

THE VOYAGE  
O F T H E  
PRISCILLA  
B Y T H E M A T E



THE  
VOYAGE  
OF THE  
“PRISCILLA”

By The Mate.



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THE VOYAGE OF THE "PRISCILLA."

# The Voyage of the "Priscilla."

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By the Mate.

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PART I.—OUTWARD BOUND.

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For many days the trip had been talked of among those of the party who intended making the voyage on the American schooner "Priscilla" to Turks Islands and return, and plans were accordingly discussed. More than a week passed in semi-exciting suspense before anything like a definite decision as to the

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schooner's movements was arrived at, and many trips to the Front Street wharves were made, individually and collectively, even before it became a certainty that we would be able to get away from the "Land of the Lily and the Rose" in less than another week. However, during the latter part of June matters began to take on a semblance of materiality, for the "Priscilla" was actually loading lumber for the Turks Islands. At this stage, and before the loading had proceeded far, the United States Consul kindly informed us that the schooner was committing all sorts of depredations of a criminal nature against the "Merchant's Shipping Act," as she was not a merchantman by any means, but a yacht, sailing under yachting rules and regulations, and therefore could not lawfully carry cargo. Our sanguine expectations of a pleasant trip fell far below zero when we saw the couple of dozen boards which were to constitute her cargo removed from her hold, placed upon a truck and

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returned to the lumber shed, and the yacht haul out into the harbour, where she lay chafing at her anchor as if sharing with her crew the ardent desire to bite somebody's head off. Her owner (a man who heartily enjoys the surmounting of difficulties), entered into expensive cable communications with the proper authorities at Washington, D. C., with the result that the Consul was instructed to issue "Merchant papers" to the yacht. The cargo was again taken in, a goodly portion of which, to our disgust, was stowed on deck. I say to our disgust, for much lolling and loafing on deck was anticipated by the amateur crew, and it was unanimously thought the deck-load would be the cause of foregoing many pleasures hoped for; but, after all, loose boards proved less rigid and more elastic to sleep upon than the bare deck, and besides the deck-load kept our feet drier than they certainly would have been had the entire cargo

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been stowed into the hold of the 57 ton schooner.

The shipping of the crew was carried on with all the gravity and red tape that would have attended the shipping of six hundred men to a fifteen thousand ton frigate of forty guns. They consisted of Captain J. F. Leseur, Navigating Officer; Henry Kruger, Master; J. C. Crisson, Mate; Charles Leseur, Seaman; Robt. Linley, Seaman; Arthur Harriott, Seaman; Peter Anderson, Cook; John Tucker, Cabin boy. There were also of the party four others—Messrs. Fred Selley, W. A. Spencer, O. D. Petty and Wm. Wilson, to each of whom posts of importance were assigned, (although not shown on the articles), such as Chief Steward, Commander of the watch below, Chronometer maker to the ship, and Fruit distributor to the party. Just here let me pay the tribute due to the crew by saying that if any fell

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short in his duties it was from no lack of good-will and the desire to do it well.

Captain Kruger then, armed with the consular papers, went off to the Custom House, soon returning with all our official documents sticking fourteen inches out of his breast pocket, and no time was lost in getting under weigh.

The pilot came on board, swelling our number to thirteen, and at 3.30 p. m. of July 1st, with a moderate W.N.W. breeze we beat through Timlin's and headed for Grassy Bay. The pilot then left us, and we were glad (although none of us would acknowledge superstition), upon calling the roll, to find that the company numbered the good old lucky dozen: but we had hardly, figuratively, patted ourselves on the shoulder fairly when to our horror another creature made his appearance on the quarter-deck. An

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old yellow cat, (where he came from or how he came on board nobody seemed to know), strolled about the decks, crawled under the lumber, peered through the hawse pipes, and gazed over the rail, the while accentuating his inspections and observations with a mewling, toned as if in elation at the annoyance openly expressed by the bipeds at once again having thirteen on board. Let me remark just here, that owing to certain reasons, apparently of the cat's alone, (for nobody seemed to know anything of this matter either), somewhere between  $28^{\circ}$  and  $29^{\circ}$  N., and  $65^{\circ}$  and  $66^{\circ}$  W., Mr. Puss disappeared in as sudden and mysterious a manner as he came, and a sigh of relief was sent up by more than one heart when he failed to make his appearance as usual just at sunset. The Navigating Officer, experienced old salt that he is, even referred to Mr. Pussy's non-appearance with something closely akin to a smile.



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The run down the North Shore was accomplished without incident worthy of note, and as soon as the shades of evening began to settle around us we let go an anchor in Murray's anchorage.

