

YACHTING IN THE MEDITERRANEAN.

BY THE EARL OF DESART.



GIVEN the time and the money—which latter need not be so very much, while the former should be not less than four months—a man and a man's wife cannot do much better than take a winter's yachting saunter in the tideless sea surrounded and inspired by so many traditions—classical, mythological, poetical, historical, and Cook's touristical. But the man and his wife should guard in the first instance against putting any credence in the vague popular notion that the Mediterranean is a blue and placid lake, to be reached—by the yacht—through the fiery ordeal of Biscay's Bay, and by the prudent owner through the medium of Charing Cross and the *train de luxe*.

As a matter of fact, the Mediterranean is a most treacherous sea; constructed apparently for the especial annoyance of the British yachtsman; for, when in its tantrums, its waves seem exactly to fit the average-sized yacht: that is, to take her length neatly and exactly inside the trough, so that her progress resembles nothing so much as that of a man pursuing the fox in Kentish or Surrey market gardens. It is all jumping; and that, as the toughest old salt will admit, is bad for even the seasoned sea stomach.

And the dreaded Bay of Biscay? Well, the present writer has crossed it many times in yachts ranging from seventy to two hundred tons, and has always found it as peaceable as a political ticket meeting. Of course, when it is bad, it resembles the little girl with the curl "right in the middle of her forehead"—it is horrid. But it is a big kind of horridness that doesn't trouble the yacht size of ship nearly so much as the petty spite of the inland sea. I do not allude to a real Atlantic storm, when all vessels, of whatever size, suffer alike; but even then I venture to assert that a well-found sailing yacht—*lying-to*—will be far more comfortable than she would be—*sailing*—in equally bad weather in the Mediterranean, or than a big liner bound to keep to time. Have we not read in the papers of battened-down passengers breaking their limbs as the heavy seas strike the great fabric of the on-rushing monster with the mails?

To lie-to is the great privilege of the pleasure ship; and any vessel that will not do so should at once be sold by public auction—which is equivalent to giving her away.

Now as to the kind of yacht to go a Mediterranean cruise. Many people, especially those in a hurry, will tell you that a steamer is the only thing. Others will advocate an auxiliary—that is, a vessel fully rigged for sailing, and with a small set of engines lurking in her interior, taking up the room of what should be the best cabin. Others—and these latter folk will be very downright in their opinion—will swear by the old-fashioned sailing-ship, propelled by the winds of Heaven and nothing else.

All three have their merits and demerits, like Cabinet Ministers and crossing-sweepers. Steam—*pace* Mr. Clark Russell—has no romance, no sentiment; there is no delightful uncertainty about it. You can count the revolutions of the engines, and that is about all you can do in the way of amusement, as you glide along at your ten or twelve or fifteen knots per hour. Or you can talk to your skipper about the best place to fill up your coal bunkers; and speculate on the sort of stuff you will get into them. There are none of the sudden changes that (especially in the Mediterranean) keep your mind always on the alert when sailing. A shift of wind only means a pleasanter style of progression, or the reverse; more rolling or less; a knot or two to be added or deducted from your speed.

In a sailing-ship you may, when you turn into your bunk, be pitching merrily bows under—to the discomfort of your elbows as you undress—against a head wind and sea, and making some three knots ahead to one to leeward; and just as you wake from your first sleep and are about to sleep again, you become aware of a deliciously smooth motion, with long, regular, lurching swoops, and you know that the wind has freed you, and that you are reaching along at nine or ten knots, pointing straight for your destination. A breakfast time you may come up on deck to find a dead calm and the vessel's head where her tail should be, and before luncheon (meals always especially mark the time on board ship) you may be running dead before a smart breeze with every stitch of canvas drawing, and the white-crested waves hurrying after you, spluttering, as if envious of your speed.

Take that running, too. If the wind pipes up and the sea pipes up also, how interesting it is to watch the big combers coming at you,

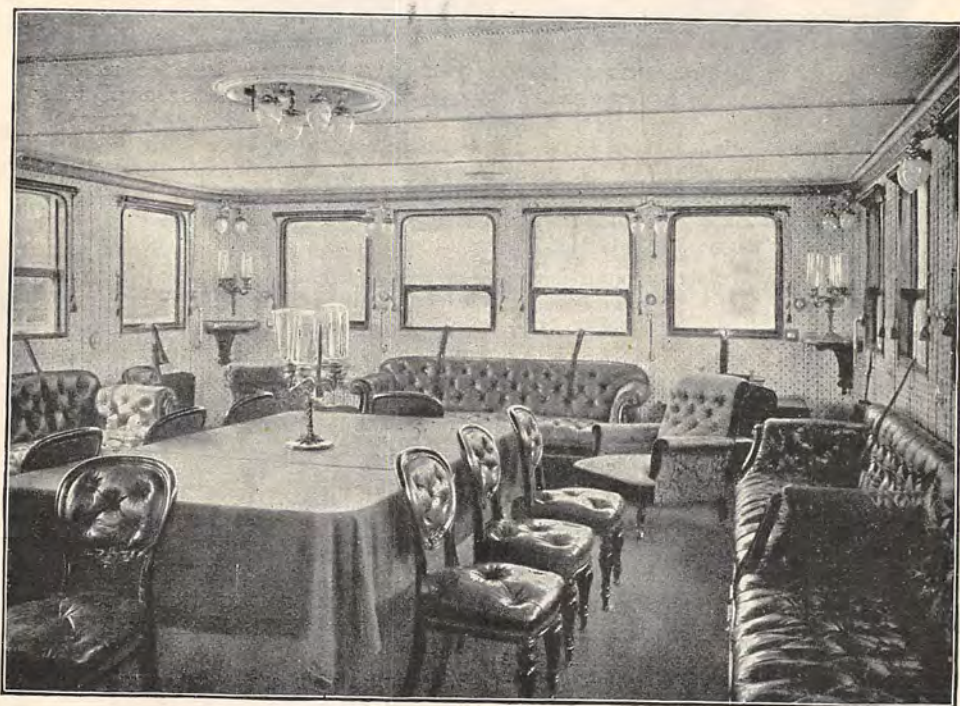
grimly determined to overwhelm the intruder on their playground: to see them suddenly subside meekly under the counter, with perhaps an angry spurt of harmless spray water upon the deck. And how equally interesting to watch the main-boom—if you have not been extra-prudent and shifted mainsail for trysail—and the man at the helm! Any little error of his, any extra big sea to knock the hull silly, and bang! over will come that great spar, and Heaven only knows what will happen to you then! But it is good fun, and safe enough withal: for count me on the fingers (one hand will do), the number of well-found yachts that have come to grief at sea in living memory.

Then with the steamer there is the ever recurrent agony of coaling. Coaldust everywhere; the decks grimy; even the knick-knacks in the main-cabin sooty; your eyes full, your temper shaky, and perhaps your dear wife not quite as pleasant as usual when

less, while there can be scarcely any concatenation of accidents in a sailing-ship—short of dismastment—that does not leave you some means of progression, or at least of being comfortable and safe until damages are repaired.

As to the hybrid, the auxiliary, which has been described as the type of vessel that can neither steam nor sail, it has many patent advantages. For long voyages of the *Sunbeam* kind it is the only thing: ordinary steam-yachts cannot carry coal enough for these. But it has one great pecuniary disadvantage—the double crew: on deck and below. It entails also the coaling nuisance; and, although many yachting men will disagree with me, I do not think it is the type of boat in which to spend a pleasant winter in the Mediterranean.

