

OVER the MAGELLAN COURSE

COMPLETE STORY of
the CRUISE of the
ST. LOUIS to the
**PACIFIC, WHICH OUR
BIG ATLANTIC
FLEET WILL
DUPLICATE
in DECEMBER**



THE cruiser St. Louis has just completed its long 14,000 mile trip around South America, through the straits of Magellan, and joined its division of the coming great Pacific fleet. At the present time the armored cruisers Washington and Tennessee are making their way around on a similar voyage, and in December the Atlantic fleet of 16 battleships will undergo this test of endurance, making the combined Pacific fleet the most powerful ever assembled under the American flag. Those who witnessed the naval display at Jamestown may appreciate the size of this fleet when it is known that Magdalena bay will see an assemblage of ships that could defeat the combined American and foreign fleets which lay at Hampton roads this spring.

The first addition to the Pacific, the protected cruiser St. Louis, is of 2,665 tons displacement, with a speed of over 22 knots and carrying a battery of 14 six inch and 18 three inch guns. Completed by the Neafie & Levy ship building company, Camden, N. J., at a contract price of \$2,900,000, this ship was placed in commission August 18, 1906, at League Island, Pa., under the command of Commander Nathaniel R. Usher, United States navy, one of the best known officers of the service. After participating in the winter's target practice off Cuba and the opening ceremonies of the Jamestown exposition she went to the New York navy yard for a final overhauling preparatory to her trip through the straits. After docking, coaling and receiving tons of sea stores she left for Tompkinsville, S. I., to await orders to proceed.

At noon May 23 "All hands up anchor" was piped, and little did the hundreds of passengers aboard the crowded ferries and steamers realize that this man-of-war was starting on a voyage which but few people take in the course of a lifetime. With a last look at the Narrows, Coney Island and those other landmarks dear to the man-of-warman the St. Louis sailed for Hampton roads, Va. There, receiving a draft of men, she put to sea on the afternoon of May 25, bound for Port Castries, St. Lucia.

In Sight of Mont Pelee

Her trip down the coast was favored by perfect conditions of weather and sea. With no "hatches battened down" and warm, balmy days the crew sat around on "top side" discussing the doings at home and the points of interest in South America. In the tropical seas the "Portuguese men-of-war" raced along beside the ship, making those graceful dives for which they are famous. At night the phosphorescence of the water made the wash from the bow appear as if it were illuminated by a radium light. Below the twentieth parallel of latitude the southern cross came to view, and nightly groups of men stood on the forecastle gazing at this beautiful constellation of the tropics. So the time passed along until noon of May 29, when Sombbrero Island was "picked up" by the masthead lookout. In the evening St. Christopher Island was passed, while dawn of Memorial day brought that great volcano, Mont Pelee, whose eruptions in 1902 totally destroyed St. Pierre, the thriving French city of Martinique. Close aboard were the lava banked mountainous shores, and looking through binoculars no signs of life were apparent on this now desolate island. Quite different was the scene five years ago when the navy hurried to the relief of the sufferers, and to those aboard who took part in that expedition this sight brought back many sad memories.

Memorial day at sea! Old Sol on the meridian, a salute began of 21 minute guns. With navy precision each gun rang out on the minute until the last of the national salute had been fired. Then, with battery secured, the day's ceremony was over. The navy's tribute to the heroes of '61 was paid. As Martinique was left astern the mountains of St. Lucia loomed up on the port bow. Speeding ahead 12 knots it was about 4 o'clock in the afternoon when the entrance of Port Castries harbor opened out and the St. Louis followed the narrow channel to her berth alongside the coal dock. Little West Indian divers swarmed around the side and filled the air with their cries of "You heave, I dive!" Natives pulled their "dugouts," passing in review, as it were, to call attention to the names painted on their boats, "St. Louis," "Tankee," "Admiral Dewey," etc. "Bumbo" men brought basket after basket of luscious fruit on the

forecastle. One "bob" would buy more fruit than a dollar in New York city.

On the quarterdeck the officers received the many Englishmen who called aboard to extend the hospitality of the port. They were particularly pleased to see a "Yankee ship," as race riots had recently broken out which at one time threatened to be serious. Out of the 10,000 people who populate this place the large majority are blacks. The government officials are constantly guarding against trouble. With no army to assist they are compelled to depend upon the moral effect of a man-of-war in the harbor.