It must be remembered that the whole ship's company were as one large family, and in fact all the adults, barring two, were members of that ancient brotherhood so universally spread over the surface of the globe. Conversation naturally drifted into Masonic channels, and being at sea and in no need of the tyler the "beautiful system" was freely discussed. To the Navigating Officer we are deeply indebted for many reminiscences and points of instruction, freely and fluently given, and which alone passed away many hours pleasantly which under other circumstances, would have lagged heavily.

A hearty supper, a game of euchre, and we sought our bunks, happy at being free and unfettered, tossed upon the briney!

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I will now follow the log of the voyage as closely as possible, supplementing it when necessary with such occurrences as are not usually recorded in the log-book.

On Tuesday the 2nd, we weighed anchor at sunrise and made sail for St. George's Narrows, outward bound; the Stars and Stripes gaily floating at the masthead. A boat came alongside and handed the consignee letters for the cargo to be delivered at Turks Islands.

The S. S. "Olenda" passed on the port side, bound for Hamilton. Waving adieu to a group on the head-land, we made good way through the Narrows, and at 8.30 a. m., took departure from Gibbs Hill Light, bearing N.N.W., 15 miles distant, shaping a course S.S.W. for Turks Island. The wind being very light the fore and main gaff topsails were set. The H. A. showed the chronometer to be 48 seconds

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slow of G. M. T. A meridian observation placed us 50 miles to south of the point of departure, and at 1 p.m., the wind falling lighter, the balloon jib and main topmast staysail were set. At 6.30 p.m. a steamer passed astern heading S. by E., eight miles distant. At 8 p.m. a light was sighted on the starboard beam but too far away to distinguish the rig of the vessel carrying it. The wind fell rapidly and at 11 p.m. we lay in a dead calm, which lasted the entire night.

The morning of the 3rd broke clear with a light W.N.W. breeze, succeeded by calms. The observations gave latitude  $30^{\circ} 10' N.$ , longitude  $65^{\circ} 23' W.$ , Gibbs Hill bearing northerly 132 miles. The entire day was spent by the crew in such occupations as could be devised for passing the time as pleasantly as possible; a little reading and cards and very much eating and sleeping, yet withal the time lagged heavily.

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The mate took the initiative in a plunge overboard and soon he was followed by a number of the party.

The vast Atlantic made an ideal bath tub, and the enjoyment of the novelty and the refreshing cool waters amply repaid any risks which may have been incurred from an encounter with a shark or other sea monster. As to sharks, we had a bunch of Digby chicks trailing astern for many hours and although one little shark did make his appearance he never took the bait, but after a good smell of it went off in the distance, presumably to have fits.

All the 4th and 5th the schooner lay becalmed. The monotony of a calm on a sailing vessel is past description. While the invigorating breezes are blowing a sailor thinks of many things to be done when the next calm is encountered, but when the time actually

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arrives and he finds himself aimlessly floating upon a sea of glass, rolling from side to side over the long groundswell, the reef-points beating a regular tattoo against the loosely hanging sails, and a tropical sun, in all his fierce fury, glancing down upon the exposed decks, he forgets all the things he had intended to do, and some shady spot under the boats, or below decks even, is sought out and he falls asleep without exerting himself in the slightest, even to the spreading of an awning for his own comfort. During a calm all the old jokes and stories heard for the thousandth time are received and laughed at as heartily as were they brand new and just from the mint. All the aged and time-worn yarns of land and sea, from Robinson Crusoe to the one about the fish swallowing the ring are aired before an audience who listen breathlessly to the recital and roar with laughter at the termination. *Sic vita est* in a calm.

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On both of these days bathing overboard formed one of the principal diversions and added much to the comfort of the crew. The decks, too, were kept constantly wet during the hottest part of the day, but, withal, the pitch in the seams in certain very exposed places melted and ran down in great beads like tears shed at our discomfort. Later, during the afternoon of the 5th, a good S.E. breeze sprang up and we began to move away quite lively. Our observations placed us in latitude  $29^{\circ} 11' N.$ , longitude  $65^{\circ} 51' W.$

The 6th and 7th were days like the 4th and 5th, light winds and calms being much in evidence, and were passed in a similar manner to the preceeding. All possible sail was carried while the winds lasted, but in the calms first one sail and then another would break away and come tumbling upon deck. An explanation to the uninitiated may not be amiss just at this point. During strong winds the pull

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upon the ropes is a steady one, but in a calm the flapping of the sails brings momentarily a severe strain upon the halliards and sheets, thereby creating great friction at the spot where the ropes pass through the blocks, consequently they become stranded and ultimately separate. A vessel under any circumstances is an expensive necessity but one single day of absolute calm will do more damage to her sails, rigging, and spars than three days of strong winds can possibly do.

