

This appeared in Yachting Monthly, an English yachting magazine, in May 1898.

A New Zealand Holiday.

By C. W. TANNER.

It was on St. Valentine's Day that we started on our summer cruise last year. St. Valentine's Day and summer cruise! say you? But you forget we were at your antipodes or thereabouts. It was Sunday, too, and, as the adage has it, 'The better the day, the better the deed,' we thought we were sailing under exceptionally good auspices.

Our ship was just suited for such a party, and the crew, all amateurs of the finest water, were just suited to the ship. So far as they are concerned, it will suffice to say that throughout the trip they were unsparingly known and described by the nicknames to which they were somewhat accustomed on other and less free-and-easy occasions, and which in a degree, at all events, may be taken to have some connection, slight though it may be, with their ordinary and respective avocations.

As Old'un, Doctor, Banker, Attorney-General (for short), Youngster, Dick, and Jim, they would have appeared on the muster-roll had we owned one (which we didn't). The last-named was the most indispensable member of the crew, as, besides his capabilities as sailor and cook, he was the best euchre player of the party. The Old'un was the skipper and navigator, and the rest were *all* lieutenants.

Our ship, the cutter *Maritana*, a comfortable cruiser of 15 tons T.M., and 11 rating by the newer measurement, until recently had held the championship in the local yacht club, but the arrival of the 10-rater *Waitangi*, built on more modern lines, compelled her to take second place.

We left our moorings at Port Nicholson, Wellington, New Zealand, in the afternoon, and a fair breeze carried us as far as the Heads, but, as it was not desired to cross Cook's Straits during the night, anchor was dropped in Worsler Bay, which forms the outer harbour, and opportunity was taken to stow such dunnage as had been left out of its proper place in the hurry of getting away.

In Worsler Bay we found the Government steamer *Tutanekai*, which had been employed in carrying stores and material for the construction of a new lighthouse at Palliser Head. All material had to be taken ashore by lines from the boats, and, as work was suspended owing to the rising sea, the steamer had dropped in for the night.

The Old'un and the Banker went to view the outlook of the Straits from the hills, others of the crew visited friends who were at the seaside, while others again paid a visit to the *Tutanekai*, whose captain ominously informed us that dirty weather was about. By 9 o'clock P.M. the whole of the yacht's crew were aboard, however, and settled down for the night, preparatory to an early start the following morning.

Then, at 5 A.M., the dinghy was taken aboard and safely stowed, the anchor was weighed, and the cutter's head pointed seawards. It was a wet drizzly morning, and there was a nasty swell, but at 9 o'clock the sun appeared and dispersed the mists. A breeze, too, springing up, the crew's spirits rose, and the depression and discontent which had at first threatened to prevail gave way to joviality and good fellowship.

The next couple of hours were most enjoyable; the boat, heeling over to the breeze, flew through the swell, and at 11 o'clock the two white beacons on the cliffs we were approaching pointed the entrance to Tory Channel.

Here, however, a curious thing happened. We were too early; for the tide flows out of Tory Channel with great force, and, though apparently making great speed, we were slowly and surely drifting to leeward. Not until 12 o'clock, at slackening water, was the boat able to make headway, but then the coast-line was rapidly approached. It formed a glorious picture with the sun shining on the rugged cliffs, the blue and white sky in the background, and the green sea and breakers on the reefs in the foreground. One great wave seemed to be thrown up with considerable regularity, and, bursting into some cave, cast upwards a tall straight column of spray, causing at the same time a loud and doubly resonant roar, suggesting to the imagination stories of imprisoned demons. It seemed, indeed, as if one of them was welcoming the strangers, or guarding his treasure, with a hoarse derisive laugh, 'Ha! Ha!'

The entrance to Tory Channel is peculiarly deceptive. The newcomer begins to think that the boat is dashing on to destruction, when, with a turn of the helm, she swerves into a narrow channel and perfect calm.