During the stay of the St. Louis several functions and dinners were given to the officers by the hospitable English residents. Their homes were delightfully situated in the hills, which completely surround the city and harbor. At 5 o'clock tea under the shade of royal palms they entertained the visiting officers with stories of Martinique and of their own frequent rumblings which shake up Castries in the season of tropical earthquakes. Like all English people they live an outdoor life, keeping up their tennis and cricket as much as the climate and country will allow. A baseball game is always interesting to Britshers as a novelty, for they know little about it. Two teams from the St. Louis played an exhibition game on their cricket grounds, but with the last inning over the spectators were in as much doubt about the score as the average American would be witnessing cricket.

After this rest of four days the crew settled down to work again and on the evening of June 2 Castries was left behind. The long, monotonous run to Bahia, Brazil, was begun. Each day brought the ship 300 miles nearer the equator. The old familiar pole star dipped lower and lower, while the "cross" jumped higher and higher in the heavens. With clear, cool nights and the dipper lost to view, preparations were made "up forward" to "cross the line." To the mind of the average layman this expression is quite unknown. The "old salt," however, awaits this equatorial celebration with as much anticipation as the youngsters at Annapolis look to the arrival of the new "plebs" class.

The custom of celebrating a ship's crossing the equator has been followed since time immemorial. "Men-of-war" sailors probably enter into it with greater zest than their brothers of the merchant marine. All who have never cruised south of the equator must pass through the initiation. The veterans of a ship arrange the details and form an



organization called "Neptune's court." The members number "Neptune," "Rex," "Aphrodite," "Davy Jones" and other dignitaries of the briny deep. A summons is sent to the officers and crew notifying them to appear before this royal party and receive the blessings of Rex.

So on the eve of June 8 Rex and Davy Jones came over the bows and welcomed the captain and his crew. An awe inspiring document was delivered to those who were entering this strange world for the first time. On the morning of the 9th all hands crowded to the forecastle to see the fun. Rex and his suite sat upon a platform overlooking a tank of salt water. Attired in grotesque costumes and covered with "war paint," they awaited the coming of the "landlubbers." One by one appeared the candidates—from the lieutenants down to the young apprentices. Each passed inspection of Rex, and to the question, "Will you take your medicine or pay the fine?" an affirmative brought forth a cocktail composed of shellac, varnish, vinegar, pepper and other palatable ingredients. Swallowing this, the "Royal Barber" shaved the poor "haymaker," and after sham-



Commander
NATHANIEL
USHER, U.S.N.



Rex Davy Jones and others "crossing the line en route to Bahia, Brazil"

pooling him with soap, paint and oil, capsize the chair and turned him head first into the tank. Here brawny braves tossed him around under the water until his whole body looked like an Indian in the Wild West show. After such a performance the poor unfortunate landlubber was declared to be a full fledged salt and member of the "Order of the Deep." This certificate, signed by Neptune, Rex and Davy Jones, announced to all "sailors, soldiers, landlubbers, park statues, box car tourists and haymakers" that the St. Louis, bound round the Horn, had been received into "His Majesty's domain." With this formality over the pirate flag of Neptune came down from the truck and the "royal party" doffed their weird garb for their uniforms of real life.

Without incident the ship arrived in the beautiful harbor of Bahia on the morning of June 13, having spent 11 days at sea in steaming 2,800 miles. Now in the land of "order and progress" the crew were confronted with the Portuguese language. After this voyage, however, a refreshing drink was in such demand that "Jack" mustered his best "Philippine" Spanish and sign "lingo" to make up for his ignorance of this strange language. Good American trolley cars furnished means of seeing the town and a Boston elevator as "lift" saved the trouble of walking up a 300 foot grade in going from the lower city up to the residential and hotel section. For \$5 gold \$2,000 reis were received, and so made each man feel he was a financial magnate. Not in four years had Bahia seen the Yankee bluejacket, so the sight of 200 neatly uniformed men in "mustered white" brought envy to the Brazilians and pride to the hearts of the few American residents. The English people welcomed the ship and gave the officers an entertainment at their club. Our American missionaries held services aboard ship, which were greatly appreciated.

