

The Royal Tour liner "Gothic" ploughs across the broad Pacific - bound for the loyal South Sea islands of Fiji - and escorted by the cruiser "Sheffield"

The first stop comes in mid-ocean - when the Royal Tourists pay a visit to the "Sheffield". The Queen and the Duke cross from the Gothic in the barge of Vice-Admiral Stevens - C.in-C West Indies Station.

During the visit - <sup>The Queen & the Duke</sup> ~~Their Majesties~~ were photographed on the fore-castle - with the ship's company  ~~- a treasured souvenir for the crew - breaking the monotonous routine of Royal Escort duty.~~

And the Queen returned with an iced cake <sup>a surprise gift from</sup> ~~which~~ the Cooks of H.M.S. Sheffield had prepared as a special surprise...

~~Bearing steadily south-west,~~ <sup>The Gothic</sup> nears the equator - where the traditional "Crossing the Line" Ceremony, with the Duke as the "Demon

~~Barber" of King Neptune's Court,~~ <sup>along the</sup> spreads mock terror into ~~the hearts of~~ the uninitiated...

The "Ordeal" was confined to members of the Royal Household and Ladies-in-Waiting. ~~Lady Pamela Mountbatten~~ <sup>treated</sup> was duly ~~lashed~~ .....and despatched in the style of a nautical Sweeney Todd.

<sup>LATER ON.</sup> Late in the proceedings, dissension broke out, as the Court tried to persuade each other to accept the "Order of the Bath". A free-for-all, with the Duke joining his victims in the water.

He comes up smiling and chats to the Queen, who, of course, <sup>was</sup> received her ~~baptismal~~ ducking during the South African Tour, <sup>in 1947.</sup> ~~in 1947.~~

The voyage continued - though not without further incident, for Surgeon Lt-Commander A.P. Nichol of the Sheffield was transferred to the Gothic to assist in an emergency operation, ~~for a specialist on a member of the crew.~~

Having reached Southern waters, the Sheffield was replaced on escort duty by the New Zealand cruiser "Black Prince" ~~and the speed was increased.~~

As the Sheffield turned northward, the Black Prince took up her station - watched by the Queen, who had filmed, with her cine camera, the change-over ceremony.

And at this time of farewell to the Sheffield, the Queen gave the order to "Splice the Mainbrace" ~~which was done by the crew.~~

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Though the Gothic was now well into the tropics, festive preparations were not forgotten. ~~the~~ Plum pudding tastes good in any climate.. 2

Nearer <sup>still</sup> to Fiji - and Her Majesty honoured the Black Prince with a personal visit, to meet the officers of the new escort-vessel.

And in a colourful ceremony under southern skies, <sup>she</sup> acknowledged the formal greetings of the crew as they marched past their Sovereign.

2034

THE GOTHIC

~~... and heading into the sunset - the~~ seventeen-day journey from Panama to Fiji is nearly over...

And as the Royal Liner anchors off Suva, the capital, the sails of countless little ships fill with the first breath of welcome...

Soon after arrival, five Fijian Chiefs come aboard to perform ~~the~~ a time-honoured ceremony ~~of~~ to assure the Queen that her visit will be welcomed by the Island.

During the ritual, a Whale's tooth - (the most valued emblem in Fiji) was presented to the Queen. The ceremony goes back to the days when the arrival of ~~foreign~~ strangers brought fear of treachery.

Then - by the Royal Barge - the Queen and the Duke came ashore - the first visit ~~of~~ of a Reigning Monarch to the Colony.... And, according to tradition, the people stood in respectful silence - though the first act of welcome spoke volumes, when little four year-old Adi Mei Kainona presented a bouquet of tropical blooms.

~~And~~ on a day of ~~solemn~~ ceremonial, (for Fiji is a land where ancient custom ~~and tradition~~ has survived the changing years) the most impressive spectacle came at Albert Park...

Here, Fijian chiefs and their Ladies paid homage to the "High Chieftainess" as the Queen is called in this ~~South Sea~~ island.

Each Chief in turn made a speech of welcome - and presented ~~the~~ Whale's tooth hung with sinnet cord - a symbol of the highest loyalty.

Then followed the Kava Ceremony, as three chiefs mixed the sacred drink - made from the root of the Yagona plant.

~~And the Queen and Duke... used during their visit to Fiji in 1927.~~

Traditional dances of welcome ~~were performed among the~~ ~~...~~

During the afternoon, the Queen visited several schools - and ~~she~~ had tea in a garden shelter, built of cocconut-palm leaves - while schoolchildren sang and danced to her.

Darkness brought <sup>a wonderful</sup> ~~another~~ ~~unparalleled~~ spectacle - as five hundred Fijians (carrying flaming <sup>torches</sup> ~~brands~~) escorted the Queen and the Duke as they drove along the sea-front to a State Ball, at the Royal Pacific Hotel.

~~and~~ During the evening, there came a personal appearance on the balcony of the hotel. And spontaneous cheering broke out to greet the Queen -

Looking radiant in a crinoline gown of blue and silver lace.

The next day, the Queen ~~addressed the Legislative Council and~~ held an Investiture - at which, in addition to civil awards - medals were presented to Fijian soldiers for acts of bravery in Malaya...

Fiji had lived its greatest day in ~~its~~ <sup>their</sup> seventy-nine years history as a British Colony. ~~...~~ <sup>The island of Fiji would always remember</sup>

the visit of ~~the~~ Queen. <sup>their</sup>