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FLEET NEARS JOURNEY'S END

Remarkable Cruise of Atlantic Squadron Will Close Monday.

SUPREME TEST OF EFFICIENCY

Trip of 45,000 Miles, Begun Under Criticism of Technical Men, Establishes the Value of American Navy.

OLD POINT COMFORT, Va., Feb. 20.

Almost across the Atlantic ocean on the last reach of their spectacular cruise around the world, the sixteen battleships of the "United States Atlantic fleet" are steaming today in leisurely fashion toward the anchorage grounds of Hampton Roads, from whence they sailed just fourteen months ago. During these months of record steaming the heavily armored fighting vessels have traveled approximately 45,000 miles and are returning in condition still fit for "a frolic or a fight." The cruise has been a veritable expedition of the seas, and tasks heretofore deemed impossible for the modern ironclad have been accomplished with an ease bordering on the commonplace.

The stories of the cruise have been succeeding chapters of receptions, banquets, balls and merry-making, but back of all this relaxation and entertaining in the hospitable port of the two hemispheres has been a test of men and material which has placed the American navy in an enviable position before all the world. The engine room efficiency in the longer legs of the journey developing a new and unexpected wide steering radius for a battleship, the facility in following the motions of the flagship in the fleet, squadron and divisional maneuvers, which came with constant experience at sea, and, above all, the marvelous records made at the targets in Magdalena and Manila bays tell of the real work and the substantial accomplishments that have marked this most notable of peace demonstrations among the ravines of the world.

The previously arranged schedule of the journey from port to port had been adhered to in remarkable manner except in two instances, when violent storms made full speed too dangerous and uncomfortable. To offset these lapses from punctuality, the fleet has made some of its longest runs two whole days ahead of time. None of the undertakings imposed upon the ships or the men has been too difficult. The cruise, however, was not inaugurated without serious snifflings at home and abroad. Victor D. M. Melcalf of California was secretary of the navy when the cruise began. After the ships had set sail from Manila with homeward bound pennants flying, Mr. Melcalf said:

"When the purpose of giving this assemblage of battleships the privileges and advantages of a practical cruise was announced, criticisms from high technical quarters were heard. It was suggested that the undertaking was too monumental; that a battleship is too vast and complicated a piece of mechanism to send around the globe on any ordinary occasion; that dangers more than multiplied with numbers in such a case; that disaster lurked on every submerged ledge and was borne on every unknown tidal current; that the skeletons of some of the ships would doubtless be left in the Straits of Magellan; that, if the fleet should succeed in round-

ing South America it was reasonably certain that the individual ships would, one by one, arrive with machinery loose and almost unserviceable, with crews reflecting the demoralized condition of the material, and that a woe-filled spectacle of failure would thus be presented.

"As to material, the cold facts are that the ships have practically taken care of their own repairs on this cruise. The repair lists turned in at the Cavite naval station were negligible."

The experience gained on the cruise will be of unending benefit to the navy is indicated from the fact that probably one-half of the entire personnel of the naval establishment participated in the epoch-making trip. Three of the sixteen captains who sailed in command of vessels are returning home as rear admirals. Eight other captains are returning in command of the same ship on which they began the journey of the world. From rear admiral down to midshipman the training has been such as no other naval cruise ever afforded. Among the enlisted men the training has been even more valuable. Landmen shipped just before the start and utterly green in the ways of the deep are coming home an integral part of a wonderful fleet efficiency and loyal believers in all that the American navy stands for. Desertions on the trip have been few. The men have taken a pride in the cruise and it will be a constant boast with them that they started to the west from Hampton Roads and came home with crews still turned in that direction. They know the world is round, and they know what it is to work and play over 45,000 miles of the watered surface of the globe.

Admiral Sperry Makes Good.