Special pleading for sail power only? Perhaps. I do honestly believe that you get more enjoyment out of a good schooner or yawl in a week than a month's runs from



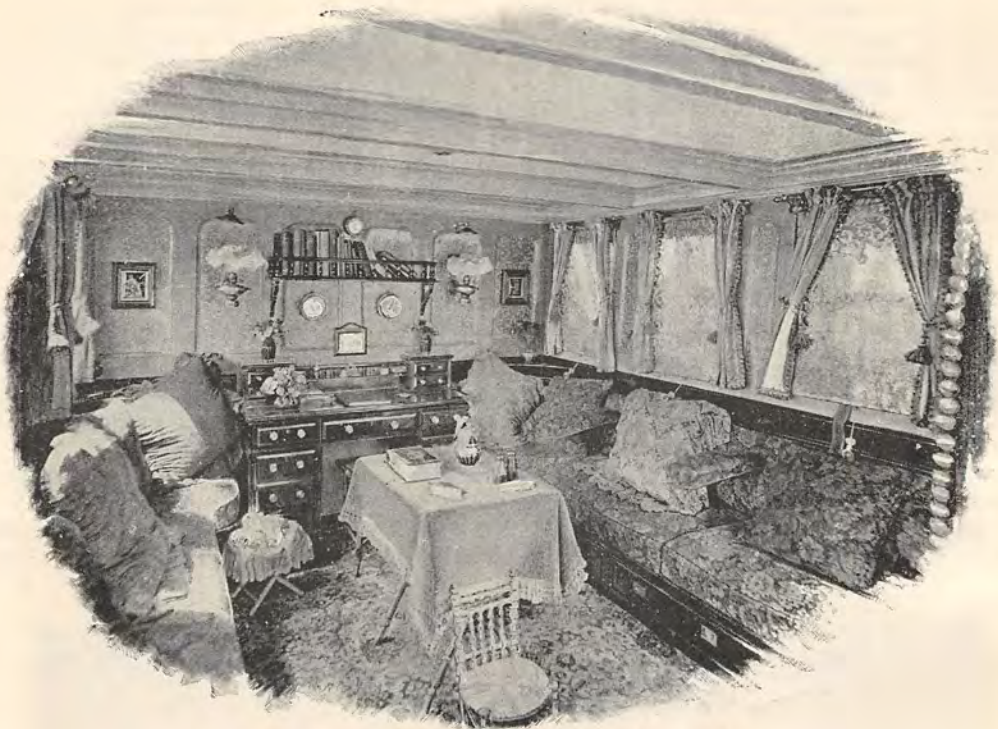
DECK CABIN OF THE ROYAL YACHT VICTORIA AND ALBERT.

(From a photograph by Symonds & Co., Portsmouth.)

she finds her beautiful new cretonne in the after-cabin blackened and spoiled.

To nervous people, too, a sailing-yacht should be preferable to a steamer; for, when anything does go wrong with the latter, it is everything. When the engines won't drive you in bad weather, you are practically help-

port to port in a steamer will give you; and, unless you go to "do" a certain amount of sightseeing in a given time, and not to yacht first and sightsee afterwards, you will do well to trust yourself to the winds and discard the oil and its stink, and the coal and its dust, and the rest of a steamer's amenities.



THE DECK-HOUSE OF THE WATER LILY.
(From a photograph by Kirk & Sons, Cowes.)

Let us imagine you have decided on sail.

Having your schooner or yawl of some two hundred tons, the next important point is the selection of skipper and crew. As regards the former, it is absolutely essential that he be a man to suit your temper: a pleasant man; one with whom you can comfortably converse in the dark watches, or when trying to subdue the irritation caused by a dead calm, a big sea left by some previous gale, a banging boom, creaking gaff, and your port almost in sight. Of course, you want a good navigator and sailor man, but really it is almost better to be wrecked—so long as you are not very much wrecked—with the agreeable skipper who makes yacht life pleasant to you while you float, than to come home safe with one of your sour sea-dogs, whose one idea is to earn his wages, and whose sole repartee or response to your neatest humour is an exhortation over the side.

With regard to the engaging of the crew, interfere as little as possible: it is not your business, only the skipper's; but if you can get a few musical geniuses among them, so much the better. It is always pleasant when far from your native land to hear the songs of her, even though they have twenty monotonous verses and are gloomy to suicide.