Monday the 8th brought us light S.W. airs, barely sufficient to move the vessel, but we greeted them heartily and consoled ourselves with the knowledge that although they turned our head away from the true course they were too light to carry us far. A black cloud made up in the N.W. and a squall struck us. The "Priscilla" careened to the force of the winds, putting her lee gunwale under and the foam and

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spray flew over the weather bow. The log said we were making a rate of eleven knots, but in fifteen minutes the wind fell, and in an hour we again lay in absolute calm. The mainsail, a huge sail indeed, as large as that carried by any three-master of 600 tons, was lowered and the vessel lay steadier on the water. Four hours later a gentle breeze arose and all sail was made. The observations placed us in latitude  $26^{\circ} 36$  N., longitude  $66^{\circ} 9$  W. Grand Turk light bearing S.  $35^{\circ}$  W., 372 miles.

The 9th began with the usual calms, and on this day the captain and mate together with three others of the party launched a dory and made photographs of the vessel as she lay becalmed in latitude  $26^{\circ} 35$  N., longitude  $66^{\circ} 55$  W.

Wednesday the 10th opened with light airs, and all possible sail was set. On this day, as on all previous calm days, the mid-Atlantic bath was taken, some-



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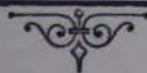
times once and sometimes twice a day, morning and evening. At 4 p.m. the wind rose a little and continued off and on through the night. Our observations gave us latitude  $26^{\circ} 11$  N., longitude  $67^{\circ} 1$  W. Grand Turk light bearing S.  $39^{\circ}$  W., 359 miles. Here we encountered light easterly trade winds. The long looked for "trades" had come to us at last, and we instinctively knew our troubles for a time were nearly ended. Our calculations gave it that during the preceding 96 hours we had made, directly on our course, 27 miles!

The easterly trade winds, the genuine, reliable "trades," gentle at first but gradually increasing in force as we made southing, during the 11th wafted us along upon our course, and we were overjoyed when we knew that Grand Turk light lay S. by W. distant but 202 miles.

On the memorable day, the 12th,

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with every stitch set and before a stiff breeze we logged mile after mile directly upon our course until late in the afternoon. Our calculations this day placed us 40 odd miles to the west of Grand Turk light. "How can this be?" said the Navigating Officer, "the chronometer and sextant are telling us lies. Let her go until sunset and then we will know what to do." We did not need until sunset for at 5 p.m. the Grand Turk light was made about eight miles distant, dead ahead! At 6 p.m. we had pilot Seymour, with his broad-brim sombrero flapping in the breeze, standing on the weather rail forward, and at 7 we let go the starboard anchor in fifteen fathoms in the roadstead.





THE TOWN OF GRAND TURK.

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## PART II.—AT TURKS ISLANDS.

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Immediately after we were securely anchored a number of boats came alongside. The Boarding Officer inspected our papers and gave us pratique, so our party hired a pilot gig and landed.

On the wharves at Bermuda, at the time of leaving, large crowds had gathered to bid us farewell, and on the government piers at Grand Turk another crowd had come together to give us welcome. All of our party were well known in the islands, through business relations and otherwise, and some of us, even, were natives,

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visiting the little salt colony after many years of residence abroad. The Navigating Officer, for a long while in the early fifties, had extensively traded between Turks Islands, Nassau, (in the Bahamas), and St. Thomas, (Danish West Indies), and to him it seemed like returning home. At any rate, the reception extended to each member of the "Priscilla's" company was such as to convey at once the assurance that they had landed among friends who were glad to have them. Our party separated, some being carried off by happy friends toward the North, others toward the East, and others still towards the South, and further meetings with friends, and, in many instances, relatives, took place. A comfortable bed was found for each and a good, sound, refreshing sleep enjoyed, unaccompanied by the accustomed call in the middle of the night, or the "wee sma' hours" of the morning, of "Eight bells; turn out!"

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At an early hour on the following morning the party met by appointment and spread over the town of Grand Turk to see the sights.

I have grave fears that it would prove a very difficult, if not impossible, task to record all the doings of the "Priscilla's" company during the four days at the capital, and as I am in no way "hunting trouble" I will leave them much to their own devices, and confine myself more particularly to the Mate's party who took up their temporary residence at "Monte Petra," the old homestead of the Crisson family on the hill, and in giving such historical sketches and statistics of the Colony as may prove interesting.

Saturday was passed (after having our luggage examined) in visiting friends and making a few necessary purchases. The office of our Agent (Mr. Jones), the Custom House, the Iron

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Buildings and "Under the (corrugated iron) Awning" became very popular resorts for our party: but, in fact, it was a strange occurrence indeed if upon entering almost any store in the town, one or another of the "jacks ashore" was not encountered, looking over post-cards, admiring the beautiful shells, sponges, coral and other such marine specimens, or making purchases of  $\frac{1}{2}$ d cigars, etc. Until late in the evening we strolled about, climbing to the tops of salt heaps, walking along the magnificent white shores, wading ankle-deep through ponds of crystalized salt, visiting friends, annoying the storekeepers, riding in donkey carts or enjoying some other occupation with the object of limbering up our muscles after eleven days of cramped confinement on board ship.

On the following day, Sunday, many of us went, like good Christians, to the Parish church, but others strolled

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out along the banks of the North Creek (an excellent sheet of water three miles long and one wide), passed through pasture lands to the drinking wells and along the western sea-shore of white sand-beach to a cocoanut-grove where fruit was procured and heartily enjoyed. In the evening—but, perhaps, it may be as well to give not too minute a record of how Sunday was spent, and drop into a few notes on the islands.

The Turks Islands, among others in the Caribbean Sea, have laid claim to being the Guanahani or San Salvador—the landfall of Columbus on his first voyage to the New World. The lagoon in the centre certainly tallies admirably with the great Admiral's description of the first island he discovered and landed upon, yet there are certain other very noticeable features here of which he made no mention, and other features which he did note



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are not to be found. Whether the Turks Islands were the true landfall of Columbus or not it is not the object of the present writing to discuss, and I will therefore begin my sketch from the period of their settlement by immigrants from the Bermudas.

The group, geographically speaking, is the most south-eastern of the Bahama Islands, and lie between  $21^{\circ}$  and  $22^{\circ}$  N. latitude, and  $71^{\circ}$  and  $73^{\circ}$  W. longitude. From 1678, the date of their settlement, they were held by the Bermudians, who made salt ponds and worked them until 1710, when the Spaniards from Santo Domingo (80 miles distant) attacked the settlers and dispossessed them by force. The Bermudians dispatched a force from Bermuda under the command of Captain Louis Middleton and the Spaniards were driven from the islands. The Spaniards, however, continued their attacks, and the salt-rakers were compelled to arm their

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vessels plying to and fro, and defend themselves against the depredators. Thus the Bermudians for a while held their interests in the islands and gathered their salt during the summer (under arms), returning to their agriculture at home in the fall.

In 1753 the French, from Haiti, invaded the islands, and landing a strong force took possession. In this case the Bermudians did not, as in the other, rashly resist, but quietly represented the matter to King George III, with the result that they were again placed in quiet possession of their salt-works.

In 1764 the French buccaneers again attacked the settlers and destroyed their houses. A representation was once more made to the British Crown, and by the treaty of peace between the Spanish, French and English Commissioners at Jamaica, the Bermudians were granted the privilege of working their

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salt-pans unmolested. They also received compensation from the French Government for the losses sustained.

From the time of settlement for near a hundred years the settlers enjoyed the absolute right to the salt-works and held possession, making their own laws and rules of government; but in 1766 the Bahama Government sought to extend their jurisdiction over the Turks and Caicos Islands, and later in the same year Andrew Seymour, Esquire, was sent from the Bahamas as His Majesty's Agent. This gentleman was "invested with unlimited power in the exercise of local jurisdiction over the islands," and up to 1790 the King's Agent exercised his "unlimited power" with more or less severity and oppression, but in this year Colonel the Honourable Alexander Murray succeeded Mr. Seymour. The state of affairs (as far as the settlers were concerned) was not materially benefitted by the change,

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and in 1799 the islands became annexed to the Bahamas.

In 1847 a petition from the inhabitants of the Dependency was sent to Great Britain praying for a separation from the Bahama Government, and in 1848 the islands became a Crown Colony. For a quarter of a century this state of affairs continued, but in 1874 by vote and petition the islands were annexed to the Colony of Jamaica. From the time of their annexation to Jamaica up to the present day they have been in a flourishing condition and have a steadily increasing surplus in their treasury.

The Turks and Caicos Islands are divided into two groups. The Turks Island group comprises Grand Turk, Salt Cay, Great Sand Cay, and a dozen or more smaller Cays. The Silver Cays and Bank, a hundred miles to the Eastward of Grand Turk, also belong

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to this group. The Turks Island Channel (twenty miles wide) divides this group from the Caicos group, which consists of the islands of South Caicos, East Caicos, Grand Caicos, Providenciales and West Caicos, besides many smaller islands known as Ambergris Cay, Long Cay, Six-Hill Cays, Seal Cays, Bush Cays and others. At East Caicos and West Caicos the sisal fibre is extensively cultivated, and at North Caicos are inexhaustible supplies of cane-earth, but at Grand Turk, Salt Cay and Cockburn Town (East Caicos), salt is the principal product.

The climate of the islands is an extremely dry one, but the steady trade winds keep the tropical belt cool and pleasant. The thermometer rarely ascends above  $86^{\circ}$ , even on the hottest days, and during the evenings falls, on an average, to  $62^{\circ}$  Fahrenheit.