To Rear Admiral Charles S. Sperry, a strict disciplinarian, a man of few words, but a recognized scholar and constant student of the higher arts of naval science, fell the task of directing the fleet on all but the first 14,000 miles of its journey. Rear Admiral Robley D. Evans, now retired, took the fleet out of Hampton Roads on December 16, 1907, and although illness soon after the start confined him to his cabin for a greater part of the way, he retained command until San Francisco was reached and the first stage of the long trip had been accomplished. Rear Admiral Evans found it necessary while the ships were at the targets in Magdalena bay to leave the fleet and seek treatment at Base Bobles, Hot Springs, Cal. His flag lieutenant went with him and he retained his rank of commander-in-chief. When the ships reached Monterey bay, the last stop-overs place on the Pacific coast prior to the entry into San Francisco harbor, Admiral Evans was helped aboard his old flagship and was on the after bridge when the Connecticut entered the Golden Gate at the head of the most formidable array of fighting vessels ever gathered under one flag. The Atlantic and Pacific fleets joined company in the bay and there were more than forty ships in the four long columns that came to anchor under Evans' blue ensign. Three days later Admiral Evans hauled down his flag for all time. He was succeeded as commander-in-chief by Rear Admiral Charles M. Thomas, who sailed from Hampton Roads in command of the second squadron. Because of Admiral Evans' illness the burden of the diplomatic calls, the speeches and the entertaining of the trip around South America, and up the California coast fell upon Admiral Thomas. Coupled with his duties as commander in command, with the commander-in-chief of the fleet, the burden was not a light one. Admiral Thomas was plainly failing in health when he succeeded Admiral Evans and he retained official command only from May 9 to 15, 1908, being relieved at that time, ahead of the depart-

ment's plans, in order that he might enjoy a rest. As the fleet was sailing from San Francisco two months later Admiral Thomas died suddenly at Del Monte, Cal.

Death Takes Two Captains.

Death has twice invaded the ranks of the captains who sailed with the fleet, but in both instances the officers had previously been relieved from duty. Captain Henry McCrea of the Georgia, a most popular officer, died soon after his return to the east following relinquishment of command at San Francisco. Captain Greenleaf A. Merriam, who took the Missouri to the Pacific coast, a capable man, also died within a comparatively short time after turning his vessel over to a successor.

Rear Admiral Sperry, who returns as commander-in-chief, sailed as commander of the fourth division of the fleet, being outranked by both Admiral Evans and Thomas. Rear Admiral William H. Emory was the fourth of the sailing admirals, and he was retired while the ships were at Manila. Captains Seaton Schroeder of the Louisiana, and William B. Potter of the Virginia, and William B. Potter of the Vermont, were captains who attained flag rank during the cruise.

Leaving Hampton Roads on the cloudless day in December, 1907, after a review by the president from the bridge of the Mayflower, the first run of the fleet took it to Trinidad. It had been announced that the practice cruise would end on the west coast of the United States, but hardly had the ships got under way than the fact became known that it was really Mr. Roosevelt's intention to have the sixteen battleships circumnavigate the globe. At Trinidad the first of the gayeties occurred. The officers and men of the fleet were welcomed with a hospitality which set a mark for all succeeding receptions and from that time on each succeeding port tried to outdo its predecessor. The climax of the gayeties, of parties and receptions, undoubtedly came in Australia and Japan, although it would be difficult for the officers and men today to say just where it was the people tried hardest to make their stay a pleasant one. Among the men, Los Angeles will always be a bright memory. For it was there that they first came into their own on the trip and all entertainments were arranged in particular for the enlisted force. It was in Los Angeles also that "Jim" Jeffries, champion of the world, referred the sailors' boxing bouts and mingled with them in all their sports.

Fear of Treachery Unfounded.

From Trinidad the fleet called next at Rio, where the days of the visit were overcrowded with social events. At Rio an unfounded rumor told of a plot by anarchists to blow up some of the American vessels. The first thrill of fear which swept the nation was quickly dispelled when the story was shown to be a pure fabrication. From Rio the itinerary led to Punta Arenas, that unique and interesting "fastest south" settlement on the Straits of Magellan. Here again a hospitable people made the stay of the fleet an exceedingly pleasant one. The Chilean government sent a cruiser to accompany the sixteen battleships through the treacherous waters of the straits and although the navigators of the American vessels had already plotted their own course through the narrow, rock-walled waterway, the courtesy of the South American nation was fully appreciated.