June 13 saw the departure of the St. Louis for Rio Janeiro. On the 21st, after an easy trip of three days, the great peaks guarding the entrance to Rio harbor loomed up above the clouds. Corcovado, Sugar Loaf and Tijuca mountains hove in sight. Passing the two Brazilian forts at the Narrows, the second greatest harbor of the world was unfolded. Sixteen miles long, and only surpassed by that of Sydney, Australia, the size can be appreciated if one imagines a bay comprising North and East rivers with Manhattan Island submerged. Such a sheet of water would just about equal this grand basin of Brazil's capital city. Along the southern shore of this harbor lies the second great-

est city of South America, and, too one of the greatest cities of the world.

Gay Days in Rio

The city presented so many diversions that a few hundred men made but little impression. Every minute was enjoyed and the touch of European life got in Rio added greatly to the liberty ashore. Shopping on the Ouvidor, as narrow as Wall street; slipping black coffee around the cafe tables on the sidewalk of the Avenida Central while automobiles and fashionable victorias rumbled over the asphalt; riding in a big French machine over the Beltra Mar, one of the greatest boulevards in the western hemisphere, to the Botanical gardens. "Say, is this a dream?" a young coxswain was heard to say. On June 13 a picnic was given to the officers on top of Corcovado mountain. About 300 representatives of official and naval society took part in the affair. Over a steam tram, up an 18 per cent grade, the ascent was made. Amid orchids and huge trees vying with those of the Yosemite valley the wonderful panorama lay below before the admiring eyes of the Americans. Twenty-three hundred feet above the sea level the St. Louis appeared like a steam launch. Rio, with its Blera Mar and Botafogo boulevards, lay like a city molded in clay, picturesque and artistic. Here a lavish luncheon was served, during which two bands discoursed music. Great enthusiasm was displayed, and Admiral Maurity (Brazilian navy), voicing the sentiments of Brazilians, toasted the United States in these well chosen words: "Raising my cup, I have the honor to express to our brothers, the gallant captain and officers of the cruiser St. Louis, the exquisite satisfaction we feel in seeing them with us today on the top of Corcovado, where, from an altitude of nearly 300 meters, I beg them to measure much higher the degree of our sincere friendship—the sister republic of the United States." The whole scene was so demonstrative, so impressive, that every one present felt as the gallant Brazilian admiral said: "Nature and Brazil? There is but one Brazil!"

Dawn of July 4 found the Brazilian fleet drawn up in martial array around the St. Louis. The ships which fought in Brazil's revolution of 1891 now paid homage to the day which formed such a part of the history of our country. As 3 bells struck—3 o'clock—the "dressing lines" of every man-of-war were hauled taut, each main truck carrying the stars and stripes. Outshading the other craft in size, the St. Louis looked resplendent in her gala attire. Noon brought the noise of salutes. Twenty-one guns belched forth from the St. Louis, followed simultaneously by the Brazilian men-of-war. Hampton roads is accustomed to such frequent salutes, but in Rio harbor throngs lined the shore to witness the remarkable demonstration made in honor of Independence day. Some patriotic Americans ashore bought fire crackers, but they realized that it was hardly necessary.

In the afternoon a reception was held aboard the St. Louis, where the American ambassador, Mr. Dudley, received the diplomatic corps and hundreds of representatives of officialdom and society. The quarterdeck was tastefully decorated with flags and two Brazilian orchestras discoursed music. At 3 o'clock more guns announced the coming of the president of Brazil. In a yacht blazing with shiny brass, flying the president's flag, the president reviewed his fleet, and disembarking in a barge, was received aboard the St. Louis with full naval honors—honors which our navy gave to President Roosevelt at the Jamestown exposition.

On the next day, July 5, the St. Louis said farewell to Brazil and her hospitable people. Good wishes followed her by signal and wireless until she was well under way for Montevideo. July 9 found the ship safely anchored off Montevideo, Uruguay, after a pleasant voyage. The chief drawbacks to this large harbor on Plata river are the storms which suddenly rise with but 24 hours' notice. To Uruguayans these "pamperos" mean that all communication is cut off between the city and steamers lying in the river. Heavy seas dash over the lower section of the city, and no tugs venture from the docks during their continuation. From two to six days vessels are sometimes compelled to await the discharge of their cargoes. With these in mind, the St. Louis was coaled immediately, and fortunately saw no real "pamperos" during her stay. Officers and men made the long three mile trip ashore on a tug, and a few, strange to say, felt a slight touch of sea sickness. The little steam launches were not kept in the water and a constant watch was held on the barometer for storm indications. Once ashore it was not known when it would be possible to return aboard.

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