The two groups are entirely of coral for-

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mation, and building stone is quarried in precisely the same manner as in Bermuda (requiring no description, except that the truing up of the blocks is done by means of axes as the material is of closer grain and one or two degrees harder than the Bermudian stone). Each island is surrounded by a reef ensuring smooth and clear waters within, even close to the shores.

The anchorages are open roadsteads, nearly half a mile off shore, outside the reefs, and in most cases on the lee side of the islands. They are considered as perfectly safe under all ordinary conditions, besides offering facilities of an exceptional nature for getting under weigh. The coasts throughout are slightly indented having many small capes and inlets which afford safe anchorages for boats and small craft.

The surface of the Turks Island group is chiefly undulating, but in the Caicos

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group such hills as Blue Mountains, 300 feet, Flamingo Hill, 270 feet, and Good's Hill, 200 feet, are particularly noticeable, and offer pleasant retreats from the heat of the valleys.

The principal vegetable products are Indian corn, Guinea corn, yam, cassava, sweet potatoes, pumpkins, cabbages, peppers, gherkins, peas, tannias, turnips and radishes, and of the fruits particular mention may be made of sugar cane, pineapples, guavas, oranges, lemons, limes, cocoanuts, tamarinds, grapes, dates, papaws, mangoes, citrons, custard apples, sappodillas, plums and naseberries. Many useful timber trees are also found, such as pitch pine, lancewood, mahogany, ebony, oak, logwood, braziletto, fustic and buttonwood. The wild tamarind and corkwood are extensively used for timbers of the native boats and craft, vessels of a hundred tons and over having been framed entirely from the roots and



GATHERING THE SALT.



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branches of these trees.

Shells, sponges and tortoise-shell, together with fish, conchs, *bêche le mer*, etc., are exported in considerable quantities, but the principal product is salt, and it is estimated that the present season's gatherings, with that in the ponds now ready for gathering, closely nets three million bushels.

The "Priscilla," having got under weigh at 10 a.m. on Sunday, sailed for Cockburn Town, East Caicos, where her cargo of lumber was discharged, and 1,500 bushels of salt taken in. While the transfer is being made let us briefly consider the manufacture of salt, and take a walk over the works.

Salt—chloride of sodium—in the Turks and Caicos Islands is obtained by evaporation from sea-water, is extensively used in the preservation of fish and meats, as well as for culinary

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purposes, and is mainly disposed of in the United States of North America and Canada. The operations of salt-manufacturing, as before stated, were first entered into in 1678, and salt has continued to be the principal source of revenue for the islands during a period of over 239 years. The gathering continues but six months of the year—the summer, or dry season—but when the winter, or wet season, sets in, the operations suddenly terminate. It is then that grinding by machinery into what is termed "fishery" salt and the shipping of the product is principally carried on. As an illustration of the magnitude of the shipping operations I will here quote from a report for the week prior to our arrival in the islands :

" Dealers in the United States were  
" offering four cents per bushel for  
" Turks Island salt last month, but  
" Mr. B. C. Frith, an enterprising

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“ merchant, senior member of the firm  
“ of Messrs. Frith Bros. & Co., at  
“ the firm’s expense, visited Port-  
“ land, Philadelphia and Boston, with  
“ the result that large cargoes were  
“ sold at five cents, and the ship  
“ *Norwood* for 72,000, bark *Blenheim*  
“ for 60,000, steamer *Cecelia* for 50,000  
“ and a fishery-salt schooner for 5,500,  
“ besides other small cargoes to Santo  
“ Domingo and Haiti, were despatched,  
“ making a total shipment for the  
“ week of over 200,000 bushels. Ar-  
“ rangements were also made for large  
“ shipments during the month to the  
“ United States, Newfoundland, and  
“ Canada, and several large vessels  
“ are due to call at Turks Islands on  
“ their return from the Brazils and  
“ the Spanish Main when homeward  
“ bound.”

By this quotation it may be seen that salt is rapidly handled by the native shippers and that delay of even a single day

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in the dispatching of vessels is of rare occurrence.

The morning the "Priscilla" sailed for Bermuda a bark of between 600 and 700 tons called at Grand Turk for orders and was sent to Salt Cay for a cargo.

There are in working order about 700 acres of salt-ponds in the colony at the present day, and new ones are being made at the outlying islands which, it is estimated, will increase the area to 850 acres.

The bottoms of the salt-pans being below tide-level, the sea-water, specific gravity  $12^{\circ}$ , easily flows through canals into main-ponds or reservoirs, where it evaporates to brine— $30^{\circ}$ ; it is then drawn off by hand-wheels and wind-pumps into the private reservoirs and evaporated to  $80^{\circ}$ , thence to the pans, generally from a foot to eighteen inches deep, and the process concluded. The



SALT PANS.

