

# OUR SAILOR PRINCE:

THE STORY OF THE NAVAL CAREER OF H.R.H. THE DUKE OF YORK.

*Illustrated from photographs of scenes on board H.M.S. "Crescent" by  
MR. MCGREGOR and MESSRS. WEST AND SONS, Southsea.*

ON the 5th of this current month of June the naval career of the Duke of York will have extended over a period of exactly twenty-two years, for he entered the Royal Navy as a cadet on the 5th of June, 1877.

The announcement made a little time back that his Royal Highness was to commission the first class battleship *Prince George*, and that he was to be promoted to the rank of rear-admiral, was received with the liveliest feelings of satisfaction by the entire British nation, who rejoiced to see the Duke returning to a service with which he had been for so long closely associated, and in which he had manifested such conspicuous ability. From the time when he relinquished the command of the *Melampus*, in 1892, the Duke of York was not attached to one of her Majesty's ships until 1898, and during those six years the Navy had been given but few opportunities of seeing him, although he was known to keep himself well posted up in naval matters.

Last year the Duke, in the capacity of a captain in the Royal Navy, commissioned her Majesty's first class cruiser *Crescent*, until she was paid off after the autumn manœuvres. It will thus be seen that his Royal Highness is quickly returning to his naval duties, and by the time these lines are in print Captain the Duke of York will probably be in command of H.M.S. *Prince George*. It is well known that the Duke is greatly attached to this ship, which is named after himself, and was launched by the Duchess of York three years ago. During the time that she was doing service with the

Channel Squadron the *Prince George* had the reputation of being the best kept ship in the squadron. She is a twin-screw battleship of the first class and was built at Portsmouth in 1895 at a cost of £950,000. She has a displacement of 14,900 tons and a speed of 17½ knots when spurting, and at a 10-knot speed she is calculated to endure for 6,800 knots. She carries four 12-in. wire guns, twelve 6-in. quick-firers, and sixteen 12-pounder quick-firing guns, besides twelve 3-pounders and eight machine guns. The *Prince George* is protected with 9-in. steel on

her sides, while the bulk-head steel is from 14 in. to 9 in. thick. Her complement numbers 757.

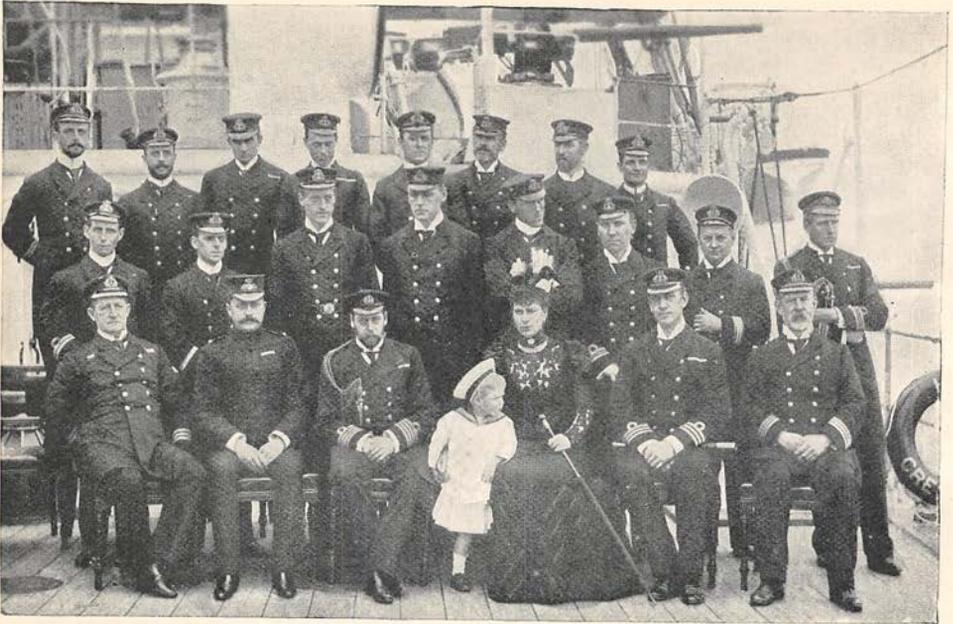
The first command which the Duke of York held in the Royal Navy was in 1889, when he was appointed to the charge of a first class torpedo boat.

His next advance, in 1890, was to a gunboat, the *Thrush*, but on the 26th of August, 1891, his Royal Highness was gazetted commander, and soon afterwards was given the charge of a second class cruiser, H.M.S. *Melampus*.

In 1898 he rose to the command of H.M.S. *Crescent*, one of the finest first class cruisers that the British Navy possesses. In choosing the sea as a profession the Duke of York is but following in the example of many of his ancestors. Our first Sailor Prince was Prince Rupert, grandson of James I., who commanded British Fleets in the Dutch wars of 1666 and 1673. Then there was James, Duke of York, brother of Charles II., who had the direct command and leadership of the English Fleet at those battles fought in 1665 and 1672 off Lowestoft and Solebay respectively, when the English flag



H.M.S. "CRESCENT" STEAMING AT FULL SPEED.



T.R.H. THE DUKE AND DUCHESS OF YORK AND PRINCE EDWARD OF YORK WITH THE VESSEL'S OFFICERS, ON DