was obviously non-existent, and indeed there was not even a water-tap above the ground floor. However, my room-mates and myself, who all happened to be old friends, settled down very comfortably. They were Lord Dudley and his brother, Jack Ward (the present Sir John Ward), and

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Lord Stanley, who was still doing duty as Press Censor. A short time afterwards, when Colonel Neville Chamberlain gave up his post as Private Secretary to the Commander-in-Chief, Stanley succeeded him, and later accompanied the Chief home. I was unlucky enough to have taken rather a bad chill after a very soaking night at Paardeberg, and though I managed to stick it out until our arrival at Bloemfontein, I had to lay up for a few days with a good deal of fever, so being the invalid of the party I was allotted the only bed, the rest of my comrades sleeping more or less on the floor. There being nothing particular to do for the moment, the doctor thought I might just as well get a little change and rest, so as soon as I had got rid of my little feverish attack I went down to Cape Town for a week, partly for change of air, and principally to buy stores for the Headquarter Mess. The railway was running through to the Cape all right, the only trouble being that the Boers had blown up the big railway bridge at Norval's Pont, so on my way down I had to cross the river in a boat.

Nothing in South Africa impressed me so greatly as the efficiency of the Railway Corps. I crossed the Orange River three times in three months, the first time, as above mentioned, in a boat, the second time, a week later, in a train over a temporary bridge, and three months afterwards in a train running over the permanent bridge that is there to this day. During the whole of the advance to Pretoria, when marching along the line, the Railway Engineers succeeded in keeping pace with the Army on the march, bringing up not



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only their repairing plant, but stores for the Army as well. Though we, who were riding close to the railway line, could see all the rails standing on-end, twisted like corkscrews for miles ahead of us, and though the ponts which crossed the innumerable spruits were one and all blown up, the trains succeeded in keeping up with the troops; and even the bridge over the Valsch River at Kroonstadt, which is a real river, only delayed them for a few days. In fact, the ordinary wreckage of war is repaired almost as quickly as it is created.

I spent a pleasant week at Groote-Schurr. Cecil Rhodes had returned there after the relief of Kimberley; his brother Frankie, still looking very thin after the privations of the Ladysmith siege, was taking a brief holiday in his brother's house. Alas! he also is no longer with us. He was one of my oldest friends, for I had known him since my young days, when hunting from Grantham. He was the kindest of men, and those of the beleaguered garrison of Ladysmith, who knew him during the siege, were always full of stories of his generosity and unselfishness. Ian Hamilton, now General Sir Ian, was another Ladysmith man who came there for a few days' fattening-up, Billy Lambton, then a Captain in the Coldstream Guards (now General Sir William), was also a guest, during his recovery from a severe shell-wound in the knee received at Magersfontein; whilst the two ladies—Lady Edward Cecil and Lady Charles Bentinck—were still doing their work at Cape Town, with Groote-Schurr for their headquarters.

When my week's leave had expired, four of us took

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the train back to Bloemfontein, but I may as well quote an old letter I wrote home at the time to describe my journey.

“We started up a party of four, the two Groote-Schurr ladies, Artie Stanley, and myself. We had two very comfortable carriages, one for the ladies and one for the men, and no end of provisions and champagne provided for us by our kind host. It was all very cheery as far as Norval’s Pont, where the railway authorities succeeded in getting our train bodily over the temporary bridge that spanned the Orange River. At Norval’s Pont they had just had the news of Broadwood’s disaster at Sanna’s Post, and the funks had rather set in on the line. Admiral Maxse had telegraphed to his daughter (Lady Edward Cecil) forbidding her to come up any further, and Artie Stanley also received a telegram telling him that no civilians were to go on, so all my pleasant companions were bundled out of the train and their places taken by various officers. After a very long delay we got off, and in the middle of the night, at one of the stations, we were all wakened up and ordered to have rifles ready, for the Boers were said to be on the line somewhere. However, it turned out to be only a scare, and as I did not possess a rifle it did not concern me, and eventually in due course, without any further disturbance, the train arrived here. Next day all was peace again, so telegrams were sent to the ladies to say that they might come up, which they promptly did. The day after the panic season set in again, and they were packed off back again to the base. When I got back I found that all the Staff, except the Chief’s own particular little lot, had been shot out of Government House, so, greatly to our comfort, Eddy Stanley, Dudley, Bend d’Or (the Duke of Westminster) and I, find ourselves lodged on the ground floor of a very decent house belonging to one Fischer, a prominent Boer statesman, who has bolted.”

The next fortnight at Bloemfontein was very dull and uneventful, and, moreover, rather depressing with the knowledge, that hard work and bad water were, between them, responsible for about 1500 enteric cases

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in the Bloemfontein hospitals. The daily round was monotonous enough. At seven every morning I was in the saddle, and generally went round to see the Naval Brigade, who had made themselves and their cow-guns extremely comfortable at the top of a neighbouring kopje, but as they never were in need of anything, my visits were of the perfunctory order. Later in the day, I took my turn with the other Aides-de-Camp to ride in attendance on the Chief, and work away at the usual deciphering and enciphering business. But our little home, thanks to the fact that one of its leading inhabitants, Lord Stanley, was Press Censor, was, I verily believe, the "hub" of Bloemfontein. Thither all the Press correspondents, some eighty in number and locally known as "Stanley's Light Horse," used to repair to get their perpetual messages censored, and (low be it spoken!) when news was scanty, as it very often was during the long halt at Bloemfontein, to try and pick up a few crumbs from us. Between us, we generally could produce the latest camp stories, and when there was nothing better, those very unveracious statements had to serve. The "Specials" had amongst their ranks a number of very clever people, to say nothing of at least one very distinguished man in the person of Mr. Rudyard Kipling, whose acquaintance I made then for the first time. Amongst the veterans were Mr. Bennett Burleigh and Mr. Melton Prior, both old acquaintances of mine, whose names had been known for years all over the Empire, whilst amongst the younger men were Messrs. Gwynne, Perceval Landon, and Prevost Battersby,—the latter I

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had got to know well on the voyage out, we having been fellow-passengers in the same steamer.

It very soon was deemed necessary to start a newspaper, and the *Friend* was produced to supply the want, under the auspices of Rudyard Kipling, Perceval Landon, and Gwynne,—a veritable galaxy of talent. It was only the other day that Mr. Kipling and I were talking over old Bloemfontein days, and he gave me a delightful account of how he and his coadjutors, having a good deal of space at their disposal, filled it up with advertisements stating that certain little shops in the town could provide every sort of luxury. Most of these said luxuries were purely imaginary and probably have not even penetrated to Bloemfontein to this day, and he went on to describe the rage of the crowds of customers who had at once swarmed into the town thinking to do their shopping!

Towards the end of April, Dudley and I got a few days' leave from our Chief to accompany a flying column that was going to Taban-Tchu under the command of Ian Hamilton. We loaded up a Cape cart with provisions and once more started on the trek. And a delightful change it was to be on the veldt again after living for so long in that rather poisonous little town! The objective of the expedition was, I believe, that of a rounding-up movement designed to surround the Boer forces, who were said to be moving to the northward somewhere in that neighbourhood. Unfortunately, the Boers were too quick for us, and there was no apparent result, and with the exception of some desultory skirmishing on the outskirts of

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Taban-Tchu and Israel Port, the column to which we had attached ourselves had but little fighting to do. Viewed as a pleasure trip it was very agreeable, as the climate was perfection and, to us, it was all new country.

By the end of the week I was back at Bloemfontein again, but this time only for a very few days, as the long, weary period of waiting there had come to an end, and on May 3rd Lord Roberts, with the Headquarter Staff, went by train to Karri Siding, to assume direct command of the Army that was now on the march to Pretoria. It is not my intention to describe Lord Roberts' march to Pretoria, except from the point of view of a spectator. Very little fighting took place, but it struck me that the Boers were distinctly clever. They wasted a great many days for us by repeatedly putting up a show that was just big enough to force our invading army to deploy, and the loss of time involved made a very considerable hole in the short winter days of May and June.

By the 12th of May Kroonstadt had been occupied ; the Boers had, of course, destroyed the railway bridge that crosses the Valsch River, and it took our railway engineers the best part of a week to span that very fair-sized stream with a temporary bridge that could carry the train. By the 22nd we were on the move again to the northward, and on the 27th the Main Army crossed the Vaal River at Vereeniging, and the invasion of the Transvaal had definitely begun. On the 31st May Johannesburg was captured. I am again quoting from a letter which I wrote home at the time.

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“It was rather fun riding into Johannesburg, but really anything like the villainous faces of the crowd I have never seen. All the Boers, and most of the Dutch and English, had either cleared out or been cleared out. There was nothing left but a mob of low-class foreign Jews, most of them Germans. Never have I seen such brutes, and my first feeling was one of intense regret that the Boers had not exploded the mines and blown up the entire population at the same time.”

A little less than a week later (June 5th, 1900) Pretoria was reached and was entered by the Commander-in-Chief after a very trifling opposition. The central column, with which the Headquarter Staff moved, had done the 300 miles—that is the distance from Bloemfontein to Pretoria—in thirty-four days, which was good going. The flank columns had even a harder time. Ian Hamilton started three days earlier from Taban-Tchu with his column, and marched 380 miles, having only had eight days' halt during the whole thirty-seven days. The night we arrived at Pretoria a most amusing dinner was organised by Lord Rosslyn to celebrate the occasion, and I suppose also to commemorate his personal release from captivity, for he had been for some time a prisoner of war at Pretoria. It was immense fun, every one being in the highest spirits. The dinner took place at the hotel, and the company consisted more or less of junior officers from every branch of the Service, released prisoners, and a number of special correspondents; and I, having managed to commandeer a bedroom on the premises, did my dinner party very comfortably.

Life on the Headquarter Staff at Pretoria was very much on the model of Bloemfontein, with even more

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telegrams to cope with, but the monotony was broken by the two days' indecisive action at Diamond Hill—a position that Botha had occupied about sixteen miles from the capital, which was, so long as there was a decent-sized Boer Army there, a distinct menace to Pretoria. The action began early on June 11th, and fighting went on during that and the ensuing day. It was successful in that the Boers retreated and left us in possession of their position, but was quite indecisive, as there was no pursuit, and for more than a month Botha's commandos were giving us trouble in the neighbourhood of the battlefield.

Personally, I was a heavy loser in the action of Diamond Hill, for my next brother, Lionel, then second in command of the 17th Lancers, was shot dead by a bullet through the heart when in command of a squadron of that regiment. He and a subaltern of his, Lieut. Charles Cavendish, a son of the late Lord Chesham, and the late Lord Airlie, commanding the 9th Lancers, all fell there and were buried together on the field.

A few days after the action of Diamond Hill I was in attendance on the Chief on rather an interesting occasion, namely when he rode out to meet Baden-Powell, who arrived at Pretoria just about a month after the relief of Mafeking. A few days afterwards I went by train to Johannesburg, partly on a shopping expedition and partly to see a great friend of mine, Bobby White, who was about to start a syndicate there to finance the tramways. My travelling companions were two of the ladies who had arrived with Baden-

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Powell from Mafeking—Lady Sarah Wilson and Mrs. Godley, both of whom had been through the siege there and were on their way home to England, whither I was, before very long, to follow them.

After two days at Johannesburg I was back again at Pretoria ; but my time in Pretoria was rapidly drawing to an end. The Naval Brigade had left the vicinity of Headquarters, so I had no excuse in the way of looking after their wants, as they were far out of my reach. Life at Pretoria was more dull than words can describe, the only duty being the eternal ciphering, which I came to the conclusion could be done just as well by the numerous subalterns on Lord Roberts' Staff as by an officer of my standing. I consequently decided, as there was nothing to do, that I might just as well return to my duties on the Staff of the Prince of Wales. Early in July I left Pretoria for Cape Town, and arrived in England at the end of the month.

Africa had been an interesting experience, especially the long marches from the Modder to Pretoria, and my time there was, as long as we were on the move, really delightful. There is something extraordinarily attractive about the high veldt ; the air is as exhilarating as champagne, and the endless rolling plain without a boundary to be seen has a charm which it is not easy to describe ; and though the sun may be occasionally too fierce, and the cold at nights rather too severe after the heat, it is none the less a marvellous climate, and, barring the want of water, it is an ideal place for campaigning. Moreover, the greater part of the time



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I was living with some of my best friends, and, for a sailor, it was a new experience to see a large British Army doing its job. Besides my old friends, I made the acquaintance of many new ones, several of whose names have since become household words during the late war. To say nothing of such celebrities as Lords Roberts and Kitchener, there were Douglas Haig (or rather Lord Haig as he is now), General Lord Rawlinson, Admiral Sir Walter Cowan, all of whom were Staff Officers in those days ; and looking over some old letters, written out there, I can congratulate myself on the prescience which led me to prophesy that the then Major Douglas Haig was sure to make a name for himself in the future. The only fly in the ointment was that, by going abroad, I had missed a very interesting treble event, namely Ambush winning the Grand National, and Diamond Jubilee securing the Two Thousand Guineas and Derby for the Prince ; but it does not need much philosophy to grasp the fact that a man cannot be in two places at once, and good fun as it is to back winners, it was far more satisfactory to have had the privilege of seeing the most interesting part of the South African War from the vantage point of the Headquarter Staff.

## CHAPTER X

### SOME SCOTTISH HOUSES

I HAD arrived in England in time for the Cowes Season, and was again in waiting in October in attendance on the Prince during a short visit he paid to Queen Victoria at Balmoral, on his way to Mar Lodge. I had, of course, been presented to the Queen before, but on this occasion, being an officer just returned from the Front, Her Majesty was particularly gracious, giving me her hand to kiss, and sending for me after dinner for a few minutes' conversation. It was the very last time that I was ever to see her, for a few months later she was laid to her rest at Windsor.

Mar Lodge is a delightful place, about twenty miles or so higher up the Deeside than Balmoral, and in those days it had only recently taken the place of the old Mar Lodge standing the other side of the river. The fire that destroyed the old lodge really must have been a blessing in disguise for the late Duke of Fife, for, (however pleasant its associations may have been,) it was badly situated, and its destruction gave him the excuse for building the present house, which is certainly one of the most comfortable residences in the North of Scotland. In those high latitudes it is everything to have the house the right side of the river,—that is

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to say on the north side, with the consequent south aspect,—and the new Mar Lodge was ideally situated in that respect, fairly near the river, with a lovely view from its windows. Beautiful as are the surroundings of Balmoral, the castle none the less suffers from being on the south side of the Dee; there being considerable want of sunshine there in the shorter days of October.

The Prince had some good deer-driving at Mar, and another enjoyable amusement provided for the guests was a well-laid-out little golf-course. The Duke and his family were all keen golfers.

Another Deeside shooting lodge that was occasionally visited by the Prince was Glenmuick, which stands about half-way between Balmoral and Ballater. The existing house was built by the first Baronet, the then well-known Mackenzie of Kintail. The present baronet is an officer in the Grenadier Guards, a grandson of the old laird to whom I am alluding. The original Laird of Glenmuick was a great character. Starting in life as a small tradesman in Aberdeen, he had succeeded in making a large fortune, and became a popular person in Society, for he owned a few race-horses, was full of Scotch stories, and, moreover, played a very good game of whist. Glenmuick was a delightful place, for there is not only a good deer forest, where I have had some first-rate stalking, but there is also a very fair grouse moor. But the house itself could hardly be said to be a success. I always believed that its situation was selected rather with the view of impressing the good people of Ballater with the importance of its owner, than to provide a comfortable

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home for himself and his guests. As far as I could see during my stay there, the only room that sunshine ever reached was the kitchen. None the less, it was a most amusing house to stay in, and the all-round sport was excellent.

There is nothing of any importance for me to relate until the new year of 1901. On the 20th of January Queen Victoria brought her long reign to an end, and died at Osborne, and my master came to the throne as King Edward VII. I was not in personal attendance on him at the time, but there was so much to do that his entire Staff was mobilised. Of course, representatives from all over the world flocked to London for the funeral, and I found myself detailed to look after the Russian and Greek suites that had come over in attendance on the Grand Duke Michael and the King of the Hellenes, the respective representatives of those two countries. There was great difficulty in housing this enormous influx of guests, but the late Mr. Larnach was one of those who came to the assistance of the Court Officials, by placing his fine house in Carlton House Gardens at their disposal, and I consequently took up my abode there, to look after the Russian and Greek gentlemen.

On the day of the funeral the party to which I was attached met the funeral cortège at Windsor, and I was consequently at the station there when a slight contretemps happened that attracted a good deal of attention at the time. The horses of the Horse Artillery team which were harnessed to the gun-carriage that was used as a bier, had become restive

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from their long wait in the cold, and began to plunge about to such an extent that the coffin seemed to be in danger of being displaced. There was a Guard of Honour of bluejackets posted at the station, and Prince Louis of Battenberg, who was with them, quickly grasped the situation. The horses were taken out, the bluejackets manned the traces, and the last stage of the late Queen's long journey from Osborne to Windsor was done in charge of the Royal Navy, to their great pride and satisfaction, and, naturally, to the infinite disappointment of the Royal Horse Artillery.

During the year of mourning that followed there was not much of interest for me to record ; but in the late autumn King Edward was in residence for the first time as the owner of Balmoral. Naturally, His Majesty was not entertaining a party there, so there was not much official work to do, consequently on most days when there was not a deer drive, Harry Stonor, (who was on duty there as Groom-in-Waiting), and I, were sent on the hill to stalk, and very fine sport we had. I think between us, in something like ten days, we had twenty-five stags to our credit.

The year 1902 was a very busy one. In March I was in attendance on their Majesties, when they visited Dartmouth to lay the foundation-stone of the College there that took the place of the old *Britannia*. The change was all for the better, as the old ship was far from healthy even in my time, and age was not likely to improve her sanitary condition. From Dartmouth the Royal party went on to Plymouth, and passed the night on board the *Victoria and Albert*, where a large

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dinner party was entertained, consisting not only of the principal Naval Officials belonging to the port, but also of the Admiral and Captains of a Japanese Squadron that was there at the time. On the following day Queen Alexandra launched H.M.S. *Queen*, with the usual ceremonial, and the King laid the first plate of a new battleship, the *King Edward*.

About two months later I was spending a Sunday at the White Lodge, Richmond Park, with one of my oldest friends, Mrs. Hartmann, to whom the lodge had been lent by the King. At luncheon time she announced to her guests that the King was motoring down for tea, and at tea-time he duly arrived. We were all assembled out in the garden, and I was sure from his manner that there was some news in store for us. We had not long to wait, as without any waste of words he informed us that what he was about to tell us would be known to the world next morning, and that was, that the conditions of peace had been signed at Vereeniging, which virtually meant that the long and tiresome South African War had come to an end. For many years past, even people quite unaddicted to business in the City, had been gambling in South African shares, much, I suppose, to the delight of the South African Jews, who had invaded London and taken up their abode there. It seemed the obvious thing that, peace being signed, South Africans would go up, and I fancy a good many of us went up to London early next morning to get the first of the market. The obvious rarely happens in real life, and, as far as I can remember, the shares that were expected to rise

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all fell, and the small punters, as usual, lost their money.

In June the Coronation that had been arranged for the 24th was put off, owing to the very serious illness of the King, and the operation that it entailed. I was in attendance on the Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovitch of Russia, who had been sent to represent his brother, the Emperor. The Grand Duke was attended by a large suite, who were lodged very conveniently for the expected ceremony at the Buckingham Palace Hotel. Most of us remember the consternation that reigned in London when the ceremony was postponed, and few could have imagined it possible that the King could have made such a marvellous recovery as he did, and thus enable the Coronation to take place at the early date of August the 9th,—but so it was.

On the 1st of August I went down to Cowes to take my turn of duty. His Majesty had been already there for about a fortnight, and I remember my amazed delight at seeing him looking so marvellously well after such a short convalescence. Sir Frederick Treves, who had performed the operation (a very serious one), told me how astonished he was at the King's powers of recuperation ; and then afterwards, on the day after the Coronation, he was again telling me that he did not think it humanly possible that any man, who had only just recovered from such a dangerous illness, could be as well as he was after that very long and fatiguing ceremony at Westminster. I was very fortunate in being in personal attendance on that historic occasion, which has been so often described by far more practised

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pens than mine, that I refrain from enlarging on it ; but as an instance of their Majesties' kind thoughtfulness for their attendants, after the cortège had returned to the palace we were all given the opportunity of offering our congratulations, before the King and Queen had divested themselves of their very beautiful, but remarkably heavy, coronation robes.

Events passed quickly. Within a week the Royal party had resumed their stay on board the Royal Yacht at Cowes. On the 16th the King reviewed the Fleet at Spithead, and the next day received on board the yacht the Boer Generals Delarey, de Wet, and Botha. Towards the end of August the Royal party went for a cruise, to work round to Scotland by the West Coast. Whenever their Majesties were cruising in the Royal Yacht or using her as their home at Cowes, the Marine Painter to the Sovereign, the late Cavaliere de Martino, was invariably one of the suite in attendance. Martino was a great character. A Neapolitan by birth, he had subsequently served in the Brazilian Navy, and then given up his naval career to become an artist. He had a complete knowledge of every detail connected with a ship, but, what was far more important, he had the real artist's sense of atmosphere, which, for him, meant sea and sky, and I am lucky enough to possess several of his charming sketches to this day. I used to see a great deal of him when he was on board, as, knowing a little Italian, I could more or less understand the extraordinary sort of lingua franca that he always talked, which appeared to be a sort of mixture of Neapolitan, Portuguese, and English. The only guests on board,



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I think, were the Marquis de Soveral, then Portuguese Minister, and Mr. and Mrs. Derek Keppel, now Sir Derek and Lady Keppel, Sir Derek being the well-known Master of the Household to King George.

One of our first stops was made at the Isle of Man, which the King and Queen had never seen, and consequently desired to visit thoroughly. It was arranged that the party was to have a picnic luncheon at some historic ruin that is at one end of the island, and then drive across to the other side and finish the journey back to the landing-place by tramway. The arrangements for this expedition automatically fell upon my shoulders as Equerry-in-Waiting, and I don't know that I have ever spent a more arduous twelve hours. It was the middle of the tourist season! I forget the exact number of thousands of them that were on the island that morning, but I remember that the entire local police consisted of a very able Chief Constable and about six men. The tourists were determined to see as much of their Sovereign and his Consort as they could manage, and though it was the best-intentioned and most loyal crowd that I have ever seen, its immense size and demonstrative loyalty made it really very difficult to cope with. When the drive across the island took place, the tourists constituted themselves into a vast escort of bicyclists. This was all very well as regards the first carriage in which their Majesties were driving, but the carriages behind were enveloped in such a cloud of dust that the unfortunate coachmen literally could not see to drive. Finally, after what was for me, to use the modern expression, "a hectic

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day," we arrived back at the port where the boats were ready to re-embark us all. The King's carriage drove out to the end of the pier, but so great was the crowd that the occupants of the other carriages had to get out and walk alongside, and in the wake of, this one vehicle, and even that was not easy, for the pressure was so great, and the crowd so enthusiastic, that one had literally to cling to any part of the carriage one could get hold of. However all ended well. Their Majesties were much gratified with the loyalty and friendliness of the people, who were, on their side, equally delighted to have their Sovereign and his Consort actually in their midst; but personally, being, as Equerry, entirely responsible for anything connected with journeys, I was extremely relieved, when I found myself once again in the decorous surroundings of the Royal Yacht.