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two prevailing essential elements, heat and wind, promote evaporation rapidly, and more than half-an-inch in a single day has often been noted. To get 3 parts of salt it is necessary to evaporate 100 parts of sea-water.

After crystalization has taken place in the pans, employees with long-handled wooden rakes pile the salt into little stacks of about twenty inches high and six or seven feet long. It is then shovelled into carts and carried to the allotted deposit, or shipping place, and stacked into heaps of from fifteen to twenty feet high and from forty to sixty feet long. Besides the out-door deposits there are numbers of storage-houses of from 200,000 bushels capacity down, but by far the greater portion is stacked unprotected and exposed to the elements. While in a "green" state, should rain fall upon the heaps very great loss would ensue, but a heap of six or eight months standing has a crust of several inches thick formed on

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the outside which, it is supposed, is not so readily dissolved, and in time this crust becomes so hard and firm that heavy mauls and pick-axes have to be employed to break it up when shipments are being made.

Grinding for fish-curing purposes is effected by means of steam and wind-operated mills and the ground salt commands a better price than the coarse.

Salt is shipped in bulk by sailing vessels, and it is estimated that a vessel will carry 40 bushels to the registered ton. A bushel of coarse salt weighs about 80 lbs and of 'fishery' 90 lbs. The shipping is carried on by lighters (manned by ten men), and a lighter usually ships from 90 to 100 tons in a day. The salt is filled into half-bushel bags and then carried by the boatmen, five to six bags a load, upon their heads, to the lighters. Instances of these powerful men carrying as many as

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seven bags, a weight of over 300lbs, are of common occurrence. The lighters, loaded until barely six inches of freeboard is exposed, are neatly handled by the experienced lightermen and sailed alongside the ship. The bags, if the vessel be a high one, are handed up from stage to stage, passed over the rail and thrown to the hatchway where two men stand and dump the contents into the hold. Below decks the trimmers with shovels throw the cargo into the wings, and the whole process of loading and trimming goes on continuously.

Turks Islands salt has a world-wide reputation for good quality and is preferred by foreign consumers for curing purposes. Fish and meat cured with this salt keep longer and carry a better price, especially in the tropics, than that cured with any other salt, mineral or evaporated.

The "Priscilla" at Cockburn Town,



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(East Caicos,) on Monday the 15th, at 5 a.m. began the discharge of lumber and at noon was ready for salt. In less than four hours the cargo for the home port was below decks and under battened hatches, and at sunset she was ready for sea. At 11 p.m. she tripped from Cockburn Town and headed for Grand Turk. Strong winds were encountered in the channel and the port fore-shroud was carried away. With no further mishap the twenty odd miles of channel were crossed and early on Tuesday morning she came to anchor in Grand Turk roadstead. As it was not possible to get the ship's papers ready and complete the other arrangements for the homeward trip for several hours the remainder of the crew went on shore.

The friends at Turks Islands exerted themselves to the utmost in making our stay a pleasant one. Two or three invitations to dinner each day

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were not uncommon events. Carriage drives and outings of all sorts were arranged for our benefit. Among these must be remembered the visit to the lighthouse, situated on the high North Bluff, four miles from the township. The road led for three miles or more along the ridge of a range of hills 60 to 70 feet high, and the journey was accomplished in salt-carts. The party consisted of a number of ladies and gentlemen, (and the entire ship's crew then ashore), and was a continuous round of enjoyment from start to finish. On arrival at the lighthouse, our party being armed with the regulation "pass" were kindly taken by the keeper to the top of the tower, 120 feet above tide mark, and shown the machinery operating the 8-reflector revolving light. A very noticeable feature in regard to the tower and every part of the machinery was that all was in good condition and scrupulously bright and clean.

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The view from the verandah at the top of the tower is a magnificent one. On the East is seen a broad expanse of foaming waters outlining the sunken reef running in a direct line from the shore in a N. E. direction eleven miles out into the Atlantic. On the South lies the entire island with the little town of Grand Turk nestling under lee of the hills close to the western shores, in very pleasing panorama, and in the distance may be clearly seen Salt Cay, Grand Sand Cay and the adjacent Cays fringing the horizon. On the West is a broad blue channel view with the high hills at the Caicos Islands clearly discernable. On the North, (with a little stretch of the imagination), we see, beyond the vast Atlantic, Bermuda, 700 miles distant, with her semi-tropical vegetation, her onion and lily fields, her oleanders, her white-roofed houses, and *our* families.

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Descending from the tower a picnic on the sea-shore was next in order, and to the bountiful supply of cakes, fruits and other good things provided for the occasion ample justice was done, our appetites being sharpened by the fresh invigorating breezes and the jolting of the cart-drive.

It had been proposed that a concert should be given at Grand Turk in our honour, but the arrival of the "Priscilla" from Cockburn Town earlier than was expected placed the subject out of the question. Mr. Goodwin, Superintendent of the Cable Company at Grand Turk, however, rose to the occasion and invited a number of friends to meet at his residence on the evening of the 16th. A large and representative number responded and an extremely enjoyable evening ensued. Mr. Goodwin and other friends at 1 a. m. accompanied us to the government piers, where our boat awaited us, and after hearty handshakes and the

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exchanges of assurances of friendship, three hearty cheers were sent up from the throats of the healthy-lunged crew, followed by "He is a jolly good fellow," and we separated, they to return to their pleasant homes among the pines and cocoanuts, and we to board the "Priscilla".



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## PART III.—HOMEWARD BOUND.

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All the necessary papers having been secured and the vessel cleared, at 3 a.m. we tripped anchor from the roadstead and with a fresh easterly breeze got under sail on Wednesday the 17th. At 7 a.m. departure was taken from Grand Turk light, 8 miles distant, bearing S. by E., and a course of N.N.E. for Bermuda was laid. All that day the strong easterly breeze continued and all sail was carried. None of the crew appeared in extra-communicative mood on this first day out from Turks Islands. There was no sea-sickness on board, but something was amiss with the company. Could it be

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they were land-sick, or, more correctly, home-sick? Be this the case or not, it is very certain that the scourge—consumption—broke out and continued to rage among the crew as long as a couple of barrels of oranges and mangoes, a case of pineapples and a hundred or so of cocoanuts lasted. Then, when the empty crates were tossed overboard, the consumption, but not the desire to consume, ceased.

Thursday began with a light E. N. E. breeze, the weather was clear with a moderate swell running in a north-westerly direction. All possible sail was set and we ran along on our course at a lively rate. The observations this day gave us latitude  $23^{\circ} 26$  N., longitude  $71^{\circ} 11$  W.—Grand Turk light bearing S. 104 miles. The breezes continued light but favourable, and considerable headway was made during the ensuing 24 hours for the observations of Friday the 19th placed us in

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latitude  $25^{\circ} 9$  N., longitude  $70^{\circ} 11$  W.  
Course and distance N.  $29^{\circ}$ , E. 117  
miles.

On the 20th the light S.E. winds continued steadily and without variation. Heavy clouds began to rise in the S.E. and took on a threatening aspect. Presently one of the party whistled a few bars of a very popular air. "I wish whoever is whistling would stop it," shouted somebody from forward, "no canary birds are wanted on this vessel." The explanation vouchsafed in answer to the mate's remark that he could not see what harm "Bill Bailey" could do us, was that "we will have all the whistling we can stand under in a couple of hours." Two pairs of practised eyes then made a critical survey of the indications and signs in the heavens and on the sea, the one to detect storm signals and the other in search of fair-weather signs. The mate expressed



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his firm conviction that no storm was within a hundred miles of the "Priscilla," and gave it as his reason that the clouds were all of the *cumulus* type, and although densely packed, clear sky was visible through them. The upper current of air running in an easterly direction driving the "mares'-tails" before it was an indication that all was well in the under-current travelling westward. A school of porpoises, some twenty or more, (from time immemorial recognized as fair weather fish), was heading directly to the southeast, the quarter whence the "whistling" was expected, yet, in the face of all these fair-weather indications, he who wanted "no canary birds" was not happy until all the light sails were taken in and a reef turned into the mainsail. All that night we went along, considering our reduced sail-area, at a fair rate, for our observations placed us in latitude  $28^{\circ} 13$  N., longitude  $69^{\circ} 42$  W.,

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course and distance N.  $12^{\circ}$ , E. 130 miles, and no storm was encountered.

Sunday the wind hauled a trifle more southerly, but still very light. The day was a magnificently clear one and the sea smooth, the ground-swell running, as it had been during the entire voyage out and home, in a westerly direction, yet withal no service was held on board the "Priscilla." The chaplain was either occupied in washing his clothes or too sea-sick to attend to his duties on this day; it was therefore put to vote and unanimously carried that each member of the crew should have a shave and a sea-water bath. At 4 p.m. the wind being directly aft and very light, the reef was turned out of the mainsail. The observations on this day gave us latitude  $29^{\circ} 5$  N., longitude  $68^{\circ} 40$  W., Gibbs Hill Light bearing N.  $44^{\circ}$ , E. 276 miles. During the night the wind freshened a trifle and hauled

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S.S.W. and as we were carrying all sail, we ran "wing and wing" directly for Bermuda.

On Monday the 22nd for several hours we ran before a moderate S.S.W. breeze under full sail, but at 10 a.m., the wind strengthening and the sea rising, all the lighter canvas was taken in. Later in the day it became necessary to take a double reef in the mainsail and lower the jib. Towards evening heavy *nimbus* clouds arose on the southern horizon and a double reef was taken in the foresail. The vessel, running with the swell, even with most careful steering occasionally shipped a large sea. The observations placed us in latitude  $30^{\circ} 43$  N., longitude  $66^{\circ} 50$  W.