For a short time we had to labour at the sweeps, but as the incoming current obtained strength, we partly sailed and partly drifted on our course. Here we found great quantities of 'whalefeed' and seabirds hunting the fish, who were gorging themselves. A hastily-constructed net of 'scrim' soon brought aboard a couple of bucketfuls of this 'whalefeed,' and we found it to be a small species of red shrimp. A 'billy-ful' was boiled, but though there was a shrimpy taste, it was all shell and no flesh. We found afterwards that this year it was in unusual quantities in the Sound.

Just before leaving Tory Channel to turn into Queen Charlotte's Sound, we noticed the yawl (yacht) *Ngaira* coming up astern in the distance, but she did not come close enough to speak or signal; and when we turned northwards she hove off to the south on her way to Picton.

Our destination for that night was the Bay of Many Coves, and we entered it just before 3 p.m. It is a beautiful bay, and its name gives a true description of it, as all around are little coves each with a small silvery beach. The funny man of our party said the name was as peculiarly applicable to our ship also, and suggested that she should be re-christened in honour of the occasion, as *the yacht of many coves*, but on his repenting and paying a fine we forgave him.

We dropped anchor in 9 fathoms in one of the coves, and, running a stern line to the shore, snuggled up for the night. The log reports that the Banker and the Attorney-General played chess for the Championship of Many Coves that night, and that the Banker won. Next morning (February 16th) the weather looked threatening, so it was decided to stay where we were, and the time was spent in fishing and exploring the Bay. Some who were sportsmen brought back a few pigeons, but on the whole we took matters pretty easily.

In the afternoon the sea in the main bay became feather-white with the increasing breeze, but in our little anchorage we felt no motion and heeded not the storm that was blowing high above our heads. We saw a herd of blackfish, a small species of whale, sporting in the Bay, and it was interesting to watch their gambols. The hearing of these fish must be very keen, as, on a shout being given, they immediately disappear to come to the surface some distance out. Two ardent sportsmen with only a boat-hook went after one big fellow that was amusing himself just outside our cove, but luckily for themselves and the dinghy they were unable to get within striking distance.

In Many Coves there was not a soul. The Robinson Crusoe life did not tempt any one. We found traces of a hut, but the occupant had disappeared probably to a more social settlement.

Next morning we headed out of our inlet, the skipper beating out in very short tacks, in a most masterly manner. In the main bay we found a light but fair breeze that gently drove us on all day towards Picton. For the greater part of the time only one hand was required on deck, and the rest lolled about smoking or reading or viewing the scenery. In and out and round about went the yacht, one headland passed only revealed another, and all wooded to the water's edge. And at this time a folding easy chair, which had been brought on board by the Banker, and for which he had then been jeered at derisively, was now first envied and then duly appreciated by all.

The slight breeze dying away, just as we passed Mabel Island, which



PICTON SOUND, N.Z., SHOWING MABEL ISLAND

screens Picton, it took us a couple of hours to drift the remaining three miles, and we came to an anchorage about four o'clock, just alongside the yacht *Atalanta*, that had also been cruising about the Sound.

Atalanta's crew visited us after tea, and bringing with them a couple of violins, a capital concert formed part of our social evening. We learned, too, that *Atalanta* had experienced rather a rough time, having met with some very bad weather. In one of the squalls they had been successful in saving from drowning a couple of settlers, whose boat capsized. *Atalanta*, being but a 4-rater with low freeboard, had herself been in difficulties, and her crew were therefore reasonably proud of their exploit.

At Picton we had expected to pick up a couple of friends who were to meet us there and join our party. On the arrival of the Wellington steamer, however, only one turned up, the other sending a message that he would try and join on the following Friday. We soon tired of Picton, which is picturesque enough, each cottage having an orchard more or less. We visited an orchard and obtained a supply of fresh milk and a small sackful of plums, which kept the Youngster supplied for several days afterwards.

The inhabitants live almost literally an outdoor life. There are few young men, but the fairer sex are plentiful, their only amusement is a picnic.

A picnic party of about forty damsels, under the charge of a Reverend Parson and three young men, passed us in a little steamer and waved greetings. The gay-coloured sun-bonnets and blouses formed a picturesque and attractive incident in the scene.

The following morning we sailed back to our anchorage in Many Coves' Bay, *Atalanta* following close behind us for some distance, till our courses diverged. We anchored at 8 o'clock, in our old cove, and the wind then falling, we saw *Atalanta* in the distance completely becalmed.

We found by experience that it is wise, in this Sound at any rate, to reach your anchorage by 3 P.M., as there is a great chance of your having otherwise to 'out sweeps' and laboriously row to a safe position. It is well to note, too, that it is not every cove that looks attractive that is safe should there be a change of wind; the water being deep, it is necessary to anchor very close to the shore.

We had determined to beach the boat that night in order to scrub her bottom, as some green growth was on her metal sheathing that we had not the opportunity hitherto to get off. Four stout saplings being cut in the bush, *Maritana*, was gently drawn ashore just before high tide. The saplings were bound to her to serve as legs, and we all took an early sleep. At 2 A.M. she was almost high and dry, and getting into the dinghy with long-handled scrubbing brushes we cleaned her satisfactorily. It was necessarily wet work, but the night was warm and the moon was brilliant, so we rather enjoyed it, and had a further three hours' sleep before breakfast, when, the tide rising, we cast off the legs and hauled off to the anchor.

We next sailed back to Picton, hoping to find our friend, but we only

received a telegram stating that he might meet us at Kapiti, an island off the west coast of the North Island, coming over in a fisherman's boat. Therefore, laying in a supply of fresh meat and vegetables, we departed *en route* for the entrance of Queen Charlotte's Sound, meaning to drop into such bay for the night as might be suitable.

In the afternoon we selected Resolution Bay as a suitable anchorage, and gliding in, tied ourselves stem and stern as usual. Here we caught more variety of fish than hitherto. There were, beside the blue cod, which can be caught anywhere in the Sound, schnapper, teraki, and gurnet. The latter has beautiful large side fins, like the wings of a great butterfly, and was very good eating.

Next morning we sailed away for Kapiti, but, the breeze becoming light, by the time we had entered the Straits we found that the tide was



'MARITANA' IN MANY COVES BAY, N.Z.

against us, and, rather than have a wearisome beat against it, we decided to turn back and make another attempt next day.

We headed towards Ship Cove, and, on our way, passed Cannibal Cove, where Captain Cook lost one or two of his sailors to form a meal for the natives. We passed the s.s. *Torea*, a pretty yacht-shaped steamer of 20 tons, at anchor off one of the islands, fishing, and were hailed by her.

Ship Cove is said to be so named because Captain Cook anchored there and replenished his water-kegs; anyhow, on arrival we followed that example. On shore we noticed the tents of a survey party, and whilst we were having lunch, hearing a whistle close beside, we found that the *Torea* had come in, and desired to hang on to us by a line. Agreeing to this, a line was taken aboard, and the two boats lay side by side. The steamer had made a good catch of fish, and she had now

come to take off some of the survey party for home. The surveyors brought aboard quantities of the great fronds of the tree fern, with which they decorated the boat, and when they steamed away they looked like a jolly Christmas party.

As the tide went down in the afternoon, the water became wonderfully clear, and rowing in a dinghy in the shallows we saw a great natural 'aquarium.' Great blue cod glided about searching for food, and star fish, sea-urchins, sea-slugs, and innumerable small fish cuddled on the rocks. Mr. Simpson, head of the survey party, and a friend, visited us in the evening, and greatly admired our snug little cabin, regretting that their quarters ashore were not nearly so cosy. When they departed we gave them a 60-lb. ling which we had just caught.

We hoisted sail at daylight next morning, and, making an early start so as to catch the tide in the Straits, by 8 o'clock had cleared Queen Charlotte's Sound.

After sailing in the inland waters with only wooded mountains bounding one's horizon, it was a great relief to enter the open sea and meet once more the free swell of the ocean. With a feesh breeze, we carried at first topsail and jib topsail, but shortly these had to be taken in, and under all plain sail we went foaming through the water.

Halfway across, a shoal of porpoises came round and accompanied us for a considerable distance. Evidently they consider that a vessel is a large fish to be inspected and challenged to a trial of speed. They came so close that their bright intelligent eyes could be seen, and, indeed, these fishes, on close inspection, have a most human or, perhaps I should say intelligent, dog-like expression. They seem to like swimming in pairs, and it was a fine sight to see a couple, side by side, dash past the boat's forefoot. A cruel attempt being made to jag one with a shark hook, they disappeared. Their skins are valuable for leather, and one of the crew (the funny man again, of course) narrated a story of how he received a bill from a shoemaker in Wellington, 'to one pair pauper's hide boots, 32s. 6d.,' and that on paying same he remarked to the bootmaker, that he 'had no idea paupers were turned to such useful account.'

Under a fine breeze we approached Kapiti, and dropped anchor between three small islands known commonly as the Anchorage Islands. This is the only safe anchorage in all weathers at Kapiti, but we found it rather a long pull in the dinghy to the main island. As we were going in we noticed a small boat approaching, and hoped that at last it was our long-deferred friend, but were again disappointed in that respect.

Our visitors were a couple of young island settlers who had taken some sheep over to the mainland, and were desirous of hanging on to us until the wind should go down, when they could get round to their farm. Coming aboard, they stayed until after tea, when our skipper generously offered to give them a hand with their boat, and taking the Youngster and the dinghy to come back in, they started to row against wind and tide.

Our skipper, who had known Kapiti previously, showed a short cut through a passage in the reef, much to the astonishment of the locals. They had a long weary pull, however, as the night was very dark; it was late before the dinghy returned and relieved us from anxiety on their account. In coming back through the rock passages, they found the water so phosphorescent that big fish could be seen darting about like streaks of light.

During the night a disagreeable swell set into our anchorage and tossed the boat considerably. The following day we spent in exploring.

Kapiti is very precipitous, with some clearings at the top, and is



'MARIYANA' IN PICTON SOUND, N.Z.

divided into three sheep runs. The west coast is so exposed and steep that it is almost impossible to land anywhere; but the east coast is more protected, and in fine weather one may anchor quite close to the beach. The Anchorage Islands, however, form the only safe harbour in bad weather. These were formerly the resort of the whalers, when whales were plentiful along the coasts, and signs of their settlement were plainly visible in the remains of great whale bones. On one island, called Arapawaiti (the place where the little fort is), we found the ruins of a hut of which the beams and supports were composed of bones, which still existed though all else had disappeared. The whale industry has almost entirely ceased here owing entirely to the dams being killed as they came to the coasts to breed.

The shootists brought back a supply of birds, and that evening we had a game stew.

The following day we took the yacht up to the northern end of the island, to give a young runholder (Mr. Lowe), some boat's material that we had brought over for him. Some of the sportsmen went ashore to shoot, if possible, some goats, which used to be very plentiful on the island, but had now become rather scarce. They were not fortunate in getting sport, and after clambering over the hills amused themselves by hurling boulders down the cliffs into the sea. The light-hearted enthusiasm of boyhood's days again took possession of them, and by joint efforts a monster stone that must have weighed three tons was sent crashing into the deep. The rush and roar of the falling stones was a thing never to be forgotten.

Not having been particularly successful in obtaining sport, though the blue cod were plentiful enough, we dropped back half-way down the island in front of a pretty waterfall. The weather being still fine, we anchored close to the shore, and here filled up our water-kegs and took the opportunity to wash clothes. After our morning dip it was fine amusement to sit under a branch of the fall and enjoy a spout bath, there being a convenient spot where one could pass through the water into a hollow in the rocks behind the fall, and thence back again. Our sportsmen were here successful in getting several goats, and brought back their skins and a portion of the meat to the yacht.

It is a pretty sight to watch a herd of goats clambering the cliffs. Their variously coloured hides contrast well with the rocks and foliage. They seem to make no effort to escape the hunter; their walk is apparently leisurely, no running and jumping, but before he realises that they are conscious of his presence they have disappeared. Above all things, too, it is necessary to consider the position of the game; or, the animal, when shot, may tumble down almost inaccessible cliffs, from whence it may be enormous labour, or even impossible, to recover him.

Pigeons and many other birds were plentiful in Kapiti, but we were disappointed in the fishing. We caught no sharks, although we were provided with a shark-hook specially made to catch the monsters. It was a terrible weapon of $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch steel rod, with a chain and swivel, and the line was a stout Manila rope. Every night it was duly baited, but without success. Once we thought we had one, but it was a false alarm. The current had caused the yacht to overrun the anchor, and the shark-line at the stern had got foul of the anchor-chain. The surface of the water seemed of an inky blackness, but disturbed showed brightly phosphorescent, and it was only when we noticed our chain showing like a line of light, deep down in 10 fathoms—having been vibrated by the tugging of the shark-line—that we realised that we had hooked ourselves.

Some time before, a steamer had reported that great quantities of dead fish had been noticed in the Straits, so perhaps some volcanic disturbance had something to do with our ill-luck.

One day the shore-going party returned in the afternoon minus the

Attorney-General, and as he did not appear before dark, great anxiety was felt for his safety. The skipper clambered over the cliffs and the Banker searched the shore line in the dinghy, while others scoured the woods, without success. Mr. Lowe, our young settler friend, coming over from the mainland at 2 o'clock in the morning, also joined in the hunt.

After an early breakfast the search was renewed, and later, much to the joy of those still on board, the wanderer was discovered coming over the rocks towards the yacht. He had got caught in a fog, been bushed, and spent the night on a hill-top, but was no whit the worse for his night out.

A search party had then to be sent out after the searchers who had



FILLING THE WATER-KEGS, N.Z.

gone inland, and it was some time before these were brought back. The yacht then took Mr. Lowe to his home, and for the remainder of the day the whole party idled about recovering from their wakeful night.

It was at this place that the great Maori freebooter, Rauperaha, had the stronghold from which he sallied to ravage and eat up the natives of the coast. A great confederacy of the tribes on both sides of Cook's Strait was formed to destroy him, and, according to Maori tradition, so many were the attacking canoes that those in the van were out of sight before the last had left the shore. The attack was a failure, as the advanced canoes did not wait for supports, and, being beaten, dismay