Another very interesting island visited that autumn was Arran, where the Duchess of Hamilton and her daughter were established in a shooting-box, which literally was a sort of sportsman's paradise. Every officer in the ship who could be spared from duty was provided with some sort of sport. One party went after grouse. Two rifles were sent on the hill, and there was excellent salmon and sea-trout fishing for the rest. There was also known to be a heavy stag, who had taken to leaving the hill and coming down to feed on some corn that was in the immediate vicinity of the lodge; the King succeeded in shooting him late in the evening. The Royal party and their guests had spent the afternoon on the fringe of the moor, watch-

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ing some sheep-dog trials ; these trials, I believe, are constantly held in Wales and Scotland, and are well worth watching. Each shepherd works his own dog without moving from a certain fixed place, and it is little short of marvellous to see how dog and man work together. The sheep are in the distance on the hill, and the prize is given to the dog who succeeds in turning them off the hill, making them go through certain gaps, and finally rounding them up in a small enclosure in the shortest time, one of the conditions being that the sheep are to be herded there, without being distressed or exhausted.

Another place visited was Dunrobin, and there again excellent sport was provided. There were not a great many guests staying at the castle during their Majesties' visit, but one charming lady, whose acquaintance I remember I had that opportunity of making, was Miss Irene Vanbrugh, otherwise Mrs. Dion Boucicault.

Shortly after the visit to Dunrobin I was relieved by a brother Equerry and went down South.

Whilst on the subject of country houses and sport in the North, I may as well mention that, before the war, I had made for many years a practice of going to Scotland in the autumn, and I can look back with infinite pleasure on the many happy and health-giving days spent in that very delightful part of the world. At many of these places I became almost an annual visitor. I am afraid to say how many times I was a guest at Tulchan, that delightful lodge and moor on Speyside, that was so long tenanted by the late Mr. Arthur Sassoon and his charming wife. Year after

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year I was one of the many who were invited there, and had not only excellent sport in very beautiful surroundings, but the greatest fun in the most supreme comfort ; for though only a shooting-lodge, very simply arranged, the Chef was super-excellent, and the wine matched the Chef ! One of the features of Tulchan was the number of dogs that literally swarmed there. Mrs. Arthur Sassoon herself was an ardent dog-lover, and had a string of Skye terriers. Our host had a large yellow retriever that was always with him. Every male guest thought it incumbent on him to bring a retriever, and the ladies of the party invariably possessed at least one dog apiece, and I veritably believe that had they not possessed a dog to take with them to Tulchan, they would have hired one for the occasion ! So, as I remarked before, dogs swarmed there. Poor Major Seymour Wynne Finch (long since dead, to the infinite sorrow of his many friends, of whom, I am glad to remember, I was one,) was another yearly visitor to Tulchan. After one of his visits he wrote to thank his hostess for a very pleasant visit, adding : "it was so nice of you to have such a charming lot of dogs to meet me." Moreover, there were very few years that passed without the late King, or the present King spending a few days of their stay in Scotland, as the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Sassoon at Tulchan Lodge, Speyside.

Another place I constantly visited was Strathconan, which still belongs to Captain and Lady Jane Combe, and here one always found almost everything in the shape of sport. To begin with, it is one of the

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very best deer forests in Scotland; in addition there was some good grouse shooting on the lower ground, endless fishing in the lochs and river that flowed past close to the lodge, which was itself a picture of comfort, and for off-days there was a small but beautifully kept golf-course.

Glenquoich was another forest Lodge, where I have stayed several times, when in attendance on the late King. Lying, as it does, on the West Coast, the nearest point of the sea being only some eight miles distant, it combined a first-class forest with perhaps the most beautiful scenery in Scotland. When on the high ground, stalking on a fine day, I do not remember ever seeing anything that quite came up to the beauty of the scene around. One of the features of the scenery consisting in the number of tiny lochs that made small patches of that most gorgeous blue that combines so well with the colour of the heather and the grey-brown of the rocks. The late Lord Burton had a lease of Glenquoich for many years, and was really a benefactor to the whole neighbourhood, as through the long winter months, when life is very hard for the gillies (who, in general, have to make all they can out of the shooting and stalking season) he used to employ them in making pony-paths on the hill, so that he could ride pretty nearly all over the forest.

Then, for golf purposes, I constantly used to stay with my kind friends, Mr. and Mrs. William James, who had bought a charming house, Greywalls, built by the late Alfred Lyttelton, close to the club house

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at Muirfield. Since poor Willy James' lamented death, Greywalls has, I think, recently passed into other hands; but probably as a headquarters for golfing purposes it could not be surpassed, standing, as it did, on a Championship Course, and being within the easiest reach of North Berwick, Archerfield, Gullane, Gillspindie, Loughness, and indeed many other first-rate courses.

I was also a constant visitor at Gordonstown, as the guest of Mr. and Mrs. John Hanbury, where there was excellent low-ground shooting, and a delightful golf-course close by at Lossiemouth.

And, finally, another of my happy hunting-grounds has been, and is, Kinross, where, for many years past, I have been the guest of Sir Basil and Lady Montgomery, at their beautiful home on the shores of Loch Leven. Kinross deserves more than a passing mention. The beauty of the situation of the house is alone worthy of note. Built to face the island on the loch, where Queen Mary of Scots was imprisoned, I know nothing more beautiful in the way of a peaceful landscape, than the view from the windows. It commences with a foreground of walled garden, the centre of which is formally laid out and terminated by an imposing gateway, known as the Fish Gate. Immediately opposite, as a mid-distance, is the principal island of Loch Leven, with its ruined castle embowered in trees, with various smaller islands dotted about, and the whole group encircled by the waters of the loch. In the distance are the outlines of the low Fife hills; while, as a finish to the picture, the loch is framed by the massive bastions

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of hill formed by Fife-Lomond and Glenarty, which rear themselves up from the placid waters to the right and left. The house, too, is very beautiful and interesting. The first owner and architect of the present building was Sir William Bruce, and there is a tradition that he built, with the object of disposing of it to the Duke of York for a Scottish residence when his succession to the Throne was in doubt, at the time of the passing of the Exclusive Bill. This hope, if it ever existed, speedily came to an end, for before Kinross House was finished, the Duke of York had ascended the Throne as James II, and had Holyrood for a Scottish palace. Kinross House is a fine example of one of the early mansions of the Scotch Renaissance. It contains many beautiful things, principal amongst which is a fine staircase, with pierced and carved panels, which leads directly to the ball-room, a very large saloon taking up the greater part of the first floor. In the saloon are hung, amongst other family pictures, a very fine full-length portrait of Lady Montgomery by Raeburn, faced by a Hoppner of Lady Elizabeth Montgomery, and there are two very good three-quarter-length Romneys of the Marquis and Marchioness of Townshend. Altogether, the house and its surroundings make up one of the most beautiful and "liveable" homes that I have ever come across in my wanderings in Scotland.

## CHAPTER XI

### KING EDWARD'S FOREIGN TOUR

IN the spring of 1903 I was one of the suite in attendance on the occasion of King Edward's official visits to the Capitals of France, Portugal and Italy. The sea route having been selected, His Majesty took the opportunity of visiting Gibraltar and Malta at the same time.

There are not wanting those who are of opinion that this expedition was what Sir Sidney Lee, in his biographical notice, calls a "vacation exercise." Others, including a humble spectator, such as myself, think, on the other hand, that our subsequent happy relations with France are mainly due to the personal characteristics and influence of King Edward himself. At any rate every man is entitled to his own opinion, and, having expressed mine, I go on to say that those five weeks,—more especially the days of them that were passed in Paris,—were among the most interesting of my life. Under these circumstances I think it worth while to give the names of those who were in attendance during the trip.

The King embarked on board the Royal Yacht, *Victoria and Albert*, on March 30th. The Marquis de Soveral, Portuguese Minister in London, was a guest



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on board, as far as Lisbon, and the suite in attendance were as follows :—

The Hon. Charles Hardinge (now Lord Hardinge of Penshurst), Minister Plenipotentiary.

The late Major-General Sir Stanley Clarke, Equerry and Acting Master of the Household.

Rear-Admiral the Hon. Hedworth Lambton (now Admiral of the Fleet Sir Hedworth Meux), Extra Equerry and in command of the Royal Yacht.

The late Sir Francis Laking, Physician in Ordinary.

Captain Frederick Ponsonby (now Colonel Sir Frederick Ponsonby), Equerry and Acting Private Secretary.

The late Cavaliere de Martino, Marine Painter to His Majesty.

And another Equerry in the person of myself.

On the following day the Royal Yacht proceeded on her journey to Lisbon, escorted by the cruisers *Venus* and *Minerva* ; and not encountering the best of weather, rolled very heavily on her passage across the Bay. When approaching the entrance to the Tagus on April 2nd, our escort was reinforced by four Portuguese ships of war, which made the procession up the river quite an imposing spectacle.

As soon as the Royal Yacht had taken up her moorings she was boarded by King Carlos and his brother, the Duke of Oporto, and their Suites. They arrived in a procession of Royal Barges, the leading boat being certainly one of the most curious and beautiful craft that I have ever seen afloat. She was built in the

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eighteenth century, with a huge dragon, the arms of Braganza, as a figure-head, and pulled twenty oars a side, each oar being double manned, which made up a crew of over eighty, all dressed in scarlet caps and jackets. Never have I seen such a smart turn-out afloat. The coaches, too, which conveyed the King to the Necessidades Palace, where he took up his abode, were mainly about two hundred years old, and magnificently horsed,—or rather, to be accurate, “muled.” Nearly all the Royal carriage work at Lisbon used to be done by splendid mules well over sixteen hands high.

The two monarchs landed together in the forty-oared boat, and processed through the streets of Lisbon with the usual ceremonies to the Palace, where King Edward was received by the Dowager Queen Maria Pia. The usual addresses inevitable on those occasions were presented, and responded to, during the course of the visit ; there was the customary State banquet, and every hour of the day was occupied. But there was time for a short visit to the Royal Palace of Peña, situated at the very summit of the mountain of Cintra, which I have attempted to describe before ; and on the Sunday, after Service at the English Church, the King took luncheon at the Legation, with the British Minister, Sir Martin Gosselin, and his wife.

The afternoon before the Royal Yacht sailed was given up to what was looked upon (anyhow by the people of Lisbon) as the most important part of the whole visit, namely a bull-fight. A Portuguese bull-fight is an extraordinarily beautiful spectacle. The bull has his horns padded, and so good are the horses

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and so well are they handled that, as a general rule, not a horse is ever touched by the bull, and the bull is only irritated by pin pricks in the literal sense, the lances used by the picadors having nothing more formidable at their points than a useful-sized pin. So neither man, horse, nor bull is any the worse, and when the latter is getting tired he is man-handled by some of the under-strappers of the ring and taken back to his stall. But the beauty of the spectacle really consists in its details and surroundings.

The bull-fighters arrive at the arena in a procession of delightful old coaches, with six horses apiece and endless outriders, from which they slowly descend with great pomp. They are all beautifully turned out, the picadors in particular being gorgeously apparelled and splendidly mounted. The surroundings consist in the huge amphitheatre, packed with people, (the women being all in bright colours), and a cloudless blue sky. When the performance begins, what with the bull charging, and the horsemen worrying him, the cries of the spectators, and the clanging of bands,—even the most callous spectator finds himself being carried away, and becomes gradually roused to some slight measure of enthusiasm.

On the 7th April the visit to Lisbon terminated, and the Royal Yacht was once more under way *en route* to Gibraltar.

And now for the practical outcome of the visit.

Just before the King started from England a very mischievous article had been published in a newspaper, hinting that the object of the visit to Lisbon was the

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acquisition of Delagoa Bay ; indeed, vague rumours to that effect had been in circulation for some time. This *canard* was at once seized upon by the Anglophobe journals of the Portuguese and foreign Press, and great capital was being made of it. In the course of his speech, when accepting an address from the Commercial Association of Portugal, the King took the opportunity of saying that "Our respective countries and colonies, the integrity and preservation of which is one of my dearest aims and objects." This announcement absolutely put an end to all the mischief at once. The Prime Minister of Portugal expressed his gratification to Sir Martin Gosselin, who happened to be standing near him, for what he described as "those golden words." In fact, in a few seconds more was done to remove a cause of friction between two countries than could have been accomplished in the same number of months by official correspondence.

In lovely weather the Royal Yacht made her way to Gibraltar, where she arrived on the following day. An address of welcome was presented by a deputation from the Chamber of Commerce, to which a reply was duly given. There was an official dinner at the Convent given by the Governor, who was then the late Sir George White, the stout-hearted soldier who had so resolutely defended Ladysmith. The King, in responding to the toast of his health, took the opportunity of announcing his intention of promoting General Sir George White to the rank of Field-Marshal. No announcement could have been better received, as Sir George White, a very gallant man, and a loyal and

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capable soldier, was exceedingly popular, not only in Gibraltar but throughout the Army.

It was during the King's visit that I first had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of Sir Arthur Nicolson, then Minister at Tangier (since then so well known as our Ambassador in Russia, and subsequently as Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs. He recently became Lord Carnock). He came over to present the Envoy of the Sultan of Morocco, and bore a letter from His Shereefian Majesty to King Edward. This Envoy rejoiced in a name so gorgeous that it is well worth while to print it—Cid Abderrahman ben Abdelsadok ! The Governor of Algeciras also paid an official visit, arriving in a Spanish gunboat ; but with the exception of a review of the troops of the garrison there was no other official function. The King was, of course, shown all the newest work in connection with the defences of the fortress and the developments of the dockyard, where he laid the first stone of a new dry dock. Personally, having spent a good deal of my youth there in frequent short visits, I was delighted to have a look at Gib. (as we all used to call it) again.

During the Royal Yacht's stay at Gibraltar, it had been arranged that a squadron of battleships of the Channel Fleet should be there under the command of Rear-Admiral Curzon-Howe, but with King Edward's usual genius for doing the right and gracious thing, at his suggestion the squadron was ordered to Algiers in order to salute the French President, Monsieur Loubet, on his arrival there, in connection with some official function.

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On the morning of April 13th, the Royal Yacht with her escort, which had been reinforced by four more cruisers belonging to the Mediterranean Station, left for Malta. *En route* we passed near enough to Algiers to be saluted by the shore batteries and by the Russian, Spanish and Italian ships that were there in compliment to the French President, and on the 16th the Royal Yacht steamed into the Grand Harbour, Valetta.

Never have I seen that most picturesque of harbours looking better. It was a day of brilliant sunshine ; all the ships in the harbour were dressed ; there seemed to me to be more of those gaily painted *dhaisas* than ever, and as for the old knight's fortifications, they were almost black with the crowds that came to see, and acclaim, the first British Sovereign who had ever visited their historic island.

On landing, the King was received by the Governor-General, Sir Mansfield Clarke, and the Naval Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Sir Compton Domville, and drove with the Governor to the palace. During the afternoon endless deputations were received, and later in the day the King held a *levée*, which was attended by the officers of the Fleet and Garrison and the Government officials. There were the usual official dinners at the Palace, and on board Sir Compton Domville's flagship the *Bulwark* ; a review of the troops of the Garrison, and the day before the visit ended a review of the seamen and marines of the Fleet at the Marsa, where I had so often played polo and raced ponies in the days of my youth. It was a good show. Eight thousand bluejackets and marines duly marched past,

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and I believe it was the first time that Aides-de-Camp had ever been mounted on bicycles,—the “gallopers,” consisting of a number of midshipmen on wheels. What I confess interested me most was to see again the beautiful Gobelin tapestries that are hung on all great occasions round the whole of the interior of St. John's Cathedral. It is very seldom that they are all produced, but of course for the King's visit they were very much in evidence.

The last evening at Malta was given up to a water carnival and illuminations that had been organised by the Fleet. The feature of the carnival was a procession of miniature ships, twelve in number, ranging from Noak's Ark to H.M.S. *Edward VII*, which was then our latest battleship. Some of the twelve I can remember: there was a Greek Galley, a Chinese War Junk, a Roman Trireme, the *Revenge* (Grenville's flagship at the Azores), and the immortal *Victory*. Every unit of this quaint fleet, with the crews dressed in the supposed costumes of the various periods represented, passed by the Royal Yacht either under oars or under their miniature sails. Evidently the details had been carefully studied, and much loving care had been bestowed on the white dove that flew in and out of the Ark!

And now for the practical value of this Royal visit to Malta,—and considering the many years that I have passed, on and off, as man and boy, in that little island, I think I may venture to claim some slight knowledge of its inhabitants. To begin with, I like the Maltese; even now, if I were to go back to Valetta, I am sure I

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should find some old boatman, tradesman, club-servant, or horse-coper, who would still remember, and be glad to see me. It must be realised that Malta literally swarms with priests : indeed one of its few drawbacks as a winter residence is the never-ending clanging of bells in the multitudinous churches there. Small wonder, then, that there is a strong clerical party of very extreme views, and, as usual, this party consists not only of the members of the priesthood themselves, but also of a large section of the Maltese nobility. These gentry,—I expect in humble imitation of what are known as the “Papalini” in Rome,—are violently pro-Italian and anti-English, just as the aforementioned “Papalini” were, and, for all I know, are, almost to a man, pro-German and opposed to their own Government. The result of this is, that trouble is apt to be stirred up at Malta by the local Press. Everything English is reviled, and an immense amount of mud is thrown at us. But I am convinced that all the best of the Maltese upper classes, and the entire peasantry and working classes, when not too severely priest-ridden, are thoroughly conscious that they are extremely well off under the Union Jack, and have not really the smallest desire to become Italian subjects. They like, however, to flirt with the idea. As the Irishman said when comparing Home Rule to Heaven, “Every one wants to go there eventually, but no one had ever been met with who was ready to go there next day.”

The effect of the King's visit and his remarkable personality was immediate. The minority, who are



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always there striving to stir up disaffection, were reduced at any rate to comparative silence for some considerable time, owing to the remarkable demonstration of loyalty and affection that was shown towards the King by the bulk of the population.

On April 21st the Royal Yacht, escorted by the Mediterranean Fleet, passed through the Straits of Messina and proceeded to Naples. The Fleet must have given the tourists at Taormina a fine show, consisting, as it did, of eight battleships and four cruisers, to say nothing of the small craft in the shape of destroyers, with the Royal Yacht flying the standard, leading between the two lines of battleships. I have passed up and down those same Straits many scores of times, during my service in the Navy, and on every occasion that I have seen it I have been more and more obsessed by its beauty. The loveliness of the surroundings there never palls, and one of the only advantages of getting old is that one becomes more and more appreciative of both artistic and natural beauties. I have stood outside the temple at Taormina in brilliant sunshine, when a slight rain squall in the Straits has bridged Sicily and the mainland with a perfect rainbow, and the difficulty is then to decide whether the view of the Straits from the land on either coast, or the view of both coasts from the sea, when passing through the Straits, is the more magnificent. Meanwhile, the last is generally the best, and my last passage through, up to the time of writing, was on this particular occasion.

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After having left the Straits behind us, as there were two or three hours to spare, the Yacht and Fleet steamed slowly through the Lipari Islands. The small volcano that exists on the crest of the Island of Stromboli really behaved remarkably well on the occasion. Just at dusk, when only a few hundred yards off the island, the Royal Yacht was indulged with three successive and very considerable explosions, formidable enough to send up clouds of flame and smoke, to say nothing of stones, that fell hissing into the sea. Whether a volcano can be treated in a medical way I know not, but at the time, I had a strong personal suspicion that the leading inhabitants must have administered some sort of emetic to the mountain to produce these happily-timed explosions. On the other hand, it might only have been an instance of extreme tact on the part of Dame Nature. Anyhow, it made a very beautiful spectacle, and was at once immortalised by my friend Martino, who made a very lovely water-colour sketch of it.

Naples was reached on April 23rd in abominable weather. This, mercifully, did not last long, as it was the King's intention to stay there for three or four days before proceeding on his official visit to Rome. The Royal Yacht accordingly was berthed inside the Mole, and four very pleasant days were spent—a welcome relaxation to all concerned, after the continual functions.

A very old friend of mine, then Sir Francis Bertie (who, alas! as Lord Bertie, died very recently), was then Ambassador in Rome, and he and the late Mr.

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Rolfe, then still Consul at Naples—another very old friend—were speedily on board to pay their respects. There were a number of yachts at Naples at the time, with owners obviously lying in wait for the King's arrival, and soon there was a considerable influx of visitors. Queen Amelie, then Queen of Portugal, was with her son, the present ex-King Manoel, on board her yacht. A cutter belonging to the Duke of the Abruzzi, an enthusiastic yachtsman, and also an old Cowes acquaintance and friend of the King's, was in the port, as were also the yachts of the German Crown Prince, with Prince Eitel Friedrich, and of Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt. Though it was announced that the King's visit was entirely private and unofficial, he was most warmly greeted by the Neapolitans wherever he landed, and, as a concession to the wish expressed by the Mayor, consented to be present at a gala performance at the Opera.

During the next three or four days various excursions were made, one to the Royal Palace of Caserta, which I had not seen since I was a small midshipman, another to Posilipo, where Lord Rosebery was in residence at his charming villa (now made over by him to the country as a summer residence for our Ambassador in Rome). So what with excursions, and sight-seeing, the days passed like a flash.

On the 27th the King left Naples for Rome. Admiral Lambton, who had just been relieved of his command (of the Royal Yachts) by his successor, Sir Berkeley Milne, travelled on with us, in attendance on His Majesty as extra Equerry-in-Waiting.

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The Royal train arrived at Rome in the early afternoon, and the King, after being received at the station by the King of Italy, who was accompanied by the Royal Dukes of Genoa, of Aosta, of the Abruzzi, and the Count of Turin, proceeded to the Quirinal Palace where His Majesty and the whole of his suite were lodged.

As always, during the three days that the official visit lasted, there was no rest for the King, every hour of the day and evening being fully occupied. Official visits had to be paid, a deputation of the British Community was received at the British Embassy, Foreign Ambassadors and Chefs de Mission were received ; there was a gala dinner at the palace, a gala performance at the Opera, and the review of a large number of Italian troops. In reality, far the most interesting incident was the visit the King paid to the Pope. I regretted at the time, and I regret still, that I was not one of the suite present on that occasion. Though I am not particularly wrapped up, in what the French call *la calotte*, Pope Leo XIII was such a very remarkable personality, as well as such a great Pope, that I should like to have the recollection of having seen him, and his royal guest, together at the Vatican. The visit was, naturally, rather a delicate matter. The Government of England, in their eternal terror of the Nonconformist conscience, and their natural love of the line of least resistance, were of course against it. There were also difficulties of etiquette as to His Majesty visiting the Vatican whilst a guest at the Quirinal Palace. Moreover,

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the King was anxious that, though his visit should be considered private and informal, it should be made on the initiative of the Pope, to the extent of a letter being sent to the Ambassador acquainting him with the fact, that the Holy Father expressed a desire to see the King, if it were His Majesty's pleasure to pay him a visit. All the details were settled, I believe, at an interview between Cardinal Rampolla and Mr. Hardinge, and any awkwardness that might arise from being in residence at the Quirinal, was got over by starting from the Embassy in Sir Frank Bertie's private carriage. As usual, the King was right. His visit to the Pope was accepted by the King of Italy and the Italian Government as a matter of course. It was popular in Italy and, naturally, with all King Edward's Catholic subjects, and the entire Italian Press, of all shades, commented most favourably on it.

