

—By Yacht to Durville Island—

AN EASTER CRUISE

By Jack F. Just

Continued from October Issue

There was no regular sleep-producing swell now; as the dawning light grew brighter, steep, white-crested seas were revealed to our gaze. Discomfort had taken place, where once comfort and serenity had prevailed. About us waters surged and spray swept over our little craft, drenching us to the skin. It is amusing how the conflict between yacht and elements reminds one of life. There are times when life is fair sailing, then in a short space of time, trouble! We all experience it, and just as the yacht was made to fight her way to Whareatea by the will of our skipper, so are we made to fight ours, ever onward and upward, by the will of the Great Master.

All nature rebelled at our intrusion that morning as we neared the shores of Durville Island. The seas became less vicious, but squalls of great force came sweeping down the steep slopes to lay the yacht flatly on the water, and time and time again our portholes were awash, as we fought our way into the bay. Our determination to make anchorage in Whareatea was equal to that of Nature's in trying to keep us out. Slowly, but surely, we gained ground by taking advantage of lulls between squalls. At last I received orders to clear the anchor line. How uncomfortable it was in the confined space forward of the yacht, trying to shift a sack of onions that had been stowed on top of the anchor, while the yacht lay out at an alarming angle.

At last all was ready, the anchor and chain was arranged on deck. Nature now played her last card before finally submitting to our intrusion. Our fore-hatch was open; down from the hill came a squall greater in force

than ever. The yacht heeled over; water, green and cold, cascaded down the hatch for fully half a minute. It swirled the entire length of the bunk on the lee side, soaking cushions, blankets and clothing in its mad course

MEMORIAL TO SAMUEL PLIMSOLL

ERECTED BY NATIONAL UNION OF SEAMEN

"Erected by the members of the National Union of Seamen in grateful recognition of his services to the men of the sea of all nations." So reads the memorial tablet on the memorial to Samuel Plimsoll, on the Victoria Embankment, London. But the greatest monument is to be found on every ship throughout the world—the compulsory "Load Line Mark" on every vessel over eighty tons (with very few exceptions). Sam, like the founder of the world-famous Marine Society, was not a sailor, but an ordinary civilian, and he experienced many knock-backs when he first became interested in the well-being of our mercantile marine. When the Plimsoll Line was first introduced, one captain put it on the funnel of his vessel to show his contempt. However, the fact remains that he is remembered today as a man "not of the sea," but one who did much for those "Who go down to the sea in ships."

onward. My pulse quickened, but any fears I entertained were cut short by the sound of the anchor chain running out, which proved both comforting and reassuring. When I eventually made an appearance on deck, the

yacht was anchored within twenty feet of the beach.

After everything had been put in ship-shape order I took time to survey the shore. Above us, peeping through the trees, was the residence of a retired Indian Army officer. How peaceful this house appeared among the palms and trees; the setting was more tropical than sub-tropical. It filled one with a desire to set foot ashore; the desire becoming more intense each minute, filled one with a longing to view from the hilltop the panorama, and try to mentally trace the course we had followed. Other members of our party had unlashd and launched the dinghy, and all soaking clothes, cushions and blankets were tossed in to be taken ashore and dried. Everyone was as keen to go ashore as I was. Those who had made the trip before expected to meet the owner of the cottage, but unfortunately this meeting was denied them, as he had taken advantage of the Easter holidays to make a trip to Nelson.

After landing on the beach and completing our morning ablutions, we set off on a tour of the Island, starting from the beach, and including the residence and fowl-runs—finally resting on a knoll directly above the vegetable garden. From here we enjoyed the panorama I was sure would be afforded us. The wind had eased somewhat in force. Great white clouds were drifting lazily across the sky; below us was the sea, so clear one could see the seaweed and rocks on the bottom. I had enjoyed the rest and became anxious to visit the vegetable garden. Not that I was interested in vegetables other than as a means of sustaining the inner man, still I wanted to see what was there. This proved a

profitable visitation, because we found peas, beans, a plentiful supply of rhubarb, and some leeks. Such a sight reminded us it was time for lunch, and even though some might call it "plunder," we **did** help ourselves to a generous supply which we took back to the yacht. A senior member took the responsible duties of chief cook, and I was unanimously elected as "spud-barber" and galley-hand.

Now culinary art is a very difficult thing to master in the confined space of a yacht. Firstly one has trouble with the petrol stove, which invariably develops a blockage when it is needed. The preparation of vegetables on a yacht's deck is an entirely different problem to that presented to the housewife. But the most trying task is that of arranging **three** billies on a stove meant to hold only two. However, these problems, difficult as they appear, were overcome by our chef, who was endowed with the valuable characteristic termed "ingenuity" so essential to those who indulge in holidays of this nature. Those ashore showed remarkable speed

at the sound of the dinner bell. The trouble we had to produce that three course meal of soup, cold mutton and vegetables from the garden, with stewed rhubarb

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and cream to follow, was justified by the amount of praise poured forth by our diners. They hadn't tasted or enjoyed any better even at home, which just

proves how capable mere man is in a case of necessity. This capability seems to diminish when we arrive back in civilisation. I suppose it is because we know there is a mother or wife on hand to do it all for us. This always strikes me as a peculiar trait in human nature. Simple menial tasks at home hold no glamour for us; but on a cruise we derive no mean satisfaction in executing them.

As the cruise was to last only for a week, and we were desirous of seeing as much as possible in that short period, it was decided to sail for French Pass as soon as possible. It was therefore with great haste that dishes were washed and clothes, which were now dry, were brought back on board. At two-thirty our anchor broke bottom at Whareatea, and it was with mingled feelings of contentment and expectancy that we bade farewell to that little bay. As we rounded the point, the bay and its environs were slowly lost to view, and we were under way again, this time headed for French Pass.

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