And as to grumblers! If there be one such in your crowd on deck, let him go, even though you have to bribe him over the side; for a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, and otherwise you would soon have all your men rightly struggling to be free from a bondage which gave them no turtle soup, truffles, and champagne—even insisted on anchor watches being absolutely kept!

Then comes the question of the passengers. In choosing them recollect that if you have mildly disliked some habits of a friend on shore, those habits after a week, or less, at sea will tempt you to cut his throat, or your own.

The best-tempered individual is apt to be querulous when a bit of a kick-up has made him what he calls bilious (but what is really s—s—k), and I rather doubt whether Job himself would have safely passed the ordeal of luncheon in a hot cabin when beating down Channel against a fresh breeze and lumpy sea, bound, in honour of his new yachting suit, to smile and smile and thrust the hateful cutlet down his throat, while aware that a curious green tint is spreading over his erst healthy cheeks and that his fellow-men are furtively grinning at the prospect of impending disaster.

Someone—a lady for choice—who can sing is a great addition to a yacht party; and there should certainly be four whist lovers, who also should take a benevolent interest in cribbage, b  zique or piquet. A beauty on board is a great thing; she gets you far more civility from foreign officials than yellow gold, or even the white ensign of the R.Y.S.; and if you can only find and capture that *rara avis*, the man who is "such good company," and who knows when to begin and how to stop, you may get your mainsail and anchors up, and sail away with a favouring slant of wind from Southampton or elsewhere, esteeming yourself as highly favoured among yacht owners.

It is truly the *premier pas*—the Pas de Calais—that costs in this matter. In November the Channel is seldom smooth. Your passengers, even your sailors, have land stomachs; and sea-legs are far to seek. It is cold, and things have not tumbled into shape

regular Atlantic rollers; your beauty staggers from her cabin and looks at the sea; your "good company" man makes his first joke; your mate takes the most credulous-looking passenger aside and tells him hideously untruthful yarns, for which mates have a speciality, which leaves them when they become "cap'ens." The smell of dinner from the galley comes stealing along the deck; the steward—ostentatiously disdaining to avail himself of any help against the quick heave of the waves—trips along to tell you that dinner is ready; and while the cliffs of Albion recede into oblivion you eat your first meal on board and drink success to your voyage in search of innocent, and, perhaps, instructive, pleasure.



THE LADY INA.—MUSIC ROOM.

(From a photograph by Adamson & Son, Rothesay.)

on board; although they are probably tumbling about a good deal otherwise. Either the head steward or the cook is very likely unwell. He calls it neuralgia, or something of that sort; and you hesitate to choose whether it is the result of parting glasses overnight, or of the motion.

But soon things settle down; the spiteful Channel seas are exchanged for long and

The main-cabin looks so cosy in the lamp-light; the little knick-knacks that remind you of home gleam with a new charm; the water swishing by the ship's side makes a sweet and subtle music; the elastic feel of the ship under your feet as she flies the seas gives you a new and exhilarating feeling of buoyancy and emancipation from the stolid solidity of the earth. It is a home, and a delicious one, this little oasis of wood in the

desert of water; and you turn in, after a business talk on deck with the skipper, happy as a newly-made peer, and utterly regardless of such trifles as tempests, rocks, fog, or collision.

Talking of collisions reminds me of a little incident of some five years ago, which is characteristic of sailors' practical common sense. I was lying becalmed—floating about helplessly—on a dark night, some five miles outside Ajaccio harbour. The French President, M. Carnot, had just been there, and there had been high jinks, which we missed through the contrariety of the winds. Well, out of the harbour came a number of great ships of war, the French and Italian fleets; and what reeked their officers, flushed with "ponch d'honneur," of a little English yacht bobbing about in aimless fashion among them? One of them—a turret-ship that looked, I am told, at least a million tons in the gloom—came straight at us, and our flare, or blue light, kept on deck for emergencies, had no effect on her course till the last moment, when she altered her helm and shaved us by a few yards. Had that alteration of helm come a second later there would have been paragraphs in the London papers, "A yacht missing," and the eventual writing off of that yacht's number at Lloyd's as "foundered at sea;" for the going over us would have scarcely woke the iron-clad's captain, and the officer of the watch would naturally have said nothing about the incident.