And so ended the Italian visit. It was a complete success and gave pleasure to all classes in Italy from the King and Pope down to the small tradesmen and *contadini*.

The Royal train left Rome on the morning of April 30th on its way to Paris. The only feature of interest on the journey was that at Pisa, where the train made a short stop, the Duchesse d'Aosta took advantage of this delay to board the train and pay a short farewell visit to the King. As Princesse Hélène d'Orleans she had, of course, lived a great deal in England before her marriage, and was extremely intimate with our Royal Family.

At Dijon next morning the official visit to France

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really commenced, for there the train took up, as additional passengers, Sir Edmund Monson, British Ambassador in Paris, who was accompanied by the Naval and Military Attachés of the Embassy, Captain Charles Ottley, R.N., now so well known as Sir Charles Ottley, who served for some time as Secretary of the Defence Committee, and the present General the Hon. Edward Stuart Wortley, then a Lieutenant-Colonel. With them arrived the French officers who were attached to the King during his visit—le Vice-Admiral Fournier, le Général de Lacroix, and an old friend of mine, and a very popular personage in Paris Society, le Commandant Chabaud, belonging to the Military household of the President.

After leaving Dijon, the Royal train ran straight through to the station of the Bois de Boulogne in Paris, where the King was met by the President of the Republic, (Monsieur Loubet), the Presidents of the two Chambers, and all the highest Military and Civil Authorities of the Capital. The customary presentations having been made, His Majesty and Monsieur Loubet entered the President's state carriage and, followed by the carriages conveying the suite, the personnel of the British Embassy and the French Ministers, moved off in a procession to the British Embassy in the Rue du Faubourg St. Honoré, that beautiful house, formerly the residence of the great Napoleon's sister, Pauline Borghese, which was acquired for our nation by the first Duke of Wellington.

The streets were lined with troops, and there was a large escort of Cuirassiers of the Garde Republicaine.

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An immense crowd had collected in the streets, and the windows and balconies of the houses on the route were crammed with spectators, but, in the interests of truth, I am compelled to state that, though not unfriendly, the reception was distinctly chilly.

There was not room in the Embassy for the whole of the suite, so a portion of it, of which I was one, was quartered at the Hôtel Bristol in the Place Vendôme, which was conveniently near our "Head-quarters."

After the usual ceremonial visit to the President at the Élysée, the next official function was the reception of the President and a Deputation of the British Chamber of Commerce in Paris by the King, and in his reply to the address presented by the Deputation, one of the first steps forward was taken towards the establishment of an Entente between England and France. In the course of his speech the King made use of these words:—

"A Divine Providence has designed that France should be our near neighbour, and, I hope, always a dear friend. There are no two countries in the world whose mutual prosperity is more dependent on each other. There may have been misunderstandings and causes of dissension in the past, but all such differences are, I believe, happily removed and forgotten, and I trust that the friendship and admiration which we all feel for the French nation and their glorious traditions may in the near future develop into a sentiment of the warmest affection and attachment between the peoples of the two countries. The

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achievement of this aim is my constant desire, and, gentlemen, I count upon your institution, and each of its members severally, who reside in this beautiful city and enjoy the hospitality of the French Republic, to aid and assist me in the attainment of this object."

The most favourable impression was made in Paris, by the immediate publication of the King's speech.

The first evening in Paris was a comparatively quiet one, but after a small private dinner at the Embassy, the King and his suite went to the Théâtre Français to see Maurice Donnay's play, *l'Autre Danger*, the President and Madame Loubet being also present.

Next morning the President came round to the Embassy at nine, and the King left in the President's carriage in his company for Vincennes, where the review was held. The greeting he received from the crowd was noticeably far warmer than on his arrival the previous day. The review was admirably conducted. There was an unusually large force of cavalry on the ground, and I, personally, was much impressed with the quality of the horses, and the admirable horsemanship of the men. A very few years later I happened to be present at a large manœuvre review of troops near Breslau, and, to my mind, there was no comparison between the cavalry of the two nations, France and Germany. In every way, the French, except no doubt in point of numbers, were infinitely superior. As an instance of the way in which some of the crack cavalry corps were mounted, I noticed at Vincennes that the same man, was riding the same horse, in that part of the escort



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that was close to the carriage of which I was an occupant. For a troop-horse to carry a heavy man (probably in his full kit putting up some eighteen stone) at a fast trot for the best part of eighteen miles, even with a good interval of rest while the review was taking place, will, I am sure, be acknowledged by any English cavalry officer as being no inconsiderable performance, testifying, as it does, alike to excellence and good condition.

On his return journey to the Embassy, after the termination of the review, the King stopped for a few minutes at the Hôtel de Ville, where he was received by M. Deville, the President of the Municipal Council. In answer to the toast of his health, the King replied in the following words, which merit being quoted in full, the concluding sentence doing more, perhaps, to complete the success of his visit than any other utterance that was made in Paris :—

“ Je désire vous exprimer combien je suis vivement touché de vos bonnes paroles. Il aurait été fâcheux, en passant par votre belle ville, de ne pouvoir m'arrêter a l'Hôtel de Ville. Bien sincèrement, je vous remercie de l'accueil que vous m'avez fait aujourd'hui.

“ Je n'oublierai jamais ma visite à votre charmante ville, et je puis vous assurer que c'est avec le plus grand plaisir que je reviens à Paris, où je me trouve toujours comme si j'étais chez moi.”

After the return to the Embassy, the President took leave of the King, and His Majesty entertained a few of his old friends at luncheon, before attending a race-

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meeting that was to take place at Longchamps in the afternoon.

Amongst some of those present at the luncheon were Prince d'Arenberg, Duc de la Force, Général le Marquis de Gallifet, the Marquis and Marquise de Jaucourt, Mr. and Mrs. Standish, Admiral Duperré, Prince Mohamed Ali, and the Marquis de Soveral, who was on a private visit to Paris.

The race-meeting was an enormous success. It was a lovely day and all Paris was there. The King's reception, instead of being chilly, was enthusiastic. The races were all named after some of the King's most famous horses, and for one of them, the Persimmon Stakes of £1000, he had offered a splendid gold cup as an additional prize. The greater part of the time was spent by him in the Presidential box, with his official host and hostess; but towards the end of the afternoon he passed a few minutes with some of his old friends in the Jockey Club stand.

Rarely have I witnessed such friendliness and enthusiasm as was evinced by this huge crowd, and, moreover, there were not a few Frenchmen present who were secretly delighted at being able to shout "Vive le Roi" without being arrested by a policeman!

The evening was given up to the official dinner at the Élysée, followed by a gala performance at the Opera.

Once more the best possible impression was conveyed by the King's speech in answer to the toast of his health, and in toasting the President of the

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Republic and drinking to the prosperity and grandeur of France.

In the course of his speech he touched his audience by a phrase he used : " Je connais Paris depuis mon enfance ; j'y suis revenu bien des fois, et j'ai toujours admiré la beauté de cette ville unique et l'esprit de ses habitants,"—while, later on, he used the words : " Notre grand désir est que nous marchions ensemble, dans la voie de la civilisation et de la paix."

There was a very representative company at the banquet. I heard that there were over 130 guests present,—amongst numberless other celebrities an old acquaintance of mine, M. Victorien Sardou, the dramatist, was there ; M. Carolus Duran and M. Saint-Saëns were also pointed out to me.

In connection with the King's speech on this occasion, I remember that two or three of the leading representatives of the Press came to see Fritz Ponsonby and myself after our return from the races, and asked us kindly to supply them with the King's speech in writing, as it was very important that, having to be published broadcast, and telegraphed all over the world, it should be absolutely word perfect. We could only tell them in answer to their request that it was quite impossible. We had no knowledge whatever of what the King was going to say ; that, probably, he would not even write it himself, as he habitually spoke without notes unless he had to deal with a mass of figures. Polite incredulity was visibly expressed in their faces, but obviously there was nothing more to be done for the present, so they withdrew. After the

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gala they came round again, and this time we had to produce something. By appealing to the King himself, and by pooling our joint memories we succeeded in evolving what was probably quite an accurate version, but a copy was impossible, for the speech had never been written. The astonishment of those worthies was prodigious ; they were really *épaté*—to use their own expression—at the King's nerve and confidence in himself, in being able to make one of the most important speeches of his life, (except for the careful thought that no doubt preceded it), in this extempore fashion.

The next day was Sunday. The King and his suite, and the personnel of the Embassy, duly attended Divine Service at the little English Church in the Rue d'Aguesseau, that stands almost opposite the Embassy.

After Church there was a huge luncheon at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. All the Foreign Ambassadors and Ministers were present, and altogether there were something like a hundred guests. After luncheon I remember that the King had a long conversation with M. Waldeck Rousseau ; but I have no further knowledge of anything else that happened on that afternoon, for Prince d'Arenberg, one of the leading racing men in France (I think he was the President of the Jockey Club), came up to Hedworth Lambton and myself and suggested that, if we could decently slip away, he would drive us down to Longchamps where there was a good day's racing on. The King, with his usual good nature, readily assented, so

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away we went, and spent a very pleasant afternoon with our many French racing friends. It was delightful to hear the enthusiasm with which they, one and all, spoke of our King, and of the wonderful success of his visit.

The last evening was spent at the Embassy, where the King gave a great dinner to the President and Madame Loubet, to the members of the French Government and their wives, and the heads of Foreign Missions. After dinner there was a concert, the music being provided by some of the artists of the Opera, and this, practically brought the Paris visit to a conclusion.

The next morning the King started for home via Cherbourg. The train left, after a very cordial leave-taking with the President, at eleven o'clock, and arrived at its destination in the evening. There was the usual official reception on arrival, and subsequently the King entertained all the principal Naval, Military, and Civil Authorities at dinner on board the Royal Yacht, and left the next morning for Portsmouth.

As so ended this journey of five weeks.

I have already commented on what I believe to have been the useful work done at the other Capitals that were visited. To my mind, the visit to France was infinitely the most important, and the most fruitful, of them all. For many preceding years I had spent weeks, if not months, of every year in France, and I knew well, since Fashoda, how strained the relations between the two countries had become ;—naturally, I am only speaking from the point of view of a very

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ordinary spectator. It was evident to me that, though not actually uncivil, one's old friends in Paris, and on the Riviera, were anxious to avoid one, when they could decently do so. Probably the estrangement there was between individuals was also existing quite as strongly amongst the officials of the two countries ; but from the time of the King's visit onwards, there has certainly been steady improvement, culminating in the alliance that has held together during the years of the lately finished war. I venture to maintain that, though this same result might have been brought about gradually by the politicians of the two countries, only one man in the world, and that man was King Edward, could have established, what was almost an immediate *rapprochement*, between our two great nations. The difference between the civil, but chilly, welcome that was extended to him on his arrival, and the enthusiastic reception that he received everywhere, in an increasing measure, during the last days of his visit was due to his personality, charm, and tact. As an instance of the change in the feeling of Parisians for Englishmen that took place during those few days, I can give a personal experience. Owing to some oversight in the giving of an order, on the evening of our arrival, those of us who were lodged at the Bristol found ourselves later on, standing outside the hotel, waiting impatiently for a carriage in which to drive round to the Embassy. There was a huge crowd in the Place Vendôme, and the neighbouring streets, and to walk round was impossible. Meanwhile, those of the crowd who were in our vicinity, quickly realising

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our embarrassment, manifested the greatest delight, and almost openly jeered at us. Eventually the carriage arrived, and while it was forcing its way slowly through the crowd, some of them put their heads close to the windows and raised the cry of "Vivent les Boers." I am afraid I could not resist the very obvious repartee, "Vivent les Boers, pourquoi pas? ce sont nos sujets maintenant."

Three days later there was again some delay about the carriage, and we were once more waiting outside the hotel. If anything the crowd was even denser, but instead of being treated with discourtesy, we met, on the other hand, with the greatest kindness. A French gentleman detached himself from the crowd, and said that he had noticed our difficulty, but fortunately he could come to our assistance, and begged us to make use of his own carriage, which was waiting round the corner. When the hour arrived for the King to leave the French Capital I shall never forget the enthusiasm of the French crowds that lined the streets to bid him farewell before his journey home. That he had always been popular in Paris from his youth up, is quite true; but at no time was he more so, than when this official visit came to an end on the 10th of May, 1903.

Mr. Charles Hardinge, who acted as Minister Potentiary in attendance on His Majesty during the trip, wrote an admirable little book in the shape of a *Short Record of the King's Journey, March 30th—May 5th, 1903*. This little work was completed by June 5th of the same year, and so was written when everything that occurred was fresh in the memory of the writer.

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With his kind permission, I will, while thanking him for the assistance his book has been to me in writing my recollections of that time, quote the sentence with which he concludes :—

“Honour to whom honour is due. It only remains for the writer of this record to respectfully state his conviction that the success of the King’s journey and the happy results which may be confidently anticipated therefrom, are entirely due to his Majesty’s own personality, to his courteous tact, to his frank and genial manner, and to his unrivalled knowledge of men and of the world.”



## CHAPTER XII

### MARIENBAD AND OTHER HEALTH RESORTS

IN July 1903 President Loubet arrived in England on a return visit to the one I have attempted to describe in my last chapter. He arrived in London on the 6th and was lodged at York House, St. James's Palace, as the guest of the King.

The English Mission attached to him during his visit consisted of Lord Howe, then a Lord-in-Waiting to the King, as Chef de Mission, General Sir Reginald Talbot, at one time Military Attaché in Paris, Admiral Sir Lewis Beaumont, Captain Ottley and Lieutenant-Colonel Stuart Wortley, the Naval and Military Attachés in Paris, and myself.

One official visit is very like another. Apparently the necessary procedure is that every hour of the visiting Potentate's day, from 8 a.m. until past midnight, should be filled up; a somewhat exhausting process for all concerned, but as the official visit only lasts from three to four days, as a general rule, no harm to life or health ensues. There is always a banquet, and a review of troops, and the illustrious visitor, be he King or President, invariably receives the resident Corps Diplomatique, as well as a deputation of his own countrymen, in what is theoretically a

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portion of his own fatherland, namely at the Embassy of his own country. The principal duty of the officers of the Mission, is to see that their illustrious charge and his suite, are produced punctually for all the unending functions, and, generally, to look after their comfort. Though there is a great sameness about these visits, there is nearly always something of interest to remember about them, and President Loubet's was no exception.

To begin with, it was the first time in history that a French President had been the guest of an English Monarch,—an event in itself,—furthermore, following as quickly as it did on the King's successful visit to Paris, the arrival of the President in London gave proof of the wish of the French nation to live on better terms with ourselves, and, indeed, from that time onwards, the bitterness and bad feeling between the two countries, that arrived at its culminating point during the time of the Fashoda incident, may be said to have vanished, I hope for ever. In fact, the hatchet was buried.

Though contemporary history is not the subject with which I am dealing, it is interesting to remember that in October of the same year, an arbitration treaty was signed by the Governments of England and France, and, in the following April, what was known as the Anglo-French Agreement, was concluded.

Personally, I was very pleased to have been selected to be in attendance on the President. To begin with, I like Frenchmen. Monsieur Loubet, though of extremely humble origin, was a gentleman. His

## Marienbad and other Health Resorts

perfect naturalness and simplicity invested him with a sort of dignity, that was enhanced by the way in which he received every attention and compliment paid him during his visit. He never lost an opportunity of emphasising the fact that every attention he received, was addressed to the "President of the French Republic," and had nothing to do with "Monsieur Loubet."

Another reason I was glad to be of the Mission was that it gave me the opportunity of making the acquaintance, however slightly, of M. Delcassé, then French Minister of Foreign Affairs, who had accompanied the President to England. I remember one afternoon, when there were some few hours of interval between the unending functions, I accompanied M. Delcassé and a number of the French gentlemen, on a hurried visit they paid to Windsor. It was typical of Frenchmen, and of their extraordinary quickness of artistic sense, that these very busy public men, who probably had little time to study art, at once rushed at all the best of the many beautiful things in Windsor. What I had often heard of before, was, on that afternoon, brought home to me practically, namely, the great admiration the French have for the work of Sir Thomas Lawrence. It is true that the Lawrences at Windsor are exceptionally fine ; though I have the profoundest respect for French taste, I am not sure that they are right in their inclination to prefer Lawrence to Gainsborough and Reynolds, in English Art.

I was present at the great State dinner given by the King at Buckingham Palace, and a very beautiful sight

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it was. Orchids, and the Windsor gold plate go very well together ; but far more beautiful, to my mind, are those splendid family portraits by the three great artists just mentioned, that adorn the walls.

In proposing the toast of the President of the French Republic and the French Nation, King Edward, an admirable after-dinner speaker, was at his very happiest. In the course of his speech he pointed out to the President that he was about to drink his health, out of the beautiful cup, that had been given him at the Hôtel de Ville, during his never-to-be-forgotten, and delightful visit to Paris. This little attention might not make any great impression on Englishmen, but Frenchmen are particularly susceptible to any graceful act or word. I happened to be sitting next to M. Mollard, the *Ministre du Protocol*, who always accompanies the President on his official journeys. He was genuinely delighted and whispered to me :—“*Dieu ! quel homme que votre Roi ! Comme il a la parole heureuse, et comme il montre de l'esprit, et de la finesse !*” And Monsieur Mollard, was no mean judge of that important kind of after-dinner speech that is connected with official visits. In the course of M. Loubet's visit, I once ventured to hope that Monsieur le Président was not being completely worn out by the strenuous days he was living. With a typical Frenchman's shrug of the shoulders, he answered, “*Mon Dieu ! Commandant, je résiste toujours !*”

At the termination of the visit, the English Mission accompanied the President and his Staff as far as Dover, and there my companions and I took leave of the very

## Marienbad and other Health Resorts

courteous, and nice old gentleman, that was Monsieur Loubet. I was to see him again before very long, for, during the semi-private visit that the King and Queen paid to Paris a few years later, during which they lived at the British Embassy, Monsieur and Madame Loubet, then living very simply *en bourgeois*, after the expiration of his term of office as President, came to the Embassy to take tea with his late hosts, and former guest.

In the autumn of 1903 I was in attendance when the King went to Marienbad for a cure, and for the next few years I was nearly always there for a portion of August and September, sometimes of my own accord, but more generally in waiting, and moreover for a succession of spring seasons, during his customary visits to Biarritz, I was nearly always on duty, at any rate for a part of his stay there.

I used greatly to like doing my turn of duty abroad, especially at those two very pleasant health resorts, the more so as it was evident that his visits to them really did King Edward a great deal of good. Like his mother, Queen Victoria, before him, he revelled in the strong air that can be breathed in mountainous countries and at the seaside. Moreover, the waters of Marienbad were good without being too strong, and during those last years of his life I think he was never better than after his Marienbad cure. He had been there once or twice as Prince of Wales, but, as far as I can recollect, after he came to the Throne, except for the year of his illness before his Coronation, I do not think that he ever missed a season there, but regarded his annual visit as a necessary sequel to the London season.

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A certain number of English people have always patronised Marienbad, notably the late Sir Henry and Lady Campbell-Bannerman, and the late Mr. Labouchere. Of course, as soon as the King made a practice of going there for his cure, quite a number of English people suddenly discovered the extraordinarily healing properties of these Bohemian Springs, and the little "Kur Ort" became quite as fashionable with English people as with foreigners. It really had many good points. I cannot speak with any authority on the efficacy of the waters from a personal point of view, for I only drank them for one season, when the outstanding effect I noticed, was, that such little memory as I ever possessed vanished entirely, a most inconvenient symptom for an Equerry-in-Waiting. During all my subsequent visits I contented myself with an "air" cure, and some parts of Marienbad being upwards of 2000 feet above the sea-level, the air is of the most approved quality, and all meals being taken practically out of doors, and long walks forming part of the cure, every one is in the open air all day long. After the early morning walk, during which time most of the water-drinking was done, the whole community, from the King downwards, used to eat their solitary egg and drink the best coffee in the world, at one of the numerous open-air cafés that lay in all directions. After breakfast, there was generally more drinking and walking, and three or four times a week, some sort of Marienbad bath. Some patients, I fancy, wallowed in mud. Personally, I escaped with some delightful baths, in which some pine extract was mixed up, and most agreeable they were. Then, after



A SHOOTING PARTY AT MARIENBAD

H.H. Prince Philip of Coburg

The Abbot of Tepl

Hon. E. Stonor

Capt. Hon. S. Fortescue

H.M. King Edward

Col. F. Ponsonby





## Marienbad and other Health Resorts

luncheon, there were delightful walks and drives to be taken, to say nothing of golf.

But the golf-course at Marienbad needs further mention. To begin with, it owed its very existence to King Edward. It was he who "squared" the authorities, from the Abbot of Tepl downwards, to give the necessary ground, and, moreover, he gave it his generous patronage, by constantly stopping for tea there, on his return from his afternoon drives, and in a still more practical form, by giving the most beautiful prizes for competitors of both sexes.

Having mentioned the Abbot of Tepl, and being on the subject of Marienbad amusements, I must go on to say a little more about the Religious Community of which he is the head, and the sport to be had in the neighbourhood, and I feel that I cannot do this better than to quote from an Introduction I once wrote for a book of the Badminton Series :—

"As an amusing specimen of a somewhat peculiar 'branch' of the sport in question (the shooting of driven birds), I remember well King Edward accepting an invitation from the Abbot of Tepl to a partridge-drive on the Tepl estates, which surround the famous old Monastery of that name. For those who have never 'made a cure' at Marienbad, I must explain that the Religious Order in question owns not only the Springs and Baths of Marienbad, but also a vast tract of agricultural land, which is farmed by the monks and their tenants. The Abbot himself is a great dignitary of the Roman Catholic Church; he has a seat in the Austrian House of Lords, and his principal duty is to administer the vast properties belonging to the Monastery, which has existed without intermission from the thirteenth century to our own time.