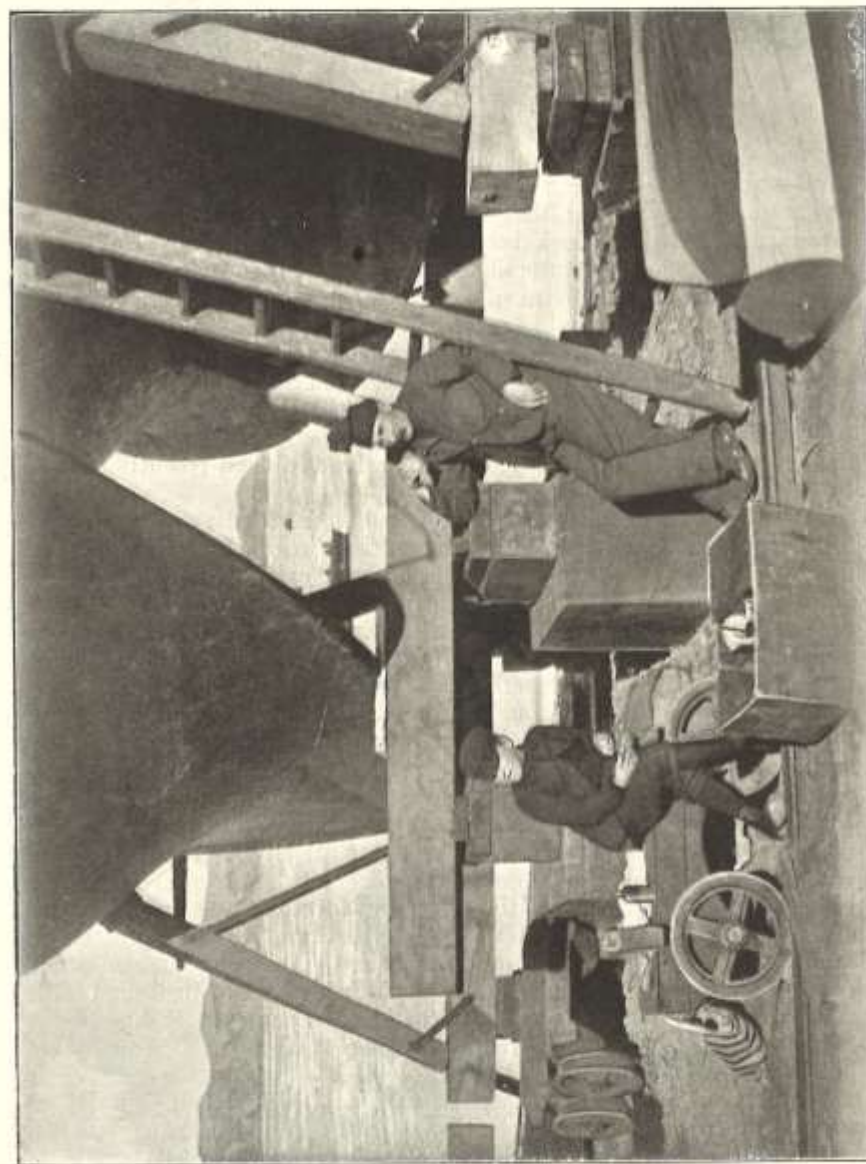
spread through the rest of the fleet, who departed in disorder, leaving the old warrior in peace. Rauperaha was afterwards captured by the English, and after a short imprisonment released, but his 'mana' or influence had disappeared. The natives considered capture worse than death, and that a captive become a 'no-man' and not entitled to respect.

Our time was now growing short, and as it was determined to return home, the yacht was prepared to make an early start, more especially as the glass became very low and bad weather was anticipated. Only one anchor was dropped in case it should become necessary during the night to cut and run.

Next morning the glass still going down, it was decided to proceed homewards as far as possible, and run somewhere for shelter if necessary.

After leaving Kapiti on the horizon, and approaching the island Mana, still with a northerly breeze, the clouds became very angry-looking towards the south. The boat was hove to, the main-sail double-reefed, the staysail stowed, and the small jib substituted for the large one. The wind dropped ominously, and then a gentle puff from the westward presaged the approaching squall. In a moment it struck the yacht, which heeled over to her bulwarks, and the rigging sung like a taut bow; but in five minutes it was over, the squall passing away to our right churning up the water into a mass of foam. We had been struck just by the edge of the storm, and congratulated ourselves on our easy escape. The breeze became steady, and the yacht thenceforth had a pleasant sail to Wellington Heads, where we met the yacht *Rona*, which had come out to welcome us. Together the two boats sailed up the harbour, and at 6 o'clock we picked up our moorings, and left the old boat safely at home for the time being.

By way of conclusion I may add that here in New Zealand yachting is only in its infancy, but already at the principal ports, there are fine fleets of 5-raters, and a few yachts of 10-rating and over. The navigating and work is entirely done by the amateur owners, the professional yachtsman not yet having come into existence. Many are the pleasant cruises that the boats undertake during the summer, and even in winter the Colonial yachtsman does not cease enjoying his hobby. At Wellington, the patent slip is some 4 miles away from the anchorage, and nearly every fine holiday during the winter, the different crews sail off in their dinghys, to put in a few pleasant hours' work on their boats. The return is generally made exciting by a race for home, and the skill of the crack yacht's steersman is often found of use, in bringing his dinghy first back to the skids. The illustration on page 343 is from a snapshot at a yachtsman and his son, taking their lunch and resting from their labours, after spending the morning on their boat. This was taken on the 21st June last, the shortest day of the year, yet the brightness of the sun can be noticed, showing the mildness of the winter at the Antipodes.



J. & L. G. M. S. A. YACHTSMAN'S MID-DAY REST, N.Z.