On Tuesday morning the clouds, collected in the south, took on a cone shape, and in a very short space of time the "Priscilla" lay to under

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double-reefed foresail, staggering before a fierce gale from the southwest. To those who have never encountered a gale at sea it must be said that, although sailing over smooth water before a stiff breeze is very delightful, it pales and fades away when compared with the sensations experienced while standing, clothed in oil skins, upon the rail of a heavily-laden vessel, under double-reefs, in a gale. With a wild steersman at the helm, the foam and spray rising on the weather beam in vast sheets and pouring over and around him, while the howling winds shriek out their songs through the straining cordage in tune and accord with the wild scene, and his vessel reels and unsuccessfully races with the huge, foam-capped billows that closely chase astern, frantic in their endeavours to engulf her, and bows to the force of the blast as a gigantic wave, suddenly rising under her lee, comes tumbling in upon deck, inundating her

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fore and aft,—this is an experience long to be remembered. To have the elements furiously toy with your staunch little craft for hours at a time, and then to see clear sky appear and the winds and waves abate as if from sheer exhaustion, is to understand full well the fascination the deep holds for him who has never been known to dodge a sea!

For four hours we lay to in the gale, but at 7 o'clock, the weather clearing a little, we hoisted the fore-staysail and kept off on our course. The vessel, in the heavy sea, laboured a great deal, and the starboard fore-shroud (an old hemp one) came rattling down upon deck. By observation it was found that Gibbs Hill Light bore S. 20°, E. 20 miles, and a bright lookout was kept for the land. At 2 p.m. the land was made S.S.E., and all the larger sails were set.

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Many thanks are due to the cook, Peter, who, owing to his vast experience as a boatman, had, during the gale, consented to take a "trick at the wheel," and willingly rendered, at all times, able assistance in handling the sails. He also has our gratitude for his promptness of action on this day. We were passing North Rock, bearing at the time on the starboard quarter. Peter was at the wheel, a stiff breeze was blowing and a high sea running. We were carrying the jib, fore-staysail, foresail and mainsail, and by the log we were making nine knots. Peter's accustomed eye detected rocks dead ahead. "I am going to gibe this vessel," shouted he, and with no further warning put the helm hard up. The main boom went over with terrific force, the schooner came to on the port, and not fifty yards away we saw a dozen or more needle-pointed rocks peeping above the surface as the long ground-

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swell passed over them. Any one of those coral points would have passed through our pretty little white oak craft as easily as an ice-pick through an eggshell. Peter stood at the wheel bareheaded, as unconcerned as if in his own house in Paget, and gave us a short lecture on presence of mind, and then said: "Somebody take the wheel. I guess I'll go forward and get something ready for dinner, but it won't be much for nearly all the grub's eaten up, and if we don't make haste an' get in, some of us 'll starve to death." He did go forward and prepare a dinner, yes, a dinner fit for a king, and if the quantity was a fair specimen of his idea of a scarcity, it is to be hoped that "grub" will always be scarce aboard the "Priscilla."

Now while I am on the subject of the grub and the Cook, I would like to say that although Peter positively stated



HOME AGAIN.

1. ARTHUR HARRIOTT, 2. CAPT. LESEUR, 3. WM. WILSON,  
4. PILOT CASSIE FOX, 5. W. A. SPENCER, 6. O. D. PETTY,  
7. CHAS. LESEUR, 8. W. R. HENRY.  
J. C. CRIBBON, Mate (Photographer.)



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on more than one occasion that he had never cooked before, there was not a single person aboard who could "conscientiously and without persuasion" believe other than that Peter was giving us some very elastic truths, (popularly known as taffy), for the curried chicken, stewed cod, baked, boiled, and fried potatoes, steamed rice, scotch toast, baked beans, rice pudding, apple pies, tea and coffee *par excellence*, and a dozen other tasty dishes, to say nothing of the boiled salt horse, were too strong evidence against him, and would have convicted him as a relative of "Tom Pepper's" in any court in the land, or on the sea, either, for that matter.

At 5 p.m. we took the pilot, and entering the channel were boarded by the Medical Officer. Beating up the North Shore under the able guidance of the pilot we arrived at 8.45 in Grassy Bay, but not being able to see

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our way clearly into Hamilton harbour  
let go an anchor close to the "Shah."

Peter again rendered us a service by launching a dory and taking eight of our party ashore. The dory grounded on the sands and we stepped out upon the rocks at Spanish Point with feelings of mingled joy and sorrow,—joy at being at home once more among our loved ones and friends, and sorrow that the most pleasant and enjoyable voyage had terminated.