"Bohemia in general, and the Böhmischer Wald,—above which Marienbad is situated,—in particular, is famous for its

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partridges ; but driving them was a new form of sport as far as the monks themselves were concerned. It had been their practice from time immemorial to have them shot by any obliging man who happened to own a gun, for the purpose of supplying their table. However, for so distinguished a guest as King Edward an exception had to be made, so the Abbot, with the assistance of a travelling Englishman, arranged a partridge-drive on the most approved pattern. The performance began with a Gargantuan luncheon in the refectory of the Monastery, at which repast the whole of the King's party, which included several ladies, was present. So long was the bill of fare, and, it may be added, so excellent were its items, that it was well past two in the afternoon before the guns were posted. On arriving at the butts, which had been beautifully constructed for the occasion, it was evident that the services of the whole population of the neighbourhood for miles round had been called into requisition. Those employed as drivers and flankers were under the immediate command of some of the more venerable members of the fraternity ; those who came as spectators, unfortunately for the bag, wandered about at their own sweet will. The Abbot himself, in a very short shooting-coat over his white cassock, a most rakish wide-awake hat on his head, and an enormous cigar in his mouth, took up a commanding position in the King's butt, various horns sounded, and the fun began. Partridges there were in plenty ; but, unfortunately, the monks had felt inspired to fly two gigantic kites, with the laudable desire of concentrating the birds and driving them over the King's butt. The desired result of concentration was undoubtedly obtained, but the general effect of the kites was to cause the birds to run down the furrows instead of flying over the guns, and this, combined with the intense caution and self-restraint that had to be exercised by the shooters, in order to avoid hitting either a flanker, or one of the numerous spectators before alluded to, resulted in a remarkably small bag. However, it was all excellent fun, and no one was more amused at the incongruity of the whole *chasse*, than the King himself.

“Shortly afterwards King Edward had a very different experience in the same neighbourhood, when partridge-driving with Count Trautmansdorff. In a short day's shooting the

## Marienbad and other Health Resorts

party bagged 500 brace of partridge, the King himself accounting for 100 brace to his own gun. Though it hardly comes under the province of sport, perhaps I may be permitted to mention that the following winter Count Trautmansdorff was one of the guests at Sandringham during the best shooting week there, and also that not long afterwards the Abbot of Tepl was invited to Windsor, and found himself being taken round the Castle and shown its treasures by the King himself."

Another distraction at Marienbad was the comparative proximity of Karlsbad. Karlsbad was by way of being far gayer, and more fashionable, than its humbler neighbour, and certainly the hotels and shops were on a more luxurious scale. The King generally went over there for the day, once or twice in the season. One of the constant Cure guests there in those days, used to be Monsieur Clemenceau, and, as a general rule, the late Grand Duke Alexis, and several other members of the Imperial Family, were to be found at Karlsbad. Indeed, it was greatly patronised by Russians in general.

On looking back on those seasons at Marienbad, it is curious to remember what a kaleidoscope of people of all countries, and some of considerable distinction, are associated with the place. To begin with, in early times there were Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, Mr. Henry Labouchere, and Miss Maxine Elliott—I was going to write, then at the height of her beauty, but she is always beautiful—her sister, Lady Forbes Robertson, in those days, if I may dare use the expression, a flapper. Another marvellously beautiful woman, Princess Mirko of Montenegro, was there for a season with her husband, who was one of the numerous

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progeny of the old Prince Nicholas of that curious little principality. Prince Mirko died (so I heard) in Vienna, having disowned his country, during the War. The lady in question was, I believe, the daughter of some Serbian General, and was certainly one of the most lovely women I have ever met in my life. Another constant visitor was that remarkably astute, and still more remarkably antipathetic personage, who was then Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria. The late Prince Kinsky, Slatin Pasha, and Count Tassito Festitics, with his wife and daughter, were occasional visitors; Count Szapary was another Hungarian who occasionally indulged in a cure, and on one occasion he arrived at Marienbad with his own Tzigane band, so one night, after dining at a restaurant, he gave us a regular concert, conducting his band himself on the cymballen. Amongst the more regular visitors were a host of friends of mine, such as Sir Charles Mathews, Mr. Charles Gill, and Mr. Charles Hawtrey, the latter, mimicking his doctor, the celebrated Dr. Ott, to his (perfectly unconscious) face, was as good as he ever was, on any stage.

Other friends who were apt to do a Marienbad Season were, the late General Sir Lawrence Oliphant, one of the most amusing and quick-witted of men, Mr. Henry Chaplin, Colonel Mark Lockwood, and Sir John Fisher—now known respectively as Lords Chaplin, Lambourne, and Fisher; then amongst well-known Parisians I may quote Princesse Murat, the Marquise de Ganay, Comtesse de Chevigné, M. and Madame Jean de Reszke, Count Boni de Castellane,

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and Count Joseph de Gontaut-Biron, and I must not forget the British Ambassadors at Vienna, Sir Edward Goschen and Sir Fairfax Cartwright, who invariably settled down at Marienbad during the King's stay there, accompanied by one or two Secretaries of their Embassy.

In the course of his earlier visits, the King generally went over once or twice in the Season to the seat of the late Count Metternich. Metternichs of sorts used to, and I suppose still, swarm in both Germany and Austria; but this particular Metternich was the direct descendant of the great man of that name who flourished during the Napoleonic era. Amongst his other properties was the celebrated Johannisberg Vineyard on the Rhine, and I must say, that a glass or two of real Johannisberg Cabinet of one of the great vintage years, at luncheon made a man take a very roseate view of life, even of that dullest of so-called sports,—a deer-drive in the woods, which generally used to follow the Metternich luncheon parties.

An annual fête that was regularly celebrated at Marienbad during King Edward's sojourn there, was the birthday of the late Emperor Franz Josef of Austria. The King made a practice of entertaining the various officials of the neighbourhood, in honour of the occasion. The guests consisted mainly of the officers commanding the troops of the district, any *hoch geboren* Austrians who might happen to be there, the principal municipal authorities, and last, but by no means least, our friend the Abbot of Tepl.

Almost the pleasantest memory of Marienbad that

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remains to me, is that, of our breakfasts under the trees at one of the outdoor cafés, where a number of us met after the morning drink. Sir Edward Goschen, Colonel Mark Lockwood, Mr. Charles Gill, Mr. Charles Hawtrey, and generally about the same number of ladies, used to assemble round, what was really a very festive board, and consume coffee and eggs with the appetite that follows a two-hours' walk in keen mountain air, and the good spirits engendered by the consciousness, that the greater part of the water-drinking business was over for the day.

As I have already mentioned, I was generally in attendance on the late King during, anyhow, a portion of his yearly stay at Biarritz, and, being very fond of the little place, I have also frequented it a good deal when not on duty. Biarritz was eminently social, as not only were there a good many charming villas in the neighbourhood, owned by French residents, but in what was called the English Season, English visitors abounded. A great deal of entertaining was done first and last, principally by my previously mentioned friend, Consuelo Duchess of Manchester, who often took a villa there, and also by an extraordinarily hospitable American lady, who, I regret to say, died not long ago, Mrs. Moore by name. She had practically lived in France all her life, and her apartment in Paris had always a lighted candle, for she loved entertaining, and was an excellent hostess. She talked the most impossible French, with a strong American accent, and mixed her metaphors to such an extent that she became a sort of Mrs. Malaprop, to

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the huge delight of her French friends. I never quite believed in the authenticity of the numerous malapropisms for which she was made responsible ; I verily believe that she could speak French extremely well, and that she really was only amusing herself, when she spoke in the extraordinary jargon that she affected. Anyhow, her parties were the greatest fun, and not only all Biarritz, but all Paris went to them.

The King was very fond of making excursions by motor-car after he had finished off his morning business, and lovely drives could be taken to St. Sebastian, Fuentarabia, and in the Pyrenees. On one occasion he motored over, with a large party of friends, to Pau, to see what was then the greatest wonder of the age, namely, Mr. Wilbur Wright and his brother actually flying in the air.

But as far as I was personally concerned when not on duty there, my greatest amusement was to play golf on that sporting little course, part of which lies on top of the cliffs, and part at their feet, close to the sea. There was also a pack of fox-hounds, but if anybody was keen about hunting, and could not manage to hunt in England, Pau was, on the whole, infinitely preferable to Biarritz, as there was much less woodland, and in some parts quite a fine grass country. For the fortunate people who always winter away from England, and are fond of creature comforts and easy journeys, there is nothing like the South of France ; the difficulty was to choose between the two French Departments, the Alpes Maritimes and the Basses Pyrénées. I have listened to endless arguments as to their respective

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merits, and, as usual, there is a great deal to be said on both sides.

Both at Pau and Biarritz there was a great deal of very fair sport to be obtained, as between them they could produce two packs of fox-hounds, a certain amount of wild shooting, excellent fishing, for in some of the valleys in the neighbourhood of Pau there are first-class trout streams, and some good salmon are to be taken occasionally. Moreover, both towns rejoice in a Club, that of Pau being one of the most comfortable establishments of the sort I have ever come across, and there is plenty of golf. But, mild as is the climate, it is, nevertheless, a grey Northern winter. On the Riviera, it is the genuine South, with its brilliant sunshine and colour, and masses of flowers, and, moreover, that general air of gaiety that seems to spring naturally from sunshine and colour. Then, again, the Riviera is wonderfully beautiful. A stroll round the promontory of Monaco on a fine morning at Christmas time, is one of the most satisfactory promenades in the world, and there were few pleasanter places than Monte Carlo until it became spoiled, as Venice and Florence, and, indeed, as all the pleasantest and most beautiful places in the world were, in recent years, by the invasion of that most atrocious sample, of a very odious race,—I mean the low-class German tourist. Swarms of these detestable people used to be let loose in Monte Carlo, arriving in cheap trains from Germany, and spoiling everything by their horrible manners, and general shoddiness. The normal population of Monte Carlo may have consisted of scamps, male and female,



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but, at any rate, until the wholesale arrival of the Germans they were well-mannered and well-dressed scamps, and were not eyesores to the surrounding scenery.

There have always been numerous legendary suicides connected with Monte Carlo. In old days, these scandals used to be freely invented by some of the local newspapers, until a decent subsidy was obtained from the Casino Company, when they invariably and unaccountably (?) ceased. I do not suppose that in reality there have been more suicides at Monte Carlo than in any other place where there is a constantly shifting and cosmopolitan population, but, oddly enough, I witnessed one once, and without any particular feeling of regret. There had been a particularly vile specimen of the German tourist, playing a very small game at a table I had been patronising in the afternoon, who made himself odious to every one in his vicinity by his noise and bad manners. That evening, I happened to be dining early and alone in the Restaurant of the Hôtel de Paris before going to the Opera. I had just begun my dinner, and was seated close to the windows that look out on the Rond Point, just outside the steps of the Casino. It was about the hour that most people would be dressing for dinner, so the little "Place" was quite deserted. Suddenly I saw a figure come hurrying down the steps, and when it reached the Rond Point I recognised the man who had made himself so objectionable in the rooms during the afternoon. Just as he arrived opposite the window he produced a revolver and shot himself. And

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then what interested me, was the intervention of the Police. The "Place," which before had seemed quite deserted, swarmed with them ; they appeared to come out of the ground. In a trice the suicide,—for the man, I am sure, was dead,—was seated in a victoria, with an agent de police by his side, and driven rapidly away. The last I saw was Monsieur l'Agent putting the man's hat on with a sort of fatherly air, as if saying, "It is all right ; you are not the least hurt, only a little frightened." The local newspaper subsidies must have been in full blast just then, for I never heard nor read any mention of the incident.





KING EDWARD, WITH EQUERRIES IN ATTENDANCE, ON THE PROMENADE AT MARIENBAD

## CHAPTER XIII

### SOME RECOLLECTIONS OF AN EQUERRY

To return to Marienbad: on the 31st of August, his cure having been completed, the King paid a visit to the Emperor Franz Josef at Vienna, and was lodged with his suite at the Hofburg. I have written so much about official visits in the last two chapters, that I do not think it the least necessary to enlarge on the Vienna visit. There was a Court representation at the Opera one evening and a dinner at the Palace of Schönbrunn, followed by a Court performance at the Burg Theatre. The Emperor himself was an interesting personage, in a sense, and though I believe not in the least remarkable for brains or intelligence, he will be remembered in history as having succeeded in keeping together the heterogeneous bevy of Nationalities, that was known as the Austro-Hungarian Empire, during a very long reign. He was often described as a sort of Royal Martyr, owing to the succession of tragedies that occurred in his family; but those who knew him best, always said that these tragedies that shocked the world, left him perfectly unmoved, so completely selfish and self-centred was he. Great capital was made out of his industry, and the fact that he rose at five in the morning, but in reality there was nothing particularly

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remarkable about this early rising (except for the appalling inconvenience it was to his suite and servants), for he dined at five in the afternoon and went to bed at eight. Eight hours cannot be looked upon as a very short night's rest. Latterly, I believe, he lived almost entirely at Schönbrunn, and in his old age used to breakfast daily with an aged actress who had been a friend of his in old days, and was established in a villa close to the palace. There was, naturally, at their age, no concealment about what had become a very harmless liaison, and the whole Viennese public were perfectly aware of it.

I was not enormously impressed with Schönbrunn. The most noticeable feature there, to my mind, was the mounting of two guards of honour outside the Emperor's apartments, when the King and his suite arrived to dine there. On one side of the corridor the guard was Austrian, and opposite were posted a similar number of Hungarian troops, both guards looking as if nothing would please them so much as to fly at each other's throats. I had visited Vienna before on my way home from Galatz, and knew the town pretty well, but was not then made an Honorary Member of the Jockey Club, as we all were in 1903. It was a most agreeable Club, and admirably managed. Amongst other details, the Club had a large permanent box at the Opera, which any member could use at his discretion.

The visit lasted the usual three or four days, and so the King and his suite were back in England in excellent time for the Doncaster races.

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In October I was again on duty, spending most of the time between London and Newmarket, and was in attendance on the 9th of that month when the change of Government took place. There is an immemorial custom on those occasions that the outgoing and incoming Ministers do not meet; they are carefully shepherded into separate apartments. I remember, even to this day, my delight and amusement in watching the performance of one of the noted political wire-pullers of that period. I never quite grasped why he should have been at the palace at all on that occasion, but there he was, and, characteristically, going constantly in and out of *both* rooms!

The year 1904 was a busy year, as far as my duties were concerned, for I was in attendance when the King and Queen and Princess Victoria paid a three weeks' visit to Copenhagen. The Royal Yacht conveyed the whole party as far as Flushing, the rest of the journey being done by the train, which was put bodily on board the ferry between Nyborg and Korson, the distance across being about equal to our Channel route between Dover and Calais.

The first two or three days of the visit were decidedly official, but after the usual ceremonial in the shape of gala dinners, etc., had been got through, the Royal Family were living very simply with their relations, Queen Alexandra, of course, being delighted to revisit her old home in her comparatively new capacity as Queen. It was a fairly full family circle, as Prince and Princess Charles, now King and Queen

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of Norway, were living in their apartment close to the Amalienborg Palace, in two different portions of which the two monarchs were lodged.

The Amalienborg Palace certainly deserves more attention than it generally receives ; the proportions of the "Plads" that are formed by the four uniform buildings that enclose the "Plads" and are the Palace, make up, altogether, one of the most perfect architectural sites that I know in Europe. I have often heard it compared to the Place Vendôme, but, to my mind, though smaller, it is even handsomer, with its four mid-eighteenth century buildings at the four corners of the octagon, and the equestrian monument of Frederick V, of the same date, in its centre.

The Society in Copenhagen is naturally limited, as it is a comparatively small capital ; but in those days, when it was constantly visited by the numerous and extremely influential relations of the then King Christian, to be Minister there was looked upon by representatives of the great Continental Powers, as a sure stepping-stone towards the highest diplomatic posts. In my time there I can remember such men as the late Count Benckendorff, M. Isvolsky, M. Crozier, as respectively Russian and French Ministers at Copenhagen. In 1904 that very charming house, the British Legation, was tenanted by two great friends of mine, Sir Alan and Lady Johnstone. They were both immensely popular in Copenhagen Society, and entertained most hospitably and gave the pleasantest of dinners. The Opera, too, was a great distraction, some of the performances being very well given, the



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ballets, in particular, being quite first-rate. Altogether, the time there passed very agreeably.

By the middle of April the King and Queen were back at Buckingham Palace, but for a short time, for, before the end of the month, they had crossed from Holyhead to Kingstown, on a short visit to Ireland. Two or three days were spent at the Viceregal Lodge, Dublin, as the guests of Lord and Lady Dudley, the then Viceroy and Vicereine, during which the King laid the foundation-stone of the Royal College of Science in Dublin, with the usual formalities, and saw some good racing at Punchestown and in the Phoenix Park. In the course of the short tour that had been arranged, their Majesties visited Kilkenny, where they stayed for a couple of nights as the guests of the late Marquis of Ormonde and Lady Ormonde, and also paid a similiar visit to the late Duke and Duchess of Devonshire at Lismore.

Lismore is very beautiful. The Castle itself is not a very genuine specimen of a castle, but it is so perfectly situated on some high ground on the banks of the Blackwater, that it looks most imposing, and the view from the windows, looking up and down the river, is quite lovely. During the stay of the Royal party, great dinners were given at the Castle, to which numbers of the gentry of the neighbourhood were invited. There is a fine dining-hall at the Castle, so the dinners were veritably banquets. By way of thoroughly carrying out the banquet scheme, the host and hostess—neither of whom cared in the least for music—had engaged the services of the band of the

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local Militia Regiment, which was very correctly stationed in the gallery. Never have I heard such appalling sounds as proceeded from that gallery ; but, none the less, the Bandmaster was thoroughly enjoying himself, and conducted, much to his own satisfaction, a lengthy programme of the noisiest and most discordant music (?) from which I have ever suffered.

Talking of being at Lismore reminds me of the many times, and the many different places, in which I have been a guest of those two most hospitable people, the late Duke and Duchess of Devonshire. Probably no two people ever entertained to the extent that they did. At Chatsworth, in the winter, there were almost incessant large parties for the Derby November Race Meeting, which they always attended, and where the Duke always ran some horses ; until past the New Year. They were at Lismore, generally, for three weeks in the spring, during which time, besides having friends to stay with them, the whole countryside was entertained at dinner. Then, at that charming place just outside Eastbourne, Compton Place, all through the summer they had a constant flow of visitors staying there for Sundays. At Newmarket, their little house in the High Street was always full for the Race Meetings, and, finally, what perhaps the Duke enjoyed most of all, there were the weeks spent at Bolton Abbey, from which, he and his guests daily cantered away on their ponies to shoot grouse on those famous moors. All of these houses were delightful to stay in, but I think, on the whole, I preferred my visits to Chatsworth, which was a veritable museum of beautiful

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things. The greater part of the wonderful collection there was formed by the sixth Duke, who was known in his time as the "Magnifico." In reality, as regards art, he was less of a Patron and more of a Collector than the Medicean Potentate with whom he shared the appellation. The result, as seen at Chatsworth, eminently justified what must have been a combination of connoisseurship, good advice, and great wealth. Besides the family pictures, amongst which is that lovely Sir Joshua of the beautiful Duchess playing "hot codlins" with her baby daughter, there is a gallery of collected pictures amongst which there are some real treasures, such as the famous Van Eyck triptych. There is also a sculpture gallery containing some of the best work of Canova and Thorwalsden. Personally I do not greatly care for the work of either of these masters, but none the less the examples at Chatsworth were very good of their kind. Then the library was wonderful, containing as it did endless treasures, such as volumes of Van Dyck's original drawings, the unique *Liber Veritatis* of Claude Lorraine, and, in addition, some beautiful illuminated missals and fine bindings. Finally, what appealed to me most of all, was the collection of drawings of the great Italian masters which, simply framed, were hung in a long well-lighted gallery where they could really be seen and studied in comfort.

So much—or, more correctly, so little—about the interior of Chatsworth, except a passing mention of the number of pleasant people of all sorts that made up the parties there. Outside the house, the gardens

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and shrubberies were on a magnificent scale : in the midst of the latter stood the miniature Crystal Palace, used as a palm and fern house, erected by Sir Joseph Paxton. The best of covert shooting, (for nowhere can high pheasants be better shown than on the steep-wooded hillsides of Derbyshire,) an excellent grouse moor on the high ground above the house, and an eighteen-hole golf-course in the park, combined to make up a really magnificent English home of the sort that is so rapidly disappearing, and that probably in another generation will have ceased to exist.

It used to be rather the fashion in those days to talk as if the Duke was only busily engaged in politics because greatness in that line had been thrust upon him, and because, from a keen sense of duty, he felt obliged to play his part as a constant Minister of the Crown. To my mind, this was an absolutely false conception of the man. I believe that, fond as he was of sport, and also of being surrounded by younger people, nevertheless, the constant love of his life was politics.

Talking of his liking for younger people, there was a famous story about him years ago at Newmarket. One of his guests had heard him returning to the house in the small hours, and at breakfast next morning asked him what had kept him up so late. He replied that he had been playing whist at the Jockey Club Rooms with some young men whose names he did not know. "They called each other," he said, "'Putty,' 'Tops,' and the 'Shaver,' and had it not been that the 'Shaver' had to attend a prize fight at six in the

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morning, I probably should have been playing whist there still."

But to return to the Duke as a politician. Though I have heard him groan at having to prepare a speech when he might otherwise have been out shooting with his guests, and probably be rather bored when he had to deliver it ; yet, none the less, I think that he enjoyed the satisfaction of knowing that his closely-reasoned utterances would be read in the Press next morning by thousands of his countrymen, who, on any important subject, were always glad to study the opinion of one of the wisest, and most perfectly honest of Englishmen. In his last years his position in this country was very remarkable. The public, in spite of the attractions of those who might possibly be described as "Headline Politicians," have a great respect and belief in a man whom they know instinctively, as well as by reputation, to be honest, truthful, and absolutely disinterested. The cynical might remark that it is easy for a man with the late Duke's position and possessions, to be the reverse of self-seeking, but I think those who knew him best will agree with me, that whatever had been his position, his character would have been the same.

In November 1904 I was in attendance on King Carlos of Portugal, when His Majesty and Queen Amelie arrived in England to return the King's visit to Lisbon of the previous year.

At the conclusion of the official visit King Carlos remained for some weeks in England, which he spent principally in paying a series of visits to various country houses for shooting, about which sport he was

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extremely keen. He was a very fine shot, and for that reason alone would have been a welcome guest at any shooting party. He visited in succession Didlington Hall, then in the possession of the late Lord Amherst of Hackney ; Elveden Hall, Lord Iveagh's wonderful shooting manor, once tenanted by another great shot, the late Maharajah Duleep Singh ; Bowood, Lord Lansdowne's beautiful seat in Wiltshire, and finally Chatsworth. It was a bitterly cold winter, and both at Elveden and Chatsworth there was deep snow on the ground. I have never met a man so completely impervious to cold as was the late King of Portugal. He would stand outside a cover in a bitter wind with nothing on but the thinnest of shooting coats, as he found that thick clothes hampered his quickness with the gun, which was really very remarkable ; he was not only very accurate as a shot, but quick,—phenomenally quick,—in getting on to his bird.