But where the sailor man's common sense came in was here: I had—seeing it was hopeless to think of getting into harbour that night—retired to my berth before the fleets emerged, and only heard of our narrow escape next morning. To my question why we down below were not warned of the imminent catastrophe, I received the reply, "It would have been no use your coming on deck: she'd have gone clean over us; and her sides were too high for a jump, even if there'd been time!"

The son of a sea-cook is, for some mysterious reason, a being to be despised; but the sea-cook himself is an important factor in your comfort in a cruise. Everyone is greedy on board ship; and the grand truthfulness of the ocean does away with land hypocrisy, as it does away with dyspepsia. The *mauvais quart d'heure*, with its penalties and restrained impatience, has no place there—the steward's announcement means a rush into the main cabin, where no *menu* is required, for all intend to go "nap," or eat all that is set before them.

And what cheery meals these are! There

has been a biggish sea running all day; just before you have dived down the companion to smarten yourself you have made out Cape Finisterre; the maligned Bay is passed, or nearly so. The passengers are all—or nearly all—hardened sailors. How everyone laughs when a lurch sends the swinging-table up to A's nose on one side, and against B's knees on the other; while the sherry decanter stands on its head, and the second steward—second stewards not having the dignity, never have the equilibrium of their chiefs—flies prone on to the lee sofa! How the difficulty of conveying each mouthful to your mouth enhances its value when arrived!

Even James I. would have allowed smoking after dinner at sea; and what lady in these days of revolt against femininity would dare to play the part of tobacco stopper? Or, if it be not too cold, the men take their cigars and pipes on deck, and watch the far-off lights of the coast of Portugal; while the ladies mysteriously get through some thirty minutes or so putting on their wraps; and the stewards deftly transform the main cabin from a dining-chamber into a cosy sitting-room, with open piano, cards, cribbage-board, and—if no Veto men be with you—an unobtrusive tray at one end of the table.

From the deck, as you pace to and fro with steps cleverly devised to meet the roll and circumvent the pitch, you turn now and again from the contemplation of the low dark land on the port side and the wide expanse of glittering water on the starboard, to that light shining up from the centre of the ship; and after a chat with the man at the wheel, a look at the compass, another at the sky, the usual remarks as to the pace you are going—when your optimistic computation is always cut down a couple of knots by the steering pessimist—you all merrily climb—backwards if you are landsmen and women and obey sea traditions—down the companion, and soon are deep in the difficulties of keeping your temper when your call for trumps is obstinately ignored; or in the intricacies of those unreasonable two for his knob; or the delights of point, quint, and quatorze, and the chance of the glory of *capot*.

Then, when you sleep on board ship, how you do sleep! Even like the newspaper murderer on his last night. There are yacht owners, or "guy'nors," as their men always call them, who are barbarous enough—at least, so I have heard—to insist on their male guests being placed in the watches and made to keep them. But such practices are absurd. They have neither object nor excuse; except to make innocent landsmen uncomfortable,



THE LADY CASSANDRA.—THE BEDROOM.
(From a photograph by Adamson & Son, Rothesay.)

and to do the same for the crew, who like to do their watching as easily as possible, and feel bound to put out their pipes and assume company attitudes when a passenger is among them. No. Let your crew watch: they are paid for it; and let your friends sleep. If the guv'nor likes to keep watch himself, that is his own look-out; and he deserves no pity at breakfast when he recounts how cold and bored he was, or how he got drenched by that bit of sea, or tumbled into the lee-scuppers when "she" took that lurch to leeward.

In yachting there seems nothing pleasanter than leaving a harbour, till you are out at sea, and that is delicious; but still more charming is reaching another harbour. After a week or so of sailing, is it not music to hear the "Stand clear below! One—two—let go!" and the quick grating of the anchor chain as it follows your hook to the friendly holding ground? And how can you experience a pleasanter sensation than when you come on deck on a fine crisp morning to find yourself moored safely off the New Mole of Gibraltar, with the grand old rock towering above you?

Then the letters—so many things happen in a week: the excitement of your beauty, who, like Angelina of the ballad, does not absolutely abominate the brave men who fight for their country; the civility of the Senior Naval Officer (who hates being called

the Captain of the Port, and is therefore nearly always so styled by new-comers); the monkeys that you probably don't see, and the galleries that the ladies do see, but not the men. The former—oh, New Woman, see to it!—are supposed to be unable to grasp the secrets of these fortifications, and are contemptuously let in where their brothers and husbands fear to tread.

I fancy Gibraltar has been described before, so will not let my yacht dwell there, but pass away into the Mediterranean, with this advice: Go, if you have time, to Tangier, but do not be persuaded to visit Tetuan. The former is quite as Oriental as the latter and far easier to get at. Do not hunt with the Calpe foxhounds unless you can raise a trustworthy steed. Some of those to be hired cannot safely be galloped down-hill, and will not go much out of a walk up hill; and it is all up or down hill in the Calpe country. And do not expect too much of Cork Wood picnics, and you will not be disappointed.

Well, Gibraltar is bidden good-bye, the anchor is short under the bow, and after the

usual wait for the steward and the inevitable washing, or the caterer's dinghy with the last instalment of stores, you are off, with all the tideless sea to roam in at your wicked will.

Stay, there is one great bar to your freedom that I must not forget—the letters. These are to go to such a place: therefore, let the winds blow as they may, to that place you must also go. But this is only a delusion—chance them. You have no idea how soon you get accustomed to receiving none; and, after all, if the Government is turned out, or Ireland conquered by America, or women permitted to sit in Parliament, your knowing it a little sooner or later will not make much difference.

Let your letters be sent to some likely place with a civilised post-office; and then, when you arrive somewhere that tempts you to stay a week or so, telegraph for them. That is the only way to be happy when taking a cruise. I have known men whose whole pleasure has been absolutely spoiled by their letters and their washing; who, instead of obeying the finger of Fate and sailing pleasantly and quickly with the wind to

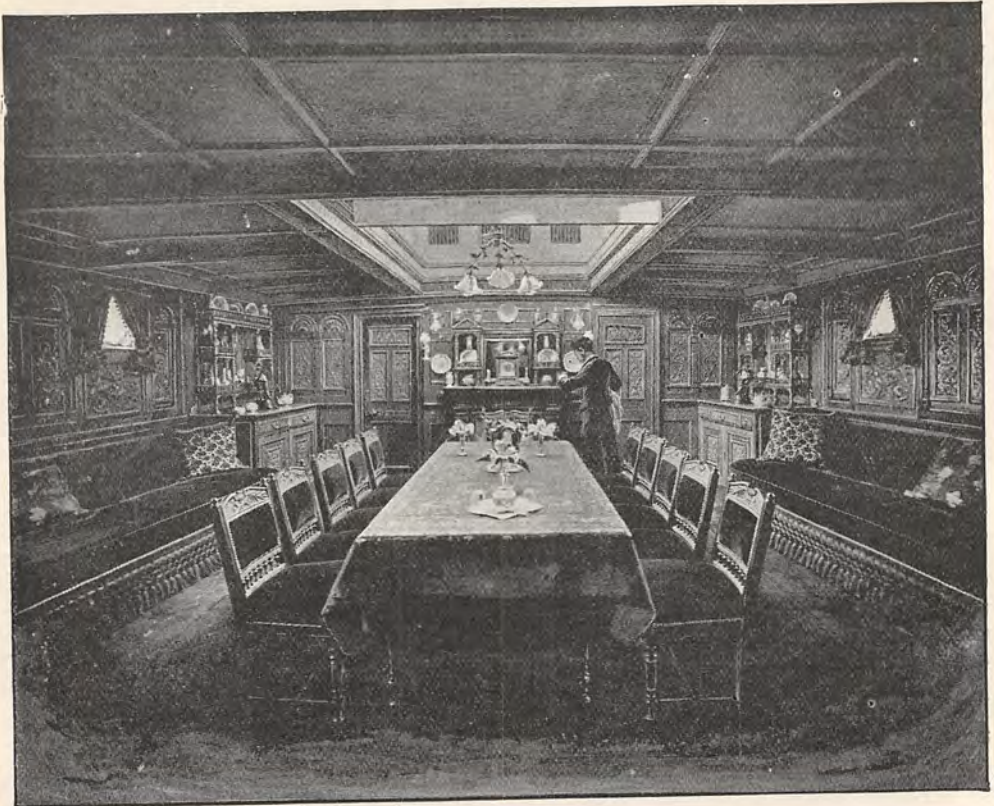
Algiers, have miserably tacked backwards and forwards, with no inch of dry deck and the utmost straining of their gear, to reach Barcelona, and to find that Aunt Tabitha's cat has had three kittens, and Uncle Toby's eldest boy is suspected of incipient measles.