When the ships had safely left the straits, the department officials at Washington undoubtedly breathed a sigh of grateful relief, although on the sixteen big ironclads themselves there was never a question in the mind of any officer or enlisted man as to the safety of the sturdy fighting craft. Sailing up the western coast of South America the fleet passed in

review of the president of Chile in the harbor of Valparaiso, sweeping in a great curve into the harbor and out again before the admiring eyes of a deeply impressed people. No stops were made between Punta Arenas and Callao, where again the entertainments offered the visitors taxed every day's time to the utmost.

After Callao came Magdalena bay, where for a month the ships were out of touch with the world except by wireless telegraphy. Drills and record target practice filled the time at Magdalena. It was a month of real work—a month of work enjoyed by all. Record target practice is eagerly anticipated every year. It is a time that every sailor, no matter how new he may be in the service, gets a chance at the guns, provided he has shown any sort of aptitude in the "ring-pong" trials which are continued aboard the men-of-war in port and out. It is at record practice that the men attain the rank of "gun pointer" and get a white star and crossed circle on their blouse-sleeve if they make a certain mark. To be a gun pointer means extra pay each month, according to the class attained, and there is prize money for all, if the ship's guns as a whole make a deserving record. The record practice of last spring developed an accuracy and rapidity of fire never before attained.

Social Fetes in California.

After Magdalena came the excursion of the fleet to the California resorts and there was apparently a never-ending program of merry-making. At San Diego (Coronado beach); at the ports of Los Angeles, at Santa Barbara, at Monterey, Santa Cruz and San Francisco, the people of California received the fleet with wild acclaim. It was the first time that such an array of fighting vessels had been seen on the Pacific coast and California celebrated with a hospitality for which the people of the state are noted. A trip to Puget sound took the fleet to Seattle, Tacoma and Bellingham and these cities offered an entertainment which ranked with the very best of the entire trip.

When the ships set sail out of San Francisco for the return trip there were many predictions that they would be left in the Pacific and that events might make such a course desirable. Invitations had been accepted for visits to Australia, to China and Japan and there was never a deviation from the outlined plans. The fleet had done exactly what the authorities at Washington said it would, but in a manner which surprised and gratified them to the fullest extent.

The story of the fleet's visit to Honolulu, to Auckland, Sydney, Melbourne and Albany in Australia; to Yokohama, to Amoy, to Manila and to the ports of call on the way home through the Suoy are too recent to need recapitulation. The welcome extended in Australia and Japan left nothing to be asked either in lavishness of entertainment or in sincerity of purpose.

The battleships, had their schedule brought them sooner to the eastern end of the fleet, might have played a notable part in supporting the stricken people of Manila. As it was the services of the ships were offered, but the relief plans had already developed so as not to require them. In a way the battleship fleet, however, accomplished much. Stores ships laden with supplies for the fighting vessels were dispatched by the home government and officers and men were glad to give up the solid foodstuffs and delicacies to the earthquake sufferers. A large sum of money was contributed from the fleet and the first division of four vessels under Admiral Sperry called at Naples to express sympathy and sorrow. The battleship Illinois was the only one of the American fighting vessels to really enter the earthquake zone. This ship went to Messina and 400 American sailors searched the ruins until they had recovered

the bodies of American Consul Cheney and his wife.

On Last Lap Home.

After visits to various Mediterranean ports and accepting the hospitalities of half a dozen nations the sixteen ships gathered again at Gibraltar and sailed for home Saturday, February 6. They were met at sea about 1,000 miles from shore by the third, or "home" squadron, of the Atlantic fleet, consisting of four battleships and five cruisers. Even the last leg of the famous journey is to be given over to work. There will be daily drills and maneuvers and inspection by the commander-in-chief of every vessel on the way over. President Roosevelt will greet the fleet on February 22 from the bridge of the Mayflower at the point from which he bade farewell fourteen months ago.