During the whole of this tour, the Marquis de Soveral, Lord Suffield and I were in attendance. It was an extremely pleasant round of visits, and the shooting at all of them was very good,—at Elveden, of course, particularly so. Queen Amelie had, meanwhile, been paying some visits on her own account ; but she accompanied the King to Chatsworth, which was the last private visit he paid before returning to the Continent. King Carlos was the personification of good nature and kindness, and was also an extremely accomplished man, which made his brutal murder in the streets of Lisbon on February 2nd, 1908, seem to any of those who had the honour of knowing him personally, to be not only

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one of the foulest, but also one of the most meaningless murders in history.

Before the year 1904 ended, I was to take part in yet one more official visit, having been detailed to be in attendance on H.R.H. Prince Arthur of Connaught, when representing the King at the christening of the infant son and heir of the King and Queen of Italy. Prince Arthur and his suite, consisting of Field-Marshal Lord Grenfell, Captain Windham, then one of the Duke of Connaught's Equerries, and myself, duly arrived in Rome during the first days of December. The actual christening took place in one of the drawing-rooms of the Quirinal Palace. It really was rather a pretty sight. A temporary altar had been set up, there was a procession of the Royal Families and their Representatives, headed by a bevy of priests, with a band in the gallery playing suitable music.

When the ceremony was over there was an enormous luncheon, followed in the evening by a gala dinner. In a letter which I wrote home at the time, it is evident that I was much impressed with the beauty of the jewels worn by some of the ladies at the banquet! "Some of the women certainly had on the most marvellous jewels; there was one opposite me, whose name I cannot remember, who wore such diamonds as I doubt if I ever saw before, even on Royalties. Donna Franca Florio (one of the most beautiful women of her time) was beautifully dressed, and had on a long row of splendid pearls that reached to her knees. She looked very handsome, as also did Princess Teano. But the beauty of the jewels that were worn impressed

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me greatly. Some of them looked as if they must have been heirlooms dating from the Renaissance.”

During all these years, some events of which I have been endeavouring to describe, notwithstanding a good deal of duty, much of which entailed being out of the country, I was by no means neglecting racing—a sport to which, in those days, I was very devoted. To go racing meant being amongst almost the pleasantest of one’s friends, and amidst the cheeriest of surroundings, and, in addition, it became more interesting to me owing to the large increase in the size of the Sandringham Stud. The bloodstock in the paddocks there had been largely augmented in the way of brood mares by the purchase, amongst others, of such fine animals as Laodamia and Nonsuch, the natural result being that every year there were more foals and yearlings to inspect, and prophesy about. But racing is a curiously fluctuating business, and, unfortunately, beautiful as these young things were to look at, from 1901 onwards they turned out, with hardly an exception, to be singularly worthless. After Diamond Jubilee’s great year of 1900, for a long spell, Richard Marsh was hardly able to win a race for his leading patron. For the entire racing season of 1901, during which time the King was in mourning for Queen Victoria, the race-horses were leased to the Duke of Devonshire (another of Marsh’s patrons) and ran in his colours. Great things were expected of them. To begin with, Diamond Jubilee seemed to have the three races, open to four-year-olds, at his mercy, but he was a queer-tempered animal and



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declined altogether to exert himself any further, and though he ran in succession in the Princess of Wales, the Eclipse, and Jockey Club Stakes, the St. Leger of 1900 was his last victory. Lean year followed lean year, and it was not until 1908, when the Sandringham Stud could only send up one colt seemingly worthy of training, that the luck began to turn. To make up for this shortage of colts, the King leased half a dozen two-year-old colts from Colonel Hall Walker (who has lately become Lord Wavertree) and partly thanks to Minoru, one of the leased animals, but mainly to the home-bred Princesse de Galles, who won five nice races, there was at last a respectable winning balance in the way of stakes.

But 1908 was easily eclipsed by the season of 1909, when the King was placed at the head of the winning list of owners. This was mainly owing to the success of Minoru, who won five good races in succession, including the two classics,—namely the Two Thousand and the Derby. The King's Derby victory was acclaimed with wonderful enthusiasm by the immense crowd at Epsom; His Majesty followed the tradition of leading in his horse, but how he managed to get on to the course, inundated as it was with a surging crowd of enthusiasts, and, having got there, how he ever got inside the neighbouring enclosure again, is almost past the wit of man to understand. However, supported by Lord Marcus Beresford, Marsh, and an Equerry or two, to say nothing of the still more efficient aid of two or three men of the Metropolitan Police, the impossible was duly performed, and Minoru was led in.

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I was not at Epsom when Diamond Jubilee won the Derby, but I saw Persimmon win, so knew something of the cheering of which an Epsom crowd is capable, but even then it was nothing to the delight displayed by the crowd, when the Derby was won by their own reigning Sovereign.

One other occasion I remember at Epsom, when the crowd was wonderfully pleased and enthusiastic, and that was when Signorinetta had won the Oaks for the Cavaliere Ginistrelli, having scored the double event by winning the Derby two days before. The King and Queen Alexandra were present in the Royal box, and I happened to be in waiting at the time. As soon as the mare's number had gone up I was dispatched to find the Cavaliere, and inform him that the King wished to congratulate him personally on his dual victory. With great difficulty I succeeded in getting him to accompany me to the Royal box, (so shy and confused was he at the sudden honour that was to be thrust on him), but I eventually succeeded. On his arrival in the Royal box, the King placed him in the front of it between the Queen and himself, so that he could bow his acknowledgments to the cheering crowd. The crowd was delighted, for he was a very popular man in the racing world, especially at Newmarket, where he lived, and though the crowd on Oaks day is very much smaller than it is on the day of the Derby, the cheering was, nevertheless, terrific in its intensity.

But my racing recollections are getting far in advance of their time, and I must revert to a few years earlier and get on with my story.

## CHAPTER XIV

### MORE RECOLLECTIONS OF AN EQUERRY

IN 1906 I came in for a most interesting cruise in the Royal Yacht, which took me further afield than I had been for many a long year, for early in April the King and Queen and Princess Victoria joined the Royal Yacht at Marseilles for a cruise in Eastern waters.

The voyage cannot be said to have commenced auspiciously, as the yacht was compelled to remain for four days at Marseilles, whilst weatherbound by an atrocious gale. However, nothing lasts for ever, and eventually the gale came to an end, so by the 8th of the month the yacht was on her way to Messina, at which port she arrived early next day. Taormina, the beautiful, being within easy reach, had, of course, to be visited. It was always a pleasure to me to see it again ; but I knew the place well, having been there in the old *Surprise* days, and later, in the course of a winter trip to Sicily.

From Messina it was only a short journey to Corfu, and there the Royal Yacht was to spend some days not only in very beautiful, but also amongst very interesting surroundings. To commence with, the King of the Hellenes was there with a number of his family on board his yacht the *Amphitrite* ; the Prince and Princess

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of Wales, on their way home from India, were on board the *Renown*; and, finally, the Mediterranean Fleet was at anchor in the bay under the command of the late Lord Beresford, flying his flag from the masthead of H.M.S. *Bulwark*.

Various entertainments were given on board the flagship in the shape of dinners, and we were also shown a good deal of what was then the new Navy, for even as late as 1906 the Fleet in the Mediterranean was our most up-to-date Naval asset, and its command was still looked upon as the most important in the Navy. Except for the great beauty of the island itself, there is nothing very remarkable in the way of sight-seeing to be done at Corfu, so in default of any other short excursion, the Achilleion was frequently visited; the house itself consists of a sort of rather tawdry villa, built in what is evidently meant to be a Pompeian style, the whole edifice being extremely ugly and characteristically German in taste. But there criticism ends, for as regards situation, and the view from the garden, it is absolutely beautiful. From where the statue of Achilles stands, from which the villa takes its name, one can see right over the little town of Corfu, with its charming old Venetian fort, and Ulysses' Island, enshrined in a most beautiful bay, the whole view being rounded off by a background, consisting of the mountains of Albania.

In fact, Corfu is a very charming place, and I always wonder that more people do not winter there; it has a delightful climate, the scenery is superb, the roads we made during our long occupation of the island, although sadly neglected by their present owners, make

## More Recollections of an Equerry

excursions in all directions still feasible. On the other hand, islands are always troublesome to arrive at, and get away from, and there is no such thing as a Casino there, though were it to become a fashionable winter resort, that necessity (?) would doubtless be soon provided by some enterprising Greek syndicate.

After four or five pleasant days at Corfu, the *Victoria and Albert* proceeded to the Piræus, and on her arrival there, the King and Queen and Princess Victoria and the suite left Piræus for Athens, and took up their temporary residence at the palace.

Shortly after our King's arrival, the Olympic games, that were intended to be a sort of International Sporting Tournament, to be held in turn in various Capitals, were inaugurated in the new Stadium that had been built for the occasion. The Stadium, in another thousand years or so, when the white marble of which it is built has become coloured and patined with age, may become beautiful; but to my mind, nothing is so hideous as the staring white, of brand-new marble, and the Stadium at Athens was no exception. It was of huge size, and being new, could look like nothing in the world but a wedding cake. Personally, I am not fond of looking on at what are called "sports," especially when they consist largely in teams of extremely well-drilled and well-set-up athletes doing, what used to be called in the Navy "physical drill," and a large part of the competition seemed made up of these exercises, which are, I fancy, very popular in Germany and among the Northern races generally. But one very interesting competition I did see, that took place outside the

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Stadium in a garden in the vicinity ; for there the English team of épéeists (if there is such a word!) encountered the German representatives, and to our great joy soundly trounced them. Our team was headed by Lord Desborough, and eventually fought its way into the final, in which they were defeated, after a very close contest, I think, by the Belgians. The particular bout that delighted me, was one between Lord Desborough, and a remarkably corpulent German expert, who received such a prodding from his powerful and active antagonist that, in spite of the plastron and the button on the épée, I fully expected to see daylight let into the Teutonic "corpulency" !

Towards the end of the month, the Royal Yacht was once more under weigh, anchoring for a night at Katakolo to enable a visit to be paid to Olympia. I had been several times to Athens before, but never had managed to get to Olympia, which is really very difficult of access. To get there in any comfort a yacht is required, supplemented by a short railway journey and a long drive, and as the hotel—or rather the village inn—is quite remarkably bad, the whole expedition has to be compressed into the inside of a day. With a yacht at one's disposal, there is no great difficulty, and indeed the actual journey by sea from Athens to the anchorage in Katakolo Bay is a very pleasant one, and wonderfully lovely as to scenery. Athens itself is more beautiful when seen from the sea than from any other aspect, and, after going through the Corinth Canal, the Gulf of Corinth, which is never more than about thirty miles across at its broadest portion, provides a succession of views whose

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beauty, both as to colour and to outline, are difficult to over-estimate. Olympia itself is wonderfully interesting. When the original town was at the height of its fame, with its wealth of temples and shrines, to say nothing of the most important feature of all,—the Stadium for the Olympic games,—it must have been one of the wonders of the world. Much has been done in the way of excavation, so, from the summit of Kronos Hill, just to the north of the town, which lies in a sort of natural amphitheatre, it is possible to form some sort of idea of what its appearance must have been, when Olympia was in its glory. But, to my mind, far more beautiful than anything else there, and alone worth any length of journey to see, is the Hermes of Praxiteles that is safely lodged in the little museum. This statue was, I believe, found some twenty or thirty years ago by an excavating party, and was lying at the bottom of the little stream which is still dignified with the name of the River Alphios. It is exquisitely beautiful. The slight turn of the head that enables the Hermes to glance at the lovely little Bacchus perched on his shoulder, the beauty of every detail, and the wonderful patina, perhaps produced by the many hundreds of years immersion, make up altogether what is, in my poor judgment, far the most attractive, if not the finest, statue in the world. I remember how difficult it was to tear oneself away from this wonderful group, and how almost disagreeable it was to look at anything else in the museum, though, as a matter of fact, not far from it stands the Niké of Paconios, which is extremely fine, and there are also a quantity of interesting fragments ;

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but the *Hermes* is so compellingly wonderful, that everything else under the same roof seems to be second-class.

Altogether the trip to Olympia was an immense delight, and even the names on the signposts were attractive. There was something very pleasant in driving, (even in a shandrydan of a Greek fly), down the road to Arcadia!

From Katakolo the Royal Yacht proceeded to Naples, at which port the King disembarked for Paris and London, the Queen and Princess Victoria remaining on board for a further cruise on the Italian coast.

Later in the year I was present at Buckingham Palace at a rather mournful little ceremony. Under the new Army Organisation Scheme, it had been decided to disband the 3rd Battalion of the Scots Guards. Naturally, the officers and men of the battalion were much distressed at their disappearance from the Army List, and, as some sort of consolation, the King took the opportunity of parading them at Buckingham Palace, so as to take leave of them, accepting, at the same time, the custody of their colours. This fine battalion paraded under the command of Colonel Lawrence Drummond, their Colonel. After the parade, the colours were handed over by the colour party to the two Equerries-in-Waiting, and by them were duly placed in the private chapel of the palace, where I have no doubt they remained until the late war, when a third battalion was reformed.

Early in 1907 I was once more in Paris in attendance on the King and Queen, who took the opportunity



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of paying a week's visit to that Capital. With the exception of a luncheon with the President, there were no official functions, and for once in a way it was a real holiday for their Majesties. The King and Queen occupied the Embassy during the whole of their visit, the Ambassador and Ambassadors (then the late Sir Francis and Lady Feodorovna Bertie) taking up their residence for the time at the Hôtel Bristol.

The British Embassy in Paris is worthy of a few words of description, both on account of its historical interest and its magnificence as a residence. I question whether many of my countrymen realise what a bargain was made by the nation, when it was purchased for something under £30,000, its value before the late war being estimated at about a quarter of a million sterling. It was bought on the advice of the Duke of Wellington during the occupation of Paris by the Allies after Waterloo, and was at the time the Paris home of the Prince and Princess Borghese, the Princess being the beautiful Pauline, a sister of the great Napoleon.

It is most conveniently situated for an official residence, standing as it does, to use the French expression, "entre cour et jardin," with its entrance on the Rue du Faubourg St. Honoré, only a very few hundred yards from the Palace of the Élysée, the official residence of the President of the French Republic. The garden is unusually large for a Paris house, extending its border almost to the Avenue des Champs Élysées.

The interior of the "hotel" (to again use the French term) is very magnificent, decorated profusely in the approved style of the period of its occupation by

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Pauline Borghese, and consequently filled with fine specimens of Empire furniture, decoration, and bibelots, extending even to a fine dinner-service of gold plate. The proportions of the great reception and dining-rooms on the ground floor are very imposing, and they contain some remarkably good specimens of mantelpieces and *garnitures de cheminées* of bronze and ormolu.

Just at the top of the great staircase is the small dining-room that was used by the King and Queen for private luncheons and dinners. This little room is hung with some early seventeenth-century Gobelin tapestries, which were sent over in the late Lord Bertie's time by our Foreign Office for cleaning and restoration; at his request they were, after their treatment, allowed to remain there, and are the principal ornament of the small dining-room to this day. The State bedrooms were, of course, occupied by the King and Queen during their visit; the larger of the two is absolutely untouched, and remains exactly as it was in Pauline Borghese's time. The bed is a splendid specimen of Empire work, and so are the toilette tables with their hand-chased bronze medallions. The candelabra on the mantelpiece are especially beautiful, and there are interesting medallion portraits of Pauline and her husband on either side of the fire-place.

The drawing-rooms on the first floor were hung with pale amber-yellow damask, and also contained all their original Empire furniture, with beautiful candelabra and chimney-pieces. The smaller of the two in those days was used by the Ambassadors as her

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sitting-room, and amongst other interesting pictures there was a portrait of herself and her sister, Lady Hardwicke, as girls, (they were the daughters of the Lord Cowley who was a long time Ambassador in Paris, and I fancy that one, if not both, of the sisters was actually born at the Embassy); there was also another portrait of Lady Feodorovna Wellesley (as she was then) dressed as a bridesmaid to Princess Alexandra of Denmark, on her marriage with the Prince of Wales in 1863.

To proceed with the King and Queen's stay in Paris:—Amongst the several theatres visited was the Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt, where that wonderful artist, Madame Bernhardt, was playing in a very pretty little poetical piece called *Les Bouffons*, and apropos of Madame Bernhardt and *Les Bouffons*, the conjunction of the two resulted in an extremely pleasant half-hour for me. I was sent round to see the illustrious artist in question, on the morning of the performance, to ask her to put off the hour fixed for the entertainment, to enable their Majesties, who had a dinner party, to be in time for the beginning. I had known the great Sarah in England, but very slightly, and on this occasion when I called at her house, though she evidently had risen straight from her bed to receive me, she kept me long after our business had been disposed of, gossiping, and relating all the amusing cabotinage of Paris, for, besides being a transcendent artist, she was one of the most agreeable of women.

There was a constant succession of luncheons given in honour of the distinguished visitors, but the one

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that remains in my memory was at the apartment of the late Sir Reginald Lister, then, as Reggie Lister, the first Secretary of the Embassy. It was quite a small party, but amongst the guests were Monsieur and Madame Jean de Reszke. Madame Jean, though nominally only an amateur, was practically a great artist, and after luncheon was over, she sang as she only could sing. She possessed one of the most lovely and sympathetic voices I have ever heard, and was, moreover, a perfectly trained musician ; indeed, Jean always averred that she was a better singer than he, and I can still remember the enormous pleasure it was to listen to her. I had heard her before, at one or two of those delightful musical parties that the late Lady Ripon used so constantly to give at Coombe,—parties, the like of which I can remember in no other house, and I can never expect to experience anything comparable to them in the future. For there all the greatest artists in the world used to sing as they sang nowhere else, knowing, as they did, that in their hostess alone, to say nothing of her guests, they had the most sympathetic of audiences, and, moreover, in her, a kind and constant friend. At so many concerts where great singers give us of their art, though they cannot help singing well, there is always a feeling that they are faithfully performing a contract for which they are paid, and the contract being completed, are very pleased to have earned their money and to go home to bed. At Coombe, on the contrary, they sometimes almost fought as to who was to get to the piano, and the accompanist first. There

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never was such a thing as a programme ; but they simply sang whatever came into their heads, or whatever they were asked for, for the popularity of that very gifted and beautiful lady in musical circles was simply boundless. I remember once seeing such artists as Destinn, Caruso, and Scotti, with Signor Ricordi at the piano, with only one book between the four of them, trying through, what was then, an unheard-of opera in London,—*Madame Butterfly*. Alas ! that those days have gone for ever, through the untimely death of one of the kindest of my friends, and the most interesting hostess of my time.

The Paris visit being concluded, the rest of 1907, as far as my duties were concerned, was spent to a great extent on board the Royal Yacht, for in July the Royal Family once more embarked on board her at Holyhead for a visit to Ireland and Wales. After spending the night on board at Holyhead, Bangor was visited to enable the King to lay the foundation-stone of the new buildings of the University College of Wales.

Two days afterwards the *Victoria and Albert* was at Kingstown, from which port the King and Queen and Princess Victoria drove to Dublin for the purpose of visiting the Dublin Exhibition, the Marquis of Aberdeen being, at that time, Viceroy. To use the usual form of the Court Circular, during all the driving that was done on this occasion, and on a subsequent visit to Leopardstown for the races, "the Equerries-in-Waiting were in attendance on horseback."

I have ridden many miles in my time on these sorts

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of occasions, and any one with any sense of humour can get a good deal of fun out of them, by studying the attitude of the mobs that one has to pass through; but nothing is half so amusing as an Irish crowd. The Irish people are always supposed to be the very reverse of loyal, but none the less they love a show of any kind, and whenever I have been riding in attendance in Ireland, though passing only an arm's length off the packed masses of humanity that line the streets, I have never heard a word, or seen a gesture, of anything that was not at any rate friendly.

The following day the Royal party went by road to the Leopardstown races. Racing is always good sport in Ireland, even when one is dressed in an Equerry's riding-kit, which includes a cocked hat, and when feeling very hot and dusty after having ridden in front of the escort for several miles on the hard high road. That particular meeting at Leopardstown produced even more amusement than usual. The King gave a cup for the winner of an officers' race, for which there were some thirty starters. There were some fairly decent animals entered, the property of officers, and ridden by their owners or some brother officer; but amongst the whole lot there was only one serious race-horse. This horse had been given by a large race-horse owner to a departmental officer so short a time before the race, as to call forth serious comment. Good odds were laid on this animal to win, but curious things happen in racing, and especially in Ireland. Some of the young officers who were riding in the race with no particular chance of winning, but more for the sake

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of taking part in a very amusing contest than anything else, had evidently made up their minds, rightly or wrongly, that the gift was not a very genuine one, and that whatever won, they would take care that this particular horse did not. And he did not! At the start, a sort of zareba of horses was formed round him, and after the flag was dropped, curiously enough, whenever he seemed to have a chance of getting through his horses, and taking his place, he was invariably unlucky in being knocked into, and eventually came in with the ruck. An Irish crowd loves and understands racing, and is endowed with the keenest sense of humour, and the shouts of laughter that went up to heaven during this contest did one good to hear.

After leaving Kingstown, the Royal Yacht steamed up the Bristol Channel on her way to Cardiff. It was a lovely morning and full of interest to me, as I could recognise many of my old haunts when passing; such as Hartland, Lundy Island, beautiful Clovelly,—where, from boyhood onwards, I have spent some of the happiest days of my life,—and the outline of Exmoor, where I had so often hunted in my boyhood and youth.

The function at Cardiff consisted in the formal opening of the new Alexandra Docks, and, later on, after lunching with Lord and Lady Bute at their great house, which is literally within the town of Cardiff, a special non-stop train ran the Royal party up to London in time for dinner. I am afraid to say at what pace the train must have been running. I only

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know that the permanent way of the Great Western is so well laid that there was no shaking ; we might have been pottering along at thirty miles an hour instead of at considerably over double that speed.

In August the Royal Yacht was again in full commission for Cowes, and the opportunity was taken of paying a visit to the then brand-new *Dreadnought*, and going outside the island in her, to see the target-practice of the then, also new, 12-inch guns. To me, of course, it was very interesting, and the visitors on board (there was quite a large party, amongst which were a great number of ladies, who came by the invitation of their Majesties) were, I think, agreeably disappointed in the noise made by the firing, which was nothing like so ferocious as had been generally expected.

And so ended the year 1907 as far as Court duties were concerned.



## CHAPTER XV

### A VISIT TO THE NITRATE FIELDS

IN the early part of that same year I had joined the Board of Directors of the Leonor Nitrate Company, and as I was anxious to make myself familiar with the manufacture of Nitrate, at the end of 1907 I accompanied a very old friend of mine, Mr. Reginald Morris, to Chile, for a trip to the Nitrate Fields. Reggie Morris was on the Board of a number of Nitrate Companies and Chairman of the Leonor, and had been out on business to Chile before, so my excursion was made under the most favourable auspices. We started from Southampton on a fine ship, the s.s. *Avon*, belonging to the Royal Mail Steamship Company, and, after coming in for a very heavy gale in the Bay, arriving successively at Vigo and Lisbon to pick up some 400 emigrants, proceeded on our journey, calling at Madeira, Bahia and Rio de Janeiro on our way,—almost the same route that I had already gone by under sail, the first time I went to sea in the old training frigate, *Bristol*, some thirty-six years before.