A man on a Mediterranean cruise must be a free man, like an archbishop when he takes his holiday and announces in the papers that his letters are to be sent to the palace, to be opened and answered by someone else.

As to washing. If your steward dare to take linen on shore (no matter if even the beauty herself has pleaded to him) without your knowledge, then let there be no mercy—keel-hauling or the yard-arm are the only meet punishments.

Many a yachting owner who has neglected to emphasise his feelings in this regard has often sadly thought—after those dreary days of waiting in some uncongenial port when the wind was fair for the haven he longed to be at—that at his autopsy the word "Washing" would be found written on his heart.

We are through the Straits of Gibraltar. Whither shall we steer? To Malaga first,



THE LADY INA.—THE DINING-ROOM.
(From a photograph by Adamson & Son, Rothesay.)

and then by train—with an abominable lunch *en route* at Bobadilla—to Granada to shiver amid the summer-sun-wanting beauties of the Alhambra? Or to Algiers, where we may meet many friends at the English Club; dance and play lawn-tennis; ride with fair ladies and uniformed officers in the reckless "Rallye-Papier;" compare the dignified and sombre Arab with the dapper little French soldier on the Place; do the old town, to be done in our purchases there; and perchance pay our gold pieces to attend the mysterious function yclept the Assoui; and see the quasi-holy men eat scorpions and

Sometimes in the after-days, when you turn over your book of photographs—a camera is indispensable on a cruise—you may be inclined to wonder why they bring back such especially happy recollections, when compared with other photographs of yours. It is because when you have visited the places they picture you have been young with the youth of the sea, and joyous with the joy of a ship's *camaraderie*; free from the constant worries and cares of a



THE SALOON OF THE WATER LILY.
(From a photograph by Kirk & Sons, Corvues.)

fire, put knives through their arms, lick red-hot irons, stand with naked feet on upturned sword edges, and, to the accompaniment of a ceaseless beating of tom-toms, make themselves generally unpleasant to all our British senses?

From Algiers it is but a short sail to Bougie, whence you must drive through the famous Chabet Pass to Kharata.

After Bougie comes, of course, Tunis, and then—but a volume would be necessary to set down the possible cruises, each with a special charm, that you may take in the Sunny Sea. It is merely a question of time how many glories you see, how many delicious memories you store.

landsman's life; no trains to catch; no hotel bills to pay; no servants to tip; no newspapers to read; and only letters now and then.

Ah, me! With one's house on one's back, as it were, with a hundred harbours wooing one with smiling mouths, and with no necessity to move from one or to stay in any, except at your own sweet will and pleasure—what a happy life it is sailing in the vessel that you love, with a ship's company as happy as yourself!

Desert