There will be two strangers in the fleet when it reaches here—the Nebraska and the Wisconsin, both Pacific built, which replaced the Maine and Alabama, detached at San Francisco and sent home in advance. The Maine will be the flagship of the welcoming squadron.

At Manila the ships spent three weeks at the target engaged in full battle practice. Battle practice is at much longer range than record practice and is really a test of the gunpointers developed at record practice can do when the ships are firing under battle conditions and at battle distances. The battle practice at Manila, held under the new fire control system, showed an improvement in many instances of 100 per cent over the gunnery records of a year ago.

Composition of the fleet as it returns is as follows:

First squadron, first division, Rear Admiral Charles S. Sperry, commander-in-chief; Connecticut (flagship), Captain Hugo Osterhaus; Kansas, Captain Charles E. Vreeland; Ohio, Captain Thomas B. Hubbard; Vermont, Captain Frank F. Fletcher. Second division, Rear Admiral Richard Wainwright, commander; Georgia (flagship), Lieutenant Commander G. W. Kille; Nebraska, Captain Reginald F. Nicholson; New Jersey, Captain W. H. H. Southernland; Rhode Island, Captain Joseph B. Murdoch. Second squadron, third division, Rear Admiral Seaton Schroeder, commanding; Louisiana (flagship), Captain Roscuth Niles; Missouri, Captain Robert M. Doyle; Illinois, Captain Alexander Sharp; Virginia, Captain Alexander Sharp. Fourth division, Rear Admiral W. B. Potter, commanding; Wisconsin (flagship), Captain Frank E. Beatty; Illinois, Captain John M. Dwyer; Kearsarge, Captain Hamilton Hutchins; Kentucky, Captain Walter C. Cowles.

Musings of a Cycle.

It doesn't require much strength to raise an objection.

Those who are rolling in wealth might find a better use for it.

A woman is never flattered by a photograph that looks like her.

If art held the mirror up to nature, nature must often be ashamed of itself.

Many a man claims to be complete master of himself who hasn't much to boast of.

Some people are so imbued with the idea that it's never too late to mend that they never begin.

Some fellows only seem to put their best foot forward when they are headed in the wrong direction.

Most things are governed by the law of supply and demand, but the crop of fools isn't one of them.

There are people so constituted that they seem to get a lot of enjoyment out of never having any fun in life.

The nuisance about people who know all about one subject is they try to make you think they know still more about some other.

The fellow who does the most talking about charity generally manages to make his escape before the hat is passed.—New York Times.

CRUEL KNOCK FOR BALDHEADS

Consternation Beneath Hairless Domes and Fearful Indignation in Nurseries.

In a paper read before the College of Physicians in Philadelphia some hard and cruel things were said of the man who makes it easy for Providence to number the hairs of his head.

The shafts of wit of the professional jokesmith harmlessly expend themselves upon the polished crowns of those destitute of their proper share of capillary covering. Wit, like death, loves a shining mark, and the bald-headed man is an easily vulnerable target. These light shafts of humor do not strike deep, and have no re-entrant barb to create a rankling wound. But when a man of science stands up and tells an assemblage of savants that bald-headed people are degenerate it makes all bald-headed people everywhere feel badly.

A baby feels badly enough about it, anyway, and that is the real reason why a baby cries. It does not want the moon, as is popularly supposed. It is not as a rule the victim of a malicious and prying pin that is pricking it somewhere. It is not usually suffering from indigestion. It is simply crying because it is bald, and it sees no hope of ever getting any hair. Now to be told in addition that it is a degenerate makes a baby's lot in life harder than ever to bear.

There will be weeping and wailing, but without gnashing of teeth, in many nurseries because of this declaration with regard to the connection between baldness and degeneracy. It will be no use to assign teething or the colic as the reason. Since Calvin enunciated the theory of infant damnation there has been no pronouncement which has brought such grief and consternation to the nursery as this declaration that the hairless are degenerate. Some mothers to reassure their infants and alleviate their distress, have decided to buy wigs for them, but it is likely that the child's intelligence will soon penetrate the deception. The situation is one for the serious consideration of those who have at heart the welfare of helpless innocent babyhood.—Philadelphia Ledger.