There were a number of Argentine passengers on board, most of whom, (as they adore Paris), we had picked up at Cherbourg, where the ship stayed for a few hours after leaving Southampton.

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Nothing of the smallest interest happened on our journey out ; the only salient fact that remains in my memory is, that I came to the conclusion that Argentine children, with which the ship swarmed, were the most unruly and badly-brought-up specimens I had ever come across. They made day and night hideous with their noise ; their parents and governesses could not exert even the smallest control over them, and I solemnly wished that there had been a new Herod on board to massacre these "innocents." I just had sufficient knowledge of Spanish to recognise "swear words," and the language used to the stewards and servants by these afore-mentioned "innocents" would have shocked any of the topmen of my sailing-ship days.

About the middle of the month we arrived at Rio, and were two full days there, so we left the ship and spent the night at a delightful hotel high up the Corcavado Mountains, which is reached by its own little funicular railway. It was midsummer in South America, and I shall never forget the gorgeous views over the harbour from this mountain hotel. It happened to be full moon at the time, so we and our fellow-passengers strolled about in the garden for hours after dinner, quite unable to go to bed, so beautiful was the scene. By the vivid light of a full tropical moon the whole of that wonderful panorama that is Rio Harbour was plainly visible in every detail ; indeed so vivid was the moonlight that it was almost possible to see colour in the hibiscus that grew like weeds in the garden of the hotel. The next day

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we had a long morning drive in a most up-to-date motor-car that had been lent to us by Mr. Sheppard, which took us for miles on fine roads bordered by that tropical vegetation that is perhaps more gorgeous at Rio than almost anywhere.

The mention of our drive in Mr. Sheppard's car reminds me that that gentleman, who is so well known in South America as being, amongst other things, Managing Director of perhaps the most successful industry outside the United Kingdom, was a sort of "Fairy Godmother" to us during our stay at Rio. He met us when we arrived, provided us with motors and steam-launches, entertained us most hospitably, and finally put us on board and saw us off.

By the 25th of November we were comfortably lodged at a very good hotel in Buenos Ayres, where we had to wait until the train,—which in those days, I think, only ran twice a week as an express,—could take us on our way to the frontier.

We were most hospitably received by the Argentine gentlemen for whom we had letters, and were made honorary members of the Jockey Club, a palatial residence about twice the size of Stafford House. Things are done on a large scale in the Argentine. I discovered that the entrance fee for members of the Club was £300! One of our hosts was a charming man—Don Carlos Tompkinson, a descendant on one side of that well-known old Cheshire family. He himself was a great racing man, and to my delight made arrangements for us to go out to luncheon at M. Correa's stud farm, a few miles outside the Capital.

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M. Correa was the gentleman who had purchased the King's horse, Diamond Jubilee, for £30,000, a year or two before. His stud farm was an enormous establishment, and, in addition to Diamond Jubilee, there were two other very high-class stallions standing there, one of them being that good French horse, le Sancy. To show the scale that M. Correa's horse-breeding was done on, I happened to say to him that £30,000 was a high price, but I supposed that so many subscriptions would be taken to Diamond Jubilee that no doubt the horse would be a paying asset, when, to my surprise, he told me that he took no subscription, and that his three horses were never mated except with his own mares, of which he owned the best part of a hundred.

A few days elapsed and we were in the train that crosses the great Argentine plain that reaches to Mendoza, a fair-sized town at the base of the Andes. At Mendoza we changed to the funicular railway, that in those days only reached as far as Los Quevas, where we found the work on the Transandine Tunnel in full blast. The tunnel has long since been completed, and the line now runs through it direct to the Capital, Santiago de Chile.

At Los Quevas there was a sort of rest-house where we passed the night, and at six the next morning we mounted our mules and rode over the pass, and though it is almost the lowest of the Andes passes, even there a height of 13,000 feet is reached. I had looked forward immensely to the ride, which I expected to enjoy, but all enjoyment was made, more or less,

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impossible, for, like every one else, I suffered from mountain sickness, which, though it only took, in my case, the form of a splitting headache, was sufficiently disagreeable to discount considerably the pleasure of riding over the Andes.

At this altitude we had, of course, easily reached the snow line, and felt the cold considerably, having been fairly roasted in the train only the day before ; but in spite of all these trifling inconveniences, it was an interesting ride, and the scenery was very wild and grand. The mules were good beasts, but, being generally in the habit of carrying packs, preferred to walk on the extreme edge of the mountain paths that we had to ascend, and until one became accustomed to it, there was something rather uncanny in proceeding in single file with one's outside leg well over the edge of the precipices. But it is quite useless to attempt to argue with a mule, and we soon got used to it. At almost the extreme summit of the pass there is a colossal statue of Our Saviour, which marks the boundary between the two countries of Argentine and Chile, and the descent at once commences. The mules carried us as far as the Chilean village of Huncal, and there the passengers, with their luggage, were transhipped into a number of rattletrap carriages which drove at a furious speed down the mountain side to the first railway-station on the Chilean side, where we took train to Santiago, at which place we arrived on the 1st of December.

At Santiago we settled down for a few days at the Hôtel Oddo, as there were some business men to

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interview on the subject of Nitrate Concessions, one of whom was a gentleman who is now well known in London, namely Señor Augustine Edwards, for he and his charming wife, Madame Edwards, have, for some time past, been representing Chile, at the Chilean Legation in Grosvenor Square. Another leading personage amongst the business men of Chile, whose acquaintance I was fortunate enough to make out there, was Señor Merry del Val, a brother of the well-known Cardinal of that name, another brother of the same family being Don Alfonso Merry del Val, the Spanish Ambassador at present in London.

Santiago is quite an attractive town, beautifully situated at the base of the Andes, and with every sort of comfort in the shape of a good hotel and an excellent club. At the time, I was much struck with the enormous number of unfinished churches that abounded in the Capital, and naturally wanted to "know the reason why." I was told,—but whether it is true or not I have not a notion,—that as long as a church is in construction money is sent from Rome to assist in the building expenses, this grant obviously coming to an end when the sacred edifice is completed. Oddly enough, apparently no church ever is finished, so the grant goes on almost to perpetuity. *Se non è vero, è ben trovato.*

We succeeded in getting a day's racing at Santiago before leaving for Valparaiso to embark for Iquique, the principal Nitrate Port on the Chilean coast. There is so much Spanish blood in the Chilean nation that great punctuality is not to be expected ; but even then,

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it was rather more than one could bargain for, to find that the first race advertised for 2.30, did not start eventually until a little after five!

It was an easy journey to Valparaiso, and after a short stay there we embarked on a coasting steamer that duly conveyed us to Iquique, where we arrived on December 9th, and where the real work of the tour was to commence.

On arriving at Iquique we were met by Mr. Noel Clarke, who, besides being British Consul, was also the head of a large firm which did general trade all along the coast, and was intimately connected with the Nitrate business. Noel Clarke was destined to have a very busy time during the next few months, as will be explained later. Meanwhile, he and his very charming wife took us in at their house near the outskirts of the town, where we lived during our stay at Iquique, in the greatest comfort and in the pleasantest surroundings.

Iquique was not a bad sort of town at all. It boasted of some very respectable public buildings, and, being largely inhabited by English merchants, naturally possessed the inevitable club, race-course, and polo-ground. Its principal source of prosperity really consisted in the anchorage, where steamers and the large sailing-clippers could lie very comfortably waiting for their cargoes of nitrate, the long sea-coast of Chile being, on the whole, very badly off for harbours.

While on the subject of the coast, I must say something about my impressions of the Pacific. I had sailed, in my time, on most seas, but this visit was my first experience of the Pacific Ocean, and I found it extra-

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ordinarily attractive. Though I have never seen it except when it was completely acting up to its name, I have no doubt but what occasional terrific gales occur there, as elsewhere. But what delighted me was the bird and beast life of the coast (I wonder whether a sea-lion is correctly described as a beast?), and the eternal and enormous rollers that never ceased to tumble in. What caused these huge waves remained a mystery to me, for, after days of absolutely flat calm, without a breath of wind, they still came rolling in as majestically as ever. As a general rule, the little patch of smooth water that is to be found inside the protection of the breakwater, that exists at all the ports, is only deep enough for lighters and small craft generally, so the steamers anchor outside and land their passengers in boats. It is quite an exciting moment when the boat reaches the narrow entrance. The usual practice is to wait just outside the passage to the breakwater until three unusually heavy rollers have expended themselves. The three very large ones are invariably followed by a succession of small ones, advantage of which has to be taken at once, and a dash made for the entrance. Meanwhile, sea-birds of every sort and description are wheeling about in a cloudless sky or pursuing their prey in the bluest of seas, and the amiable sea-lions and sea-cows, and such like, loll about on the rocks all around and survey the scene with perfect placidity.

A very few days after our arrival, we started for the Pampas, to pay a round of visits to the different Nitrate establishments in which Morris was interested, and to give me an opportunity of learning something about the



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industry before visiting, and reporting on, the Leonor, to which place I subsequently had to travel from Antofagasta, a port some little distance to the southward of Iquique. The first part of our journey was done on horseback, the place we were to visit being only some twenty miles from the coast. All the rest of our tour of inspection was done in a small special train, that had been placed at our disposal for that purpose by the courtesy of the Railway Authorities at Iquique.

We (our hostess and host, Morris and myself) started off one afternoon about four, so as to escape the great heat of mid-day, and arrived at our first halting-place in time for dinner after a most delightful ride. The next day, of course, was spent in inspecting the establishment, and, as far as I was concerned, in getting a more finished knowledge of the business. The *caliche*, as the stuff is called that is extracted by a species of surface mining, is put into crushers and subsequently boiled, the residue turning into a white powdery substance that is the nitrate of sodium required. There is nothing very mysterious about the business, the only real peculiarity of the nitrate fields is that, fortunately for the industry, rain is absolutely unknown there, for a couple of days' heavy rain would wash all the sodium out of the ground, and the Pampas would then be a desert without the saving presence of an important industry. During the few days I was up in these parts I visited several establishments that were in the hands of English Companies; without exception they were completely run by young Englishmen. These youths, —for they were very little more,—were typical speci-

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mens of Public School boys, who, after being knocked into shape at a Public School, and only being possessed of limited private means, had started as clerks in the various business houses on the coast, and then, as soon as they were considered qualified, had been sent up country to assist in running an *officina*. At some of these factories there were probably upwards of 600 workmen, mostly Chilénos, men who are of a really fine fighting race, and apt to be extremely turbulent. It made one feel proud of one's countrymen, to see the admirable way that these young fellows handled their workmen. I fancy what tended more to preserve law and order than anything else, was the introduction of football, to which game the Chileans took very kindly; and when they realised what hard plucky men they were working under,—and nowhere, probably, are these qualities quicker detected than they are at football,—turbulent as they were by nature, and terribly inclined to be too ready with a revolver, it was extraordinary how little trouble they generally gave. One of the questions invariably asked by the visiting Directors was, whether the men had any complaint to make about their treatment by the employers, and whether they made any claim for an increase in wages. In every case that came under my notice the invariable answer was that there were no complaints, and this fact is fully corroborated by a Foreign Office dispatch that I read many months after I had returned to England.

In view of what happened a day or two afterwards, this absence of any apparent motive for trouble becomes a curious and interesting fact. That there had

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been considerable labour difficulties recently, we knew as soon as we had arrived at Iquique. There had been a strike on the Nitrate Railway Works just before our arrival, but that had been settled, and there was a strike of stevedores at Iquique still in progress, when we left the coast for the Pampas, but as far as the labourers of the various *officinas* that we hoped to visit, were concerned, we had no reason to suspect any mischief, and our first two or three visits of inspection were made in a time (apparently) of profound peace. It was somewhat of a surprise when, on the 14th of December, only three days after our arrival, it became extremely evident that a serious strike had begun in the Nitrate District, and that the sooner we got into our train and returned to the coast the better it would be,—the alternative being to be marooned in an *officina*, where no work was going on, for an indefinite period. Luckily our little special was lying in a siding close by, and off we went just in time, for already the strikers had commenced their march on Iquique. Indeed within a very few hours after the time that our train had returned to that town, many hundreds of them (having very wisely come to the conclusion that marching through the Pampas in midsummer was exceedingly thirsty work), had seized what railway stock they could lay their hands on, and, as many as there was room for, made the journey to the coast by train.

Of course, as is the case in all strikes, in all countries, the usual ineffective promise of protection by soldiers and police was given to the many men who wished to go on with their extremely well-paid work, but the

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threats and blows of the strikers proved far more effective than Government promises; the line of least resistance was duly taken, and the would-be workers joined the strike. As long as the strikers were on the Pampas they did not behave particularly badly; they did not in the least dislike the managers and staff at the *officinas*, under whom they worked, and in no case, as far as I know, was any violence or ill-treatment extended to them during the time of their forced inactivity and species of imprisonment, while the railway was in the hands of the strikers; and when our train crawled slowly through them, stopping constantly to avoid accidents, they neither derailed it, nor attempted to take possession of it, either of which they could have easily done, and contented themselves with a certain amount of booing and hissing, which broke no bones. Naturally, any establishment that contained food or drink was at once looted, but beyond that next to nothing in the way of damage to property was attempted.

However, as may be readily imagined, the members of our little party were not sorry to be back on the coast again, to settle down at the Casa Clarke until events had arranged themselves. We had no sooner returned to Iquique on the evening of the 14th, before the news reached us that the strike had become general so far as the Nitrate Fields were concerned, and on the next day some 4000 men, apparently well organised, could be seen marching down from the hills towards the town. It was fairly evident by this time that there was going to be serious trouble, and it is not to be denied that the strike leaders, one of whom was said to be a well-

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known Spanish anarchist, had chosen their moment well. To begin with, the Intendente of the Province, Señor Carlos Eastman, was at Santiago, where he had gone to present his resignation to the President; the General commanding the district, General Silva Renard, and his second in command, were both away in Santiago, leaving the troops in temporary charge of a comparatively inexperienced officer, and he, like all temporary commanders, was extremely averse to taking the responsibility for decided measures; and, by way of making the list of absentees complete, the Prefect of Police was also in the Capital. In addition, as I have mentioned before, the stevedores were also out on strike, so one way and another the position was extremely unpleasant.

At first, the Acting Commandante of the Troops seemed as if he were disposed to enforce order, and when the first lot of strikers from the Pampas arrived in the vicinity of the town, they were headed off by troops to a camp that had been prepared for them on the race-course, and there seemed some prospect of the men returning to the Pampas in trains which the Nitrate Railway Company were very ready to place at their disposal.

Apparently this attitude was only a bluff, for what eventually happened was, (in spite of the assurances given by the Acting Commandante of the Troops and the Acting Intendente of the Province, that the strikers would be prevented from entering the town by the military), that on the next day, the 16th of December, the Pampas strikers, and the transport-workers strikers of the town, joined together, took complete charge

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of the town, and stopped not only all traffic, but all work of every description, all the shops having been forced to close, and, meanwhile, reinforcements of strikers were hourly arriving from the Pampas, some on foot and others in trains that they had commandeered.

It is hardly necessary to say that, during these days, Reggie Morris and myself, living, as we were, at the English Consulate, knew from hour to hour what was going on, from our host, for we occasionally saw him when he came to his house to snatch a morsel of food. He displayed the greatest energy, and, had his advice been taken by the Authorities, in all probability a great deal of inconvenience, to say nothing of bloodshed, would have been saved. But whenever he requested the Acting Commandante to take certain measures with regard to the railway, which belonged to a British company, his proposals were invariably first accepted, and then never carried out, and when he attempted to confer with the Acting Intendente he was always informed that this great official was either too busy or else asleep, and referred to some one else, who was generally a lawyer interested in local politics.

For the inside of a week the town of Iquique was in a state of subdued chaos. Nothing happened; there were no tramways running, no cabs, no shops open, and, oddly enough, next to no disorder. The market was open for a short time in the morning, whither our intrepid hostess used daily to drive her pony cart, returning with the day's provisions. There was absolutely nothing to do all day, and, judging from our own

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feelings, the inhabitants of Iquique must have been slowly dying of intense boredom. As for ourselves, except for an hour or two in the evening when we mounted our host's ponies and went for a gallop down the coast and round the race-course, occupation we had none.

But meanwhile things were beginning to move at Santiago. Noel Clarke had been in constant telegraphic communication with Mr. Rennie, then the British Chargé des Affaires, and received at last the welcome intelligence that the real Intendente, Señor Carlos Eastman, accompanied by General Renard, were leaving Valparaiso in the Chilian warship *Zenteno*, with reinforcements of troops. Very shortly afterwards, another Chilian cruiser, the *Esmeralda*, arrived, but without the troops, that she was expected to bring.

Though there was but little actual disorder in the town, a number of the more respectable families began to get alarmed, principally owing to the panic-stricken attitude of their servants, a number of the women having taken refuge on board the merchant ships in the harbour. There was some cause for anxiety, the real danger being that of fire. A town like Iquique, largely built of wood, where rain is unknown, and where the water supply depends upon a pipe-line from the hills, is particularly open to danger of conflagration when in the hands of some thousands of strikers, many of whose pockets are known to be stuffed full of dynamite.

The only other amusement, besides the evening ride, was to attend the meetings held by the strikers. Spaniards of all shades are passionately fond of oratory

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and of the sound of their own voices. I suppose the inherent beauty and sonority of their language fascinates them, and the speeches were endless. I, alas! have very little knowledge of Spanish, so did not understand much, but I gathered from those who knew the language that their eloquence was principally employed in condemning the Government, vituperating the employers, and, what was novel in Chile, preaching an anti-European doctrine.

However, the climax was approaching.

On the 19th, the *Zenteno* arrived with Don Carlos Eastman, General Renard, and a welcome reinforcement in the shape of the O'Higgins Regiment.

The Intendente duly landed, the streets being lined with troops. All the strikers congregated to witness his arrival, their total number in the small town of Iquique being estimated at anything between 12,000 and 16,000 men.

On the following day the Intendente received a deputation consisting of the committee of the strikers. He then called a meeting of the employers, and finally had a private interview with Noel Clarke, as doyen of the Foreign Consuls at Iquique.

On the morning of the 21st, a state of siege was proclaimed in the town, proclamations to that effect being posted, and notices in the local papers. One more attempt was made by the Intendente to induce the strikers to return to their work, but his note received an insolent answer couched in a sort of semi-official language, which pointed to the fact that it was more of an attempt at a revolution, than a mere strike



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of workmen, that was confronting the Chilean Government. Fortunately for Chile, and for the Europeans who were in that country or had interests there, Don Carlos Eastman was a man who was not to be trifled with by an ignorant mob of strikers, headed by a band of anarchists and revolutionaries. The time for action had come, and was quickly seized. Owing to the overcrowding of the town by these thousands of strikers; (in addition to the danger of conflagration already alluded to,) there was a distinct risk of an epidemic breaking out, from the said overcrowding, and the filthy and insanitary habits of the men from the Pampas. Measures had to be taken to remove these unwelcome guests from the town, and they were taken at once.

The General in command of the troops was commanded by the Intendente to surround the strikers in the principal square, the Escuela Santa Maria, where they were holding one of their everlasting meetings, and order them to leave the town; warning them that if they had not moved off before the clock struck four, force would be used. Meanwhile, every effort was made by the officers present, from the General downwards, to persuade the strikers to retire, but all their eloquence was only met, by counter-abuse and violent and revolutionary speeches by the men's leaders, who then retired to the building which was used as the headquarters of the committee. The General then ordered all peaceful inhabitants to withdraw. Advantage of this was taken by some of the strikers, who left the ranks of their comrades. At the last stroke of four, fire was opened

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on the building that sheltered the committee, and on the strikers, by a couple of machine-guns. The firing lasted about a minute, and then, without any further fuss, a long column of strikers marched out of the town to the race-course, flanked on either side by troops, and almost immediately began to entrain to go back to their work on the Nitrate Fields.

While the firing was going on we were all on the roof of the Casa Clarke, about a quarter of a mile from the Escuela Santa Maria, but as soon as it was over Morris and I went down into the street to watch the procession pass.

The Chileans are a fine fighting race, and, to use the old "ring" expression, took their "gruel" like men. I heard afterwards that they had begun to return the fire with revolvers and carbines, but machine-gun fire was too much for them, and in about a minute there were about four hundred of them down, of which some one hundred and twenty or so were dead. When they passed us in the street, though every now and then a badly wounded man would fall down in his tracks, there were no complaints or curses at the troops. They simply realised that the leaders had lost, and that they had to pay for it. As usual, not a single one of these same leaders, who were pretty well known to the authorities, were found amongst the killed or wounded, and all attempts to get hold of them failed. Somehow or another, with the aid of their sympathisers in the town, they all succeeded in getting clear away.

I do not propose to deduce any moral from this rather detailed account of a strike of a few thousand workmen

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in a South American Republic; but in these days, when we all live, in this country, under the perpetual threat of strikes of all sorts and descriptions, up to a General Strike, it may be of interest to any one who happens to read these pages, to learn, how officials who are not afraid to act, (though living in a thoroughly democratic country under a Republican form of Government,) can restore law and order, when they are threatened with revolution, under the guise of labour discontent.

With the return of the Nitrate workers to the Pampas, the worst of the strike was over; but Iquique was still distinctly non-normal during the rest of my short stay there.

I was very anxious to get down the coast to Antofagasta to visit the Leonor property and report on it before returning to England, where I was due for duty on the 1st of February; but the difficulty was to find a steamer that was going down the coast, as, owing to the strike of the stevedores, they could not take in cargo. However, I eventually succeeded in getting a passage in a tramp steamer that was going in the right direction. The next difficulty was to get on board, as there was still a transport strike going on, and consequently no public conveyances were available. I wrote to the Intendente and explained my situation as regards having to be back in England by a certain date, and he at once came to the rescue. As far as water transport was concerned, I was quite all right, as Captain Wilson, commanding the Chilean Cruiser *Zenteno*, was an old comrade of mine and promptly

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produced a steam pinnace to put me on board my steamer. I shall never forget my triumphant exit from Iquique. At the hour of my departure a most forlorn old pony-victoria, dragged by two equally forlorn mules, turned up at the door of the Casa Clarke, this equipage being surrounded by one of the best turned out and smartests escorts, (of Lancers), that I have ever seen. My luggage naturally filled the inside of the little carriage to overflowing, as well as the so-called box-seat, so away I went, sitting on the top of my pile of luggage, with the escort round me, amidst the laughter and jeers of my kindest of hosts and hostesses, and of my Chairman, who was remaining at Iquique, to finish off his interrupted visit to the *officinas* of the Tarapaca district.