FLIRTING IN CHURCH ALL RIGHT

Pastor Sees No Harm in Shooting Glances from Eyes Pleasing to Look At.

May a maiden in church with "countenance demure of modest grace" look from her book at a youth, look away, and then look again?

May she flirt if she would? Is there any harm in learning the color of the other's eyes?

These questions have been answered by the Rev. S. B. Dexter, pastor of the Park Baptist church of Aurora, Ill. The clergyman holds that "the little mingling of glances consequent upon opposite seats is not objectionable if it is in church."

"On the other hand," said the minister yesterday, "flirting in theaters and other places of public amusement should be tabooed—it is harmful there, but in church it is purged of its harmfulness."

The clergyman was led to make these remarks after he had cited flirting in theaters as one reason for the crusade which has been started in Aurora to close the playhouses Sunday nights. At the same time he replied to an assertion of the theater owners that a show had been given in his church on Sunday.

A moving picture exhibition was given in the Park Baptist church a week ago, and in defense of this the pastor said: "Church surroundings and associations

are entirely different from those which attend performances in public playhouses. Sometimes the plays in our theaters are a trifle risqué, and if the show be given on Sunday, the result is a general forgetfulness of that fact. Under such conditions flirting is harmful.

"In church, however, I can see no harm in a 'little bit' of flirting, if the young people come not to look at each other, but to learn the scriptures."

"I am not opposed to the theater—in fact the theater may be termed an 'aid to indigestion.' But the Sunday show is a step below the plane Christianity should occupy. It degrades the conscience, inasmuch as the possessor refuses to listen to the 'still, small voice.'"

The Rev. Mr. Dexter has one of the largest congregations in Aurora, and his opinions have given rise to much "tea table chat." He has been pastor of the Aurora church a little more than a year.—Chicago Tribune.

GIVES DIVORCE A BOOST

Maine Judge Declares It a Remedy for Unbearable Ills of Matrimony.

In the course of an address before the Twentieth Century club of Bangor, Me., upon the subject of divorce Lucius L. Emery, chief judge of the Maine supreme judicial court, gave utterance to some views that have created much comment and discussion among the clergy and others. Judge Emery said, in part:

"I have read a great deal and heard a great deal about the divorce evil. Now in my opinion, divorce is not an evil, but rather a remedy for evil. Like other remedies for evil, it may and does have attendant lesser evils, which we must seriously consider and eliminate if possible, but in itself divorce is not an evil—it is a remedy. The evil precedes the divorce, but comes after marriage. I shall not consider the moral side of the question. I am speaking from the legal standpoint alone in considering this remedy for many of the evils of society."

"Marriage is a civil institution, established by statute for the benefit of man. It is not a sacrament. There is nothing divine about it, but it is a purely human institution. Law has established it. Its rights and abuses are defined, not by the church, but by law."

"To be sure, divorce may, in a sense, have an ill effect upon society. It would be better, of course, if all marriages were ideal, but they are not. We find these terrible conditions. The remedy may be a choice of two evils, but I say that in choosing divorce society has chosen the lesser. I have heard it said that divorce should not be granted because of the children, but I maintain that it is better for them not only better, but less hurtful. And I say these things in the light of honest experience."—New York Herald.

A Business Boy's Question.

The well known business man in Belfast who married the other day for the second time, has a bright boy of 11, who should eventually climb to the top of the tree.

On his return from his honeymoon with his blushing but not too beautiful bride, the gentleman in question promptly set out to make the lady and his son acquainted.

"My boy," he said, beaming his best and brightest upon his precious offspring, "this is your new mother."

For a few seconds the youngster subjected the lady to a most critical examination, and then, "I say, father," said he, "yes, my son," was the reply.

"Well, dad," continued the youngster, "if it's a fair question, how many coupons did you give up for her?"—Glasgow Herald.