The rest of my journey was quite uneventful. My steamer took me to Antofagasta, where I passed a few busy days inspecting the Leonor property, that had been recently acquired by the Company on whose board I sat. Our mining surveyor, who had reported on it, had, through no fault of his own, rather let us down. A sufficient proportion of nitrate was present all right, but, unfortunately, the rock that it was mixed up with proved on working to be abnormally hard, and was constantly breaking our crushing-engines, so eventually the property was not looked upon as a first-class paying proposition and was sold. When I was there, the crushing had hardly begun, and the report I sent to my Chairman was more concerned with the buildings of the *officina*, the managing officers, and the water supply.

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I succeeded in hitting off another steamer going south, and a few days afterwards was in Valparaiso. There I only waited for the Transandine train, which, as it turned out, entailed three or four days' delay,—days very pleasantly spent at Vigna-del-Mar, a charming suburb a few miles out of the town where all the rich merchants have their villas, and where there is also about the best hotel in Chile. Amongst other attractions, it boasted of a race-course, and a little club, where I believe very big baccarat occasionally went on ; altogether “Vigna,” as it was always called, was an extremely pleasant place. My journey back over the Andes was extremely like the outward trip, the only difference was that from the Pacific side the pass was crossed over in a four-horsed carriage instead of mule-back. I infinitely preferred the mule, as it was sickening to have to witness the everlasting flogging of the good and willing horses by their brutal drivers. I had another short stay at Buenos Ayres while waiting for the mail boat, and eventually returned to England in the last days of January, just in time to take up a month's duty as Equerry-in-Waiting.

## CHAPTER XVI

1910

I HAD hardly arrived at Buckingham Palace and settled down to work before the news was received of the assassination of King Carlos and of his son, the Crown Prince, in the streets of Lisbon. It was a particularly brutal murder, for Queen Amelie was in the carriage with them, and saw her husband and son murdered before her eyes. The late King Carlos and his Consort had been so very recently the guests of our Royal Family, and were on such very friendly terms with them that the shock must have been felt most acutely. I was in attendance at both the Memorial Services that were held in London, the first of which was a Requiem Mass at St. James' Church, Spanish Place, and on the following day at St. Paul's Cathedral. It was said to have been the first time an English Sovereign had been present at a Roman Catholic Service since the Reformation. The Service at St. Paul's was very beautiful and impressive, and in those days before the war, for many of those present, it was a unique experience to hear the drums of the Guards accompanying the organ in the Dead March ; I know of no place where drums are heard to such effect, as under the great dome of Sir Christopher Wren.



*Photo: A. Debenham, Corves]*

ON BOARD H.M. YACHT "VICTORIA AND ALBERT," 1909

H.R.H. The Prince of Wales    H.M. King Edward    H.R.H. Prince Edward of Wales





Probably all my fellow-Londoners will agree with me that the average February is about the most unpleasant month of the year to spend in London, and there always seems to be more influenza and other comparatively minor disorders prevalent then, than at any other time. London was, moreover, apt to be very full in the month of February, for Parliament generally met during the month, and there were always endless dinners, political and otherwise. In 1908 there was a good deal of influenza flying about, so the King was persuaded to go to Brighton for a week, staying during this short visit at the Princess Royal's house in Lewes Crescent that had been placed at his disposal. Personally, I was very glad to be at Brighton for a week, for there is something about the air there, that revives the jaded Londoner more surely than anything else.

In the month of June I was again on duty, and consequently came in for the visit their Majesties paid to the late Emperor and Empress of Russia at Reval. It was an interesting occasion from many points of view, and looking back on it from these days, I imagine there can hardly be any of the Russians we met during that visit, including the Imperial Family, that have not been murdered by Revolutionaries or butchered by their successors, the Bolsheviks.

On June 5th, the Royal party, consisting of the King, the Queen, and Princess Victoria, embarked on board the *Victoria and Albert* at Port Victoria. We were quite a large party in attendance, as, in addition to the necessary Private Secretaries and Equerries,

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Lord Carnock (then Sir Arthur Nicholson, the Ambassador at Petersburg) Mr. Hugh O'Beirne, also of that Embassy, (who, poor fellow, met his death with the late Lord Kitchener on their ill-fated voyage to Russia during the war,) Lord Hamilton of Dalziel, (as Lord-in-Waiting, doing the duty of Lord Chamberlain,) and Sir John Fisher, (then First Sea-Lord, and Principal Naval Aide-de-Camp to the King,) were on board the Royal Yacht. An escorting squadron of our latest type of armoured cruisers, the then well-known "Minotaur" class, was ordered to join the Royal Yacht at Kiel. (Incidentally, it was interesting to notice, during the war, what a singularly useless class of vessel was the armoured cruiser. After a little more than a year's warfare afloat, we had lost nearly every specimen of that class we possessed, and oddly enough, the Germans were in a similar state; the fact is they were too big and too expensive for cruisers; they carried their main armament far too low, and if they came across anything in the shape of a battle-cruiser they were sunk for a certainty.) On this occasion the *Minotaur* and her consorts had, I believe, been chosen because they drew too much water to go through the Canal, and though, of course, the Admiralty may have thought it an excellent jest to score off the Germans, by poking fun at their strategic Canal, the joke was not likely to delay the broadening and deepening of that same channel, a work which, carried out at a cost of many millions, was taken in hand very shortly afterwards, and duly completed in time for the long-contemplated war of 1914. The

Royal Yacht arrived at Kiel in the evening and was at once boarded by Prince Henry and the usual huge swaggering crowd of Germans, that formed the Teutonic idea of what the suite of a Prince should be. We were duly informed that the escorting squadron had arrived at Kiel, which gave Sir John Fisher a chance of airing the carefully prepared Admiralty gibe about the insufficient size of the Canal, and the magnificence of our cruisers. Much as I always disliked the Germans, on this particular occasion I was rather glad that Prince Henry had also a well-thought-out impromptu ready. He retaliated by chaffing the Admiral about the wireless installation that had just been put up at Whitehall, the news of which extremely recent acquisition had already reached Germany. There could be no secret about an installation that the whole world could see, and from nowhere better than from Carlton House Terrace ; but it was instructive to learn how carefully our public buildings were watched by the inmates of the German Embassy.

The Royal Yacht anchored for the night at Kiel, and left next morning with her escorting squadron for Reval. For the first hour or so there was an escorting flotilla of German Destroyers, who were evidently very anxious to show off, and were certainly sufficiently well handled. The next twenty-four hours or so were spent at sea, and nothing can be more agreeable than a long day and night afloat in the Baltic during the month of June, when it is light all night, except for a short hour round midnight, when

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there is apt to be still a suspicion of pink in the sky.

The Royal Yacht arrived at Reval on the morning of June 9th, and there we found the two Imperial Yachts, *Polar Star* and the *Standardt*, the Dowager Empress being on board the one, the other being the temporary residence of the Emperor and Empress and their children. There was also a Russian squadron anchored in the roads, which, augmented by our escorting cruiser squadron, made up a fine show of ships.

Even then, that part of Russia was in a very disturbed state, so much so that none of the suite, or the officers of our fleet, were allowed to land, in case of trouble; and no boats, with the exception of men-o'-war's boats, were permitted to ply at all in the part of the anchorage that had been assigned to the Royal Yachts of both nations.

The whole visit passed off very agreeably, the Russians in those days being always the pleasantest of people to deal with, but underlying it all there was the feeling that the country we were in was in a very abnormal state. The Empress was palpably in a nervous condition, and no wonder, considering the constant dangers to which her children were exposed. Among the notable people in attendance on the Emperor were Monsieur Stolypin, the President of the Council of Ministers; Baron Zahamelsky, the Governor-General of the Baltic Provinces, besides such personal attendants as General Count Paul Benckendorff and Prince Orloff, who were Aides-de-Camp to

the Emperor ; the former was also a brother of the well-known and much-liked Ambassador in London. Monsieur Stolypin, as will be remembered, was eventually murdered in the Opera House of St. Petersburg. After many attempts against his life, the assassinating party at last succeeded in its object,—a previous attack on his life, when a bomb was exploded in his house, had only wounded him and maimed one of his children for life.

At the State dinner party I happened to sit next to one of the Russian gentlemen who had held the post of Governor of the Palace for a couple of years, and he gave me an idea of the terrible responsibility that this office carried, in that, amongst other things, he was personally responsible for the safety of the Emperor. But, as I have written in a previous page, I doubt whether there is one of those men, (all of whom were either public servants or else attached to the Emperor's person during that visit), who is now alive. Of the fate of the members of the Imperial Family, it is unnecessary to write. All Europe has read with horror of the indignities they suffered before being murdered.

But to turn to less gloomy memories : there were the usual State banquets on board the Royal Yachts of the two monarchs ; at the one given by King Edward we, of his suite, were much impressed by the amusing way in which he settled a difficult question of etiquette. In Russia the Dowager Empress is of higher rank than the Consort of the Emperor ; in England, of course, the reverse is the case. As both these illustrious ladies were dining on board the *Victoria and Albert*, anchored

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in Russian waters, it was a rather nice point to whom to give precedence in arranging the seating of the guests at the banquet. Following a precedent set by Solomon, in a reversed sense, the King solved the difficulty by taking both Empresses in to dinner, one on each arm!

After the dinner on board the Emperor's yacht, the *Standardt*, a serenading party of singers came off from the shore in a tug, which was then anchored close to the Royal Yachts. They sang deliciously while the guests were smoking their cigars on deck. Of course it was still broad daylight, so that the Royalties were in easy view of the singers, and at the outside a couple of hundred yards off. This appeared to me to be a very risky proceeding, so I sent for an old friend of mine, (now Sir Patrick Quinn), then, the Special Detective Officer in charge of the King, to ask him his opinion. I pointed out to him that in broad daylight, as it was, any disaffected person on board the tug, if prepared to give up his own life, could make a certainty of shooting any member of the two Royal Families that he liked to select. Quinn's answer was, "You need not fuss, Captain; there is not a man or a woman on board the tug who has not been stripped by the Russian Police and searched for arms before being embarked, and when it comes to searching, the Russian Police do not make mistakes."

On the 11th the Royal Yacht left Reval for England via the Kiel Canal, the escorting squadron parting company there and finding their way home round Denmark. On our way through the Canal the Kaiser,

with that wonderful capacity he has always shown for unsuccessful theatrical effects, arranged that the Royal Yacht should be escorted through the Canal by detachments of Cavalry! It would be difficult to imagine anything more incongruous and ridiculous than was this "cocktail" performance. The German Cavalry, efficient as they are in many respects, do not shine as horsemen, and it amused us enormously to see these unfortunate troopers bumping along the road that runs parallel to the Canal, in their attempts to keep up with the Royal Yacht, which was, of course, condemned to go at her very slowest speed.

By the 16th the Royal party was back at Buckingham Palace; but London was left almost immediately for Windsor, where there was a large gathering for the Ascot Races.

Ascot Races in 1908 was a more than usually brilliant affair. There was an exceptionally large party at Windsor, which filled the Castle to its utmost capacity, and amongst the guests were some of the King's French friends, such as the Prince and Princesse Murat, the Marquis and Marquise de Gannay, and that very charming man, M. Édouard Detaille, (long since dead I am sorry to say), so well known as the very successful painter of military subjects. I had often been to his studio in Paris, which was almost a museum in its way, for he not only managed to acquire Napoleonic relics of all sorts, but had also made a most remarkable collection of the head-dresses of all the regiments of the different armies of that period. In these days it seems almost incredible that men should

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have fought for years in such enormous and fantastic head-coverings. A great many of them, I believe, were not nearly as uncomfortable as they looked, and even in the later Crimean days our Foot-guards stuck steadily to their bearskin, which were always said to be the only sort of head-dress that the British private did not try to get rid of, if he got the chance. But to return to Monsieur Detaille ; he was even then very delicate, and in rather poor health generally, but his kind host had told him that he was to go racing or not, just as he felt inclined, and to take life as easily as he liked in wandering about the Castle, with all its wealth of pictures to interest him. Incidentally, there was one of his own works there, which still hangs in a very prominent position in the large dining-room,—the fine equestrian portrait of King Edward, accompanied by his brother, the Duke of Connaught, at an Aldershot review. The portrait of the King was certainly one of the best of him that ever was painted, and the fore-shortening of the fine chestnut charger that he is riding is masterly ; the horse really looks as if he were stepping out of the frame towards the spectator.

Windsor for Ascot Races was rather a strenuous time for the Equerries, whose duties it was to ride to Ascot and back with the Royal carriage. Seven miles does not sound like a long ride, but after a sea-trip, where no exercise can be taken, to ride at a full trot without any chance of changing the pace, at mid-day in the month of June, made me much hotter than did polo at Malta played in the great heat of a Mediterranean summer.



In March 1909, I once more found myself *en route* to Biarritz in attendance on King Edward. Only a very short stay was made in Paris, just time for a luncheon with the President at the Élysée, as the King was anxious to get to the South. They were pleasant weeks, those five or six that were spent there, for Biarritz was very full and gay, and I came in for some agreeable and interesting motor trips. Amongst others, was an excursion to Pau to see the Wilbur Wright flying-machine. Mr. Wilbur Wright had, I fancy, chosen Pau for his experimental flights because not only is there a nice flat tract of country just outside the town, but Pau possesses, and also thoroughly deserves, the reputation of being one of the most windless places in Europe. When flying-machines were in their extreme infancy, a very moderate breeze was enough to prevent an aviator from making an ascent. On this occasion the elements were kind, and Mr. Wright made two or three ascents, on one occasion taking his sister up with him. In those earlier days of flying, the great difficulty was to get the machine off the ground, and it was met by a combination of about a hundred yards of light railway to take the wheels of the machine, and the erection of a shears with a dropping weight to give the plane the necessary cant-up in the air. Another interesting motor excursion was made to San Sebastian. It is a lovely drive across the Spanish frontier, and full of interest to Englishmen, with its historic memories of Wellington's advance into France. Besides being a pleasant excursion it gave the King an opportunity of paying an informal

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visit to King Alfonso, who was then in residence at the Royal Villa at San Sebastian.

By the middle of April, what was to be my last visit to Biarritz in attendance came to an end, and I returned to England, the King having met Queen Alexandra and Princess Victoria at the station of le Bourget, just outside Paris, where now, I hear, is placed the main Aerodrome in the vicinity of that capital. The Royal party changed trains and went on to Genoa for a short cruise in the Royal Yacht.

I was again on duty for the Cowes season, and an interesting season it was, commencing, as it did, with a review of the Home and Atlantic Fleets at Spithead, followed immediately afterwards by the arrival of the Emperor and Empress of Russia and their children in the Imperial Yacht *Standardt*. The Imperial Family began the official portion of their visit by coming on board the *Victoria and Albert*, from which vessel the Emperor reviewed the Fleet, which was still at Spithead. The usual State dinners took place on board the two Royal Yachts, but beyond that there were no further functions. The members of the Russian Imperial Family were evidently delighted to be out of their own country, even on a four days' visit, and it was pathetic to witness the delight of the children at being able to run about the crowded little town of Cowes and look at the shop windows at their own sweet will, after being for so long accustomed to living in a comparative state of siege, where their lives were never safe for a moment. The Emperor and Empress landed one day at the steps of the Cadet College at Osborne, the Empress being

desirous of revisiting those surroundings where she had spent so much of her girlhood in Queen Victoria's time. For the Emperor to make even such a limited excursion as a visit to Osborne and its dependencies, gave great anxiety to Scotland Yard, and every sort of precaution was taken to ensure his safety. A swarm of detectives were posted all round Osborne, and though, as usual, their work was so well done that no one, except "those in the know" even suspected their existence, the fact remains that an unusually large number had to be employed at Cowes and its neighbourhood.

After the visit to Osborne House and its grounds, the Cadet College, then a comparatively new institution, was visited, and the mention of Osborne College makes it almost incumbent on any one who is interested in the Navy to point out that of all the hopeless examples of bad work done in a hurry, there is no more glaring instance than this establishment. (This criticism does not apply to its educational side, which I believe to be thoroughly well looked after.) I had an opportunity of visiting it shortly after it was opened, have seen it several times since, and, moreover, on the strength of having once been in the Navy, I have been pestered by fond mothers on the subject of its most unhealthy condition, ever since. Osborne itself was an undeniably good choice as regards locality, embraced, as the property is, by the sea on two sides, and being within easy reach of the great Naval Establishment at Portsmouth. Unfortunately, owing to the vanity that impels men in authority to get a new thing going without delay, it was built on the lines of a temporary structure, with

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next to nothing in the way of foundations, and very possibly on tainted ground, the actual site selected being verily near that of the old stables of Osborne House. The apparent consequences have been that the wretched children, (for the Cadets who go there are little more) are never really well, and there have been constant epidemics of a serious nature. I have been credibly informed that, amongst these epidemics was one of "pink eye" some years ago, a disease that, until the Osborne College was started, was supposed to be peculiar to horses.

But enough of these unsavoury medical details, which only serve to remind me of my own "double event" in the *Britannia*, and of the remark I once heard made almost under his breath by a famous London surgeon, when he and I were visiting a celebrated Service Hospital not so very far from Osborne: "Oh dear, oh dear, this is pre-Crimean!" But I have wandered from my subject, and must return to the Russian visitors.

Amongst the Emperor's entourage on this occasion were many of the gentlemen I had met during the Reval visit, such as Count Orloff and General Count Benckendorff, and in addition, Monsieur Isvolsky, the Foreign Minister, and subsequently Russian Ambassador in Paris. Monsieur Isvolsky was accompanied by a very old friend of mine as his Private Secretary, in the person of that extremely agreeable man who, with his charming wife, were both so well known in London Society as Prince and Princess Demidoff. It amused me greatly to notice that, when attached to the suite of the Emperor, he was known as Monsieur Demidoff.

The Princedom which London Society, or the snobs amongst them (and they are numerous), had conferred on him came simply from the fact that one of his forbears had bought the property of San Donato, which lies in the environs of Florence, and gives the title of Prince of San Donato to any owner who likes to use it. The truth is that English people, as a rule, do not realise that so-called Princes swarm in Central Europe, especially in Italy and Roumania. I know both countries pretty well, and to use the colloquial expression, in Bucharest you cannot throw a stone without hitting a Prince !

After the termination of their four days' visit,—a visit which I veritably believe they enjoyed,—the members of the Russian Imperial Family sailed away in the *Standardt* on their return journey to their own country, and a very few days afterwards I found myself in King Edward's special train in attendance and *en route* to Marienbad.

The Marienbad season of 1909 was more animated than ever ; besides the regular Marienbaders there were many new faces to be seen there, noticeably the King of the Hellenes, the Duke of Teck, Princess Stephanie and Count Longay, Prince and Princess Dolgorouki, Princess Hélène Bariatinsky, Slatin Pasha, and such well-known Parisians as the Vicomtesse Vigier, Comte and Comtesse de Waru, and my old friends, Monsieur and Madame Jean de Reszke. I hardly can recollect a more agreeable season there, and some of the details of conversation at one particular luncheon given by King Edward during his stay are indelibly stamped on my memory.

## Looking Back

Monsieur Clemenceau, who had recently arrived at Karlsbad, having just succeeded in obtaining his freedom by successfully wrecking his own Ministry, came over for the day and lunched with King Edward, the only other guests being Sir Fairfax Cartwright, our Ambassador at Vienna, and Monsieur Crozier, whom I had met when French Minister at Copenhagen. Monsieur Clemenceau was in tremendous form. I fancy that he was really rather glad to be out of office for a time, and to do his Karlsbad cure in peace. Although in Paris there were the usual number of versions of the real reason for the breaking up of his Ministry, none of them, I am sure, was as amusing as his own account of his fall from power, on which topic he held forth for some time. But brilliant and clever as his conversation was, there were, to my mind, some very immortal truths shining out of it, as might the moon amongst a shower of fireworks. It is pitiful having to try and render his beautiful French into my halting English, but one or two remarks of his made such an impression on me, that I have never forgotten them. One in particular referred to a fact, or rather a quality, which we, in these days, when the object seems to be to reduce every one and everything to a dull level, may be apt to lose. Monsieur Clemenceau's contention was, that the great fault of the French was their hopeless love of logic. His countrymen had achieved a more or less successful Revolution nominally in support of a perfectly logical idea, namely that France should be governed on principles ensuring Liberty, Equality, Fraternity for all its citizens. However successful the Revolution may have

been in a general sense, it certainly failed to establish its main object. Liberty, he pointed out, is only a dream ; the freest people in the world, the English, spend their lives in inventing new yokes to place on their own shoulders. Fraternity, may simply be said to be non-existent, owing to the fact that man naturally and instinctively preys on his fellow-man. The doctrine of Equality has no doubt been fulfilled to a certain extent, for, as he somewhat cynically pointed out, every one has an equal right to vilify his neighbour.

So much for the logic of the Latin races. According to Monsieur Clemenceau, the great strength and mainstay of the men of the British race is that, not possessing logical minds, they are not to be frightened out of cherishing useful anomalies. One of the greatest of its anomalies was the continual existence of an Hereditary Second Chamber, which, in his opinion, *fonctionnait extrêmement bien*. And then, turning round with a bow to his host, he finished up by saying that as another instance the English, the most democratic nation in the world, remained faithful to the Monarchical system, and could still love and honour their King.

The conversation turned later on the inevitable war of the future, that has now become the war of the past. It had always been understood that England's main contribution, in the event of a war of aggression, was to be her Navy, but that was not enough for Monsieur Clemenceau, and his parting words on taking leave of King Edward were prophetic: "Surtout, Sire, soignez votre Armée." And if it be true, as is averred, that the war was virtually won by the Navy,

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it is surely equally true, that it was that eminently *soigné* article, the British Army of the first days of the war, that saved the situation and gave time for the power of the Navy to assert itself, and enable reinforcements, as soon as they could be raised and trained, to be sent literally from all parts of the world, to the battle-fronts where they were most needed, almost without let or hindrance.

The visit to Marienbad having been concluded, I was a free man again and could do my usual Scotch round of visits, and subsequently spend a month in mid-winter in the south of France. In February I was in attendance at Buckingham Palace, and, little as I realised it at the time, it was fated to be my last month of waiting on King Edward. As usual, London was full of influenza, and once more the King was persuaded to go to Brighton for a few days. On this occasion he was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Sassoon at King's Gardens, Hove, who had so often entertained him at Tulchan Lodge, Spey Side, which had also been, as I have mentioned before, one of the very happiest, of my own happy hunting-grounds.

After a week at Brighton the King was back at Buckingham Palace again, where Prince and Princess Henry of Prussia had arrived on a ten days' visit, and on the 21st of the month, accompanied by Queen Alexandra, he opened his last Parliament.

During Prince Henry's stay at Buckingham Palace, he succeeded in giving me a curious example of that extraordinary mentality that is apparently a German peculiarity. He had been frequently employed as a



sort of bagman by his brother, noticeably on his two visits, the first to the Far East, to exhibit the mailed fist, and secondly to the United States, in an effort that was made to win over the great heart of the American public. Like his brother, he had, when he liked, a considerable charm of manner, which could be produced when necessary, like the pulling out of a certain stop of an organ. And, like his brother, and indeed like most Prussians, he was a perfect specimen of *le faux bonhomme*. But judging from my own experience, I rather doubt his success as a political bagman, as I think he was inclined to believe that every Englishman he met, was sure to be overcome by his cordiality and condescension, and would consequently be prepared to accept, and subsequently retail, his invaluable confidences. For instance, at Buckingham Palace he kept me up until two in the morning once, *tête à tête*, apparently for the sole purpose of impressing on me that his brother was grossly ill-judged and misrepresented in England; that he really loved our country, and that the preparations that were being constantly made to perfect the German Army were solely in view of the impending danger that the Emperor, (who was the greatest genius and most far-seeing man in the world), was preparing against, and that was the Yellow Peril! His Imperial Majesty, so Prince Henry solemnly told me, was convinced that the yellow races in their countless millions would eventually invade Europe, and the German Army would prove to be its only saviour. I confess that I was not much impressed by this harangue, and, besides dis-

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liked the fact that I was evidently classed as "the village idiot." Poetic justice would have attended the invasion of Eastern Europe by the Chinese, more especially if they got as far as Berlin, and recovered some of the priceless treasures looted from them by the German Expeditionary Force, at the time of the Boxer troubles.

After a stay of some ten days the Prince and Princess left the Palace, and my last month in waiting on King Edward came to an end.

Most of what remained of the year 1910 turned out to be one of the saddest times of my life. With the rest of my fellow-subjects I mourned the loss of a great King, but I had also lost the kindest master that ever man served, and one, moreover, who was not only a good master to his servants, but was also their best friend. My grief at the King's death was, if possible, more poignant owing to the circumstance that I had been obliged to change my month of waiting, and had consequently done duty in February instead of being with him at Biarritz in April as usual, in which case I should have had the melancholy satisfaction of always remembering that I had been with him until almost the last. The climate of Biarritz suited King Edward wonderfully well; though shortly after his arrival there he had been taken seriously ill, by the middle of April he was really better, revived by the strong air that blows home there from the Atlantic. So far as we all knew, he was well, when he returned to England, but a few days later, after his visit to Sandringham, the news began to leak out that all

was not well with the King, so I hurried down to the Palace to inquire. Though it never occurred to those of us who had been long with him that any illness could possibly be fatal, so accustomed were we all to his wonderful vitality and powers of recuperation, yet on the morning of the 10th May there was no doubt but that he was very dangerously ill, and for the first time I felt really anxious. After mid-day, from what I could gather from those members of the Staff that I saw at Buckingham Palace, it looked as if he had begun to rally, so once again I was full of hope for the best. I went again after dinner, and then at last realised that, though he was still alive, his case was almost hopeless, and there I remained in the Equerries' room, with several others of my brother Equerries, until the end came. When I left the Palace shortly after midnight, there was still that quiet and patient crowd of watchers outside the Palace gate waiting for the next bulletin. Alas! when it came it was to tell them that Edward VII had passed away. Many of the crowd had noticed that I had come out of the Palace, and I was waylaid by questioners. The demand was always the same—"Was it true?"—and when I was obliged to answer that it was, the almost invariable response was that it was impossible! The fact was that the man in the street loved him, and for that reason was for the moment quite unable to realise that any like ill could befall him; such a sudden end to that busy life appeared to be impossible. At the time I quite understood this attitude; to me, also, it seemed as if those long hours of suspense, waiting in the Equerries' room before the fatal

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news reached us, could only be an evil dream, that would be dispelled on the morrow.

For that mournful ceremonial the King's funeral I was attached to the Mission sent to represent the French Republic, the chief of which was M. Pichon, then Minister for Foreign Affairs. Practically all the civilised countries in the world were represented ; the other great Republic, the United States of America, by a special Envoy in the person of Mr. Roosevelt, the Ex-President. The chief mourners besides the Royal Family were the German Emperor, the King's son-in-law, King Haakon of Norway, and his two brothers-in-law, the Kings of Denmark and of the Hellenes. The Kings of Spain, Portugal, Belgium, and Bulgaria were also present, and the heirs to the thrones of Austria, Turkey, Roumania, Serbia, and Montenegro. Other representatives were the Grand Duke Michael Alexandrovitch of Russia, the Duke d'Aosta and the Prince Consort of the Netherlands. One evening, by the kind invitation of Queen Alexandra, I was present at a small service held after night-fall in the Throne-room of Buckingham Palace, where the mortal remains of King Edward lay in state prior to the removal to Westminster Hall. Perhaps the most moving part of that very beautiful and simple service was the relieving of the Guard that happened to take place immediately after the conclusion of the office. During the whole of the lying-in-state at Buckingham Palace and Westminster Hall the coffin was guarded by the officers and men of the King's Company of the Grenadier Guards, four sentries standing at the four corners of the cata-

falque by night and by day. These motionless figures standing on one of the steps of the catafalque, resting on their reversed arms and wearing their bearskins, looked gigantic in the interior of the room. The changing of the Guard (they were relieved every hour) was a wonderfully moving spectacle. The Officer of the Guard led the relief into the room, preceded by a small Drummer-boy carrying a lantern, exactly as the Sentries are relieved throughout the night outside the Royal Palaces. This tiny procession of armed men marching noiselessly through the Throne-room to take up the duty of guarding the mortal remains of their deceased Sovereign and Colonel-in-Chief was extraordinarily impressive. On the 16th the coffin was removed to Westminster Hall, where the lying-in-state lasted for four days, during which time I believe upwards of 400,000 persons passed through the Hall to take a silent farewell of their late King.

The interment took place in the St. George's Chapel, Windsor, and this was the last occasion that his Equerries were called upon to be in attendance on him. We marched by the side of the gun-carriage that was used as a bier, and lined up in the same position in the Choir of the Chapel, where, after the funeral service, the coffin was finally lowered into the family vault beneath it. A team of Horse Artillery was used as far as Paddington Station, but from Windsor Station to the Castle, passing through a portion of the town and up the commencement of the Long Walk to the Chapel, the gun-carriage was pulled by a party of Bluejackets from H.M.S. *Excellent*. The procession through the

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streets of London, with the immense crowd that lined the streets and literally swarmed the parks, was a marvellous sight, but the passage of the cortège up the Long Walk at Windsor to the entrance to the Castle was really beautiful, and never did Windsor Castle look more magnificent than on the 20th of May, when all that was mortal of King Edward VII was laid to rest.

It would not be becoming for me to argue on the merits or demerits of the much-discussed life of King Edward as it appears in the *Dictionary of National Biography*. A far better judge than I could ever pretend to be, and, moreover, a practised writer, in the person of the late Lord Redesdale, has left behind him his views on the subject, in the paper that was read before the Royal Society of Literature on April 23rd, 1915. I have that pamphlet, as it was subsequently printed, now in my possession, a greatly prized gift from the kind author, made to me not very long before he died. I can only say that I agree with every word of it, and that in my opinion no man in England was better qualified than the writer, to form a really just estimate of the character and attainments of King Edward VII.

Lord Redesdale was a very finished man of the world, and was also a man of very wide experience, having in his time been Diplomatist, Author, and Government Official, and in addition the late King and he shared a hobby,—landscape gardening,—and I am always inclined to think that men who happen to have the same hobby, are apt to know rather more of each other, than do their other friends and acquaintances.

As to the relations that existed between the King and his Ministers, I know nothing, but I have always understood that those of them that were brought most into contact with him, thoroughly recognised and appreciated his quick and strong grasp of great political questions, especially as relating to foreign politics, and the unerring instinct he had for brushing aside irrelevances and arriving at once at the heart of the business. Possibly Ministers may not have always realised that from the fact of his position and relationship with the various reigning Sovereigns (the French had not named him "l'Oncle de l'Europe" for nothing!), and also, from the amount of pains he had taken to make the personal acquaintance of the Ministers of foreign countries, he was apt to be better informed than was Downing Street. Moreover, he had a genius for doing the right thing. I remember during the official visit to Paris that I have already attempted to describe, when he proposed calling at the Hôtel de Ville, having to pass that building on his way to and from Vincennes for the Military Review, that was one of the functions arranged for his visit, every effort was made, especially by the French Authorities, to dissuade him. Fortunately he was, as usual, extremely firm. In vain was he told that the Hôtel de Ville was a hotbed of Socialism, and the headquarters of anti-monarchical feelings. He determined that if the City Fathers of Paris would receive him, nothing would deter him. His reception there was probably the greatest triumph of a very successful visit.

But the day has probably not yet arrived for History

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to pass its final verdict on Edward VII as a King. As a man, nothing to my mind can better sum up his character than do those very simple words, that stand engraved, under the east window of Sandringham Church :—

TO THE LOVED MEMORY

OF

KING EDWARD THE SEVENTH

THE EAST WINDOW IN THIS CHURCH IS DEDICATED  
AND THE CHANCEL ADORNED AND DECORATED  
BY HIS WIFE, HIS CHILDREN, AND HIS GRANDCHILDREN,  
BY HIS HOUSEHOLD, AND HIS SERVANTS  
AND BY THE TENANTS AND WORKERS UPON HIS ESTATE  
MANY MOURNERS OF MANY CONDITIONS  
YET ONE IN DEVOTION AND ONE IN REVERENCE  
THROUGH THE POWER OF HIS SYMPATHY  
AND THE MIGHT OF HIS LOVING-KINDNESS

REGUM REGI GLORIA

MCMXI





CHANCEL OF SANDRINGHAM CHURCH, DECORATED IN MEMORY OF  
H.M. KING EDWARD VII



## AFTERWORD

SINCE King Edward's death I have had but few opportunities of being a spectator of events. Instead of travelling all over England and Europe on visits, official and otherwise, except for an occasional trip to the South of France, I have hardly left London.

During the very first week of the present reign His Majesty King George, with that extraordinary kindness and consideration that he has always shown towards his father's old servants and his own old comrades of the Navy, commanded me to Marlborough House, and there most graciously informed me that I might continue to occupy the rooms at St. James' Palace that had been granted to me by the late King, and that, moreover, I was to receive the appointment of Groom-in-Waiting and Gentleman Usher. This dual office did not last very long, for when a vacancy occurred, through the death of General Sir Stanley Clarke, the King very kindly gave me the post of Sergeant-at-Arms in the House of Lords, which very pleasant appointment I still continue to hold, as well as another that I prize very highly, namely that of Extra Equerry to His Majesty the King.

During the few months that I was on the personal

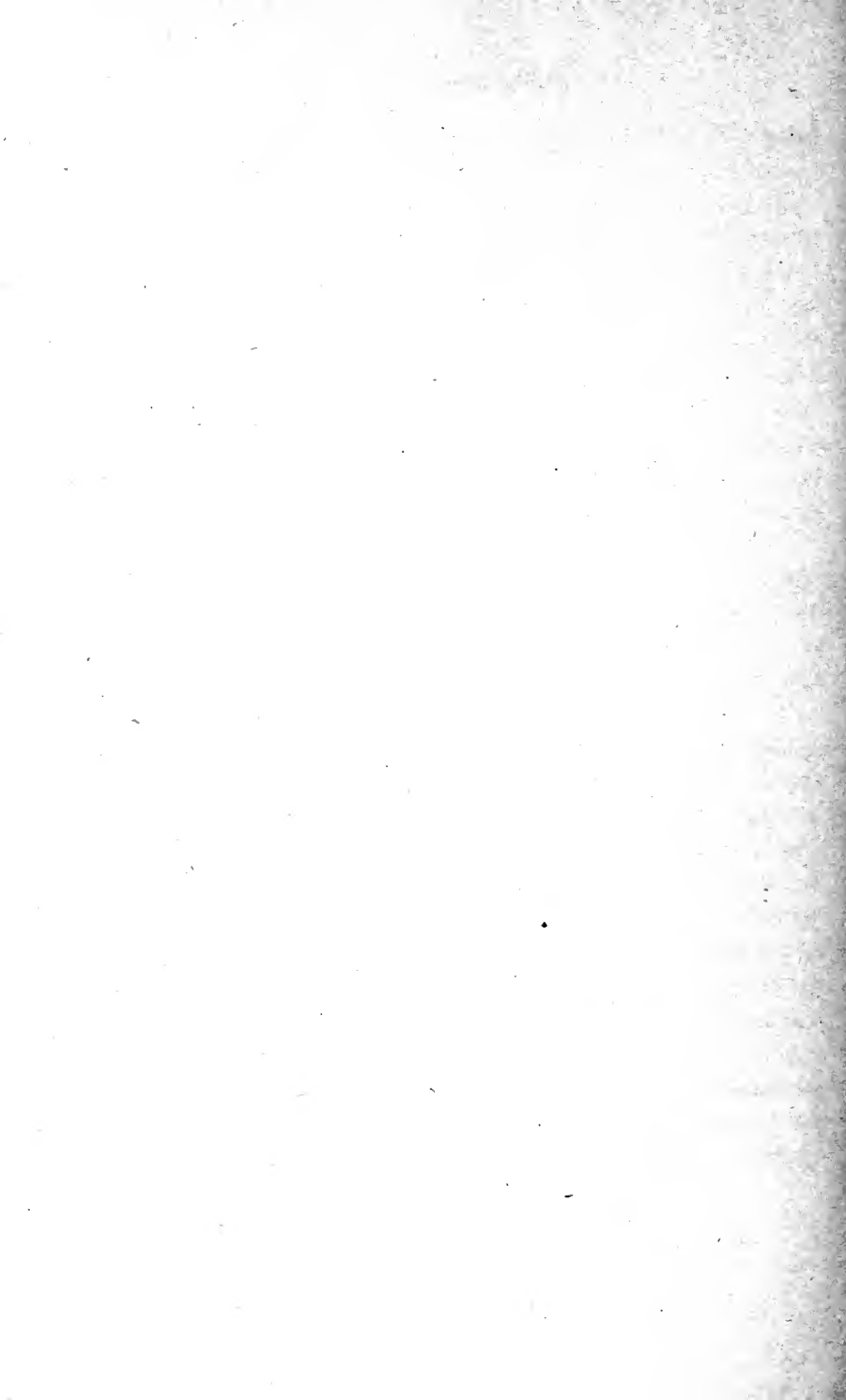
## Looking Back

Staff of King George, I came in for one very interesting experience. Towards the end of the summer I was in attendance when the King, Queen Mary, and some of the younger members of the Royal Family, embarked on board the Royal Yacht for the purpose of witnessing the manœuvres of the Home Fleet, then under the command of the present Admiral of the Fleet Sir Edward May. During these exercises the headquarters of the Fleet was Torbay, and there the *Victoria and Albert* generally anchored for the night, or remained during the day, while the King was on board one of the battleships of the Fleet. Though it is many years since I have served afloat, it is, even to this day, impossible for me to stand on the quarter-deck of a man-of-war without the sensation of being amongst familiar surroundings, so those days spent in the midst of old comrades were very pleasant ones, and remain to me as a very happy memory. I believe it was during that week that an aeroplane flew for the first time over a British Fleet. The plane in question was piloted by one of the pioneers of flying, who was giving an exhibition of aviation, and, naturally, seized such an opportunity as being the first man to fly over a British Fleet, a Fleet, moreover, that had the Royal Standard flying at a masthead. I have still among my belongings the photograph, here reproduced, of the King on the bridge of the flagship watching the movement of the plane as it approaches.

Before the end of the year 1910 the health of my poor old friend, Stanley Clarke, became so bad that he was unable to carry on his duties at the House of



ON BOARD THE FLAGSHIP OF THE HOME FLEET, 1910



## Afterword

Lords as Sergeant-at-Arms, and it having been settled that I was to succeed him eventually, I officiated for him until the end of the session. Consequently, I am now about to commence the tenth year of my tenure there, and am becoming quite an old "Officer of the House."

The day may come, perhaps, when there might be something written about events that have occurred, and speeches that have been made, in what the newspapers delight in calling the "Gilded Chamber," but certainly as far as I am concerned the time is not yet, and meanwhile the only memory I will allow myself to mention is the passing of the Parliament Bill. For a man like myself, who has absolutely no politics, and is firmly convinced that the whole philosophy of governing and of government, is contained in the Abbé Jérôme Coignard's delightful fable of the old woman of Syracuse, the assertions made across the table of the House are sometimes very interesting. Readers of Anatole France will remember that the old lady in question was living in Syracuse when the tyrant, Dionysius, was behaving more inhumanly than usual. Being asked by him why she daily prayed that his life should be spared, she replied, "I am very old, and have lived under many tyrants, and I have always noticed that each in turn, has been worse than the last. You are the most detestable one that I have yet come across ; from which I conclude that your successor will be even more cruel than you are, so I pray daily to the gods that his arrival may be postponed for as long as possible."

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So, in this philosophical frame of mind, I could watch the manœuvres connected with that measure with the greatest interest and complete impartiality. I remember speculating (in the case of the Lords throwing out the Bill) whether that long list, of I forget exactly how many scores of Peers, all to be at once created, that was supposed to be in Lord Morley's pocket, ever really existed, or was only a gigantic bluff! My knowledge of politics was, and is, much too limited to enable me to form an opinion even now, but though knowing nothing of politics, I had played poker a good deal, and from that point of view I always believed the list to be a bluff, and a very successful one!

I have named these pages "Looking Back," for the sufficient reason that, having permanently joined the ranks of the "fogies," at my time of life it is pleasanter to look back than try to gaze into the future.

That life is beginning to be different, and is going to be increasingly so in this country, is a simple platitude, and whether the changes are going to be for the better or the worse, I know not. If the new order of things makes for the greater happiness of the greater number, then I suppose there is nothing more to be said, and "everything is for the best in the best of worlds." The drawbacks seem, to my limited vision, to be that life will be apt to become terribly drab and level. The bricklayer having been long since limited as to the number of bricks he may lay, before long, Mr. Sargent may be limited by his Union to a fixed number of brush strokes, and that curious species of tyranny



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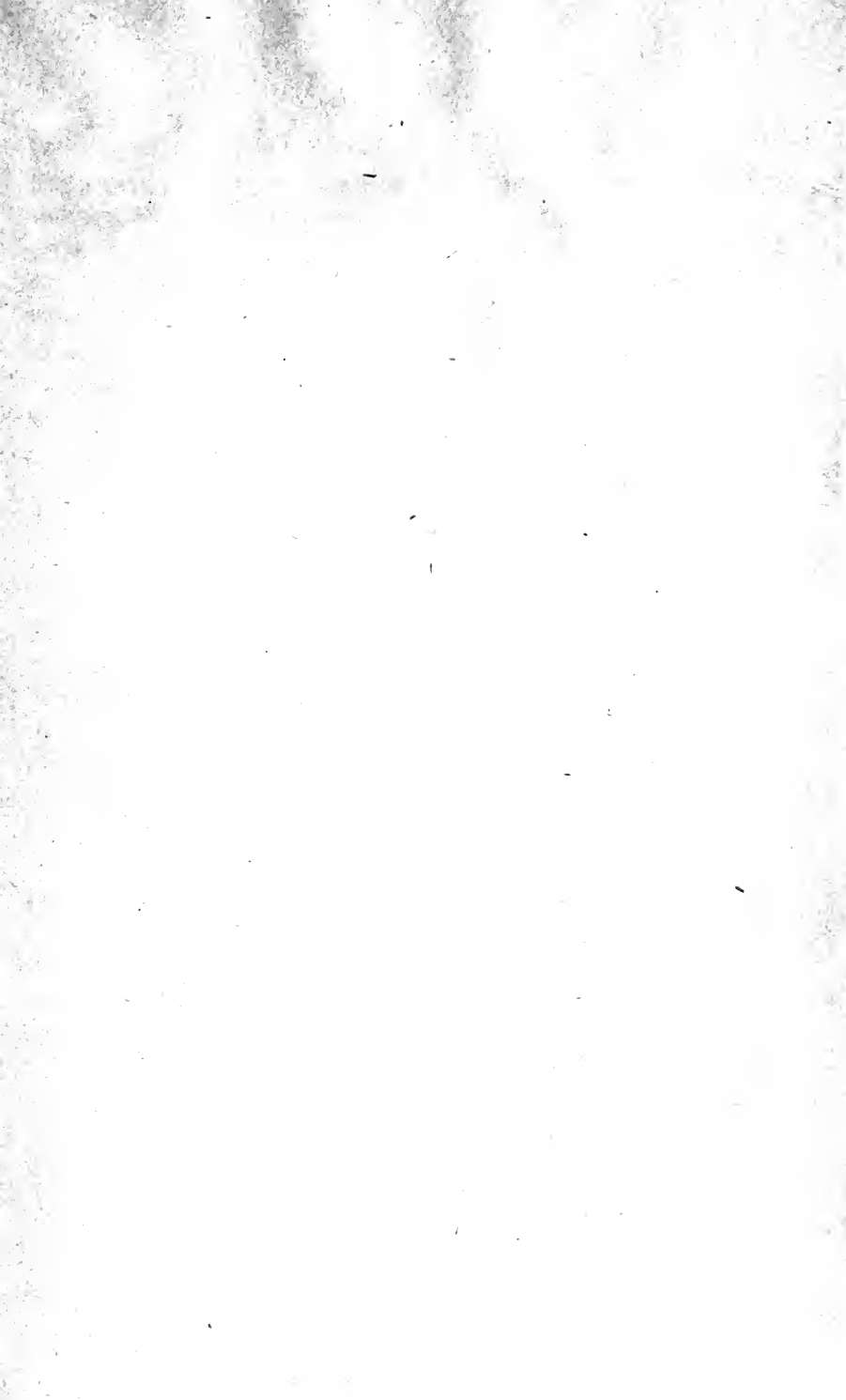
might be extended to every Art and Craft in the kingdom. Worst of all, with increasing Government control, we shall be apt to lose our liberty, which has already diminished perceptibly during the last few years. Liberty seems to me to be the most precious of all possessions, and the only one that is really worthy of a League to protect it. During the war it was inevitable that all sorts of control had to be exercised, but now that war conditions no longer exist, we do not seem to have the fetters struck off our wrists as rapidly as could be wished. It is difficult to understand some of the anomalies of Government control ; for instance, why should dancing-halls be allowed to be kept open until two in the morning, whilst the inmates of respectable old-fashioned clubs are hounded into the street at 12 or 12.30, according to the day of the week? I am all for freedom, and am entirely in favour of the dancing-places being open all night if the proprietors prefer it, always supposing that ordinary clubs are allowed to live under their own rules. Personally, the much-criticised existing liquor control seems to me to be not only tyrannical, but ridiculous. I was brought up to believe that Magee was one of the ablest of our Churchmen of his own, or of any other time. He it was, who, in a great speech delivered in the House of Lords used the words, "I should say that it would be better that England should be free, than that England should be compulsorily sober," and I entirely agree with him.

History teaches us that democracies in all times have been opposed to liberty, and it is the possible loss of

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freedom in the future that seems to me to be the coming danger to our beloved country. I am, in my humble way, as ardent a lover of liberty as was the poet Heine himself, so it is no comfort to feel that though this England of ours will surely survive the succeeding Governments, that will have charge of its destinies, each of which, according to Monsieur Anatole France, must automatically be worse than the last, its prosperity will avail us nothing, should we lose our most precious heritage, namely—our liberty.

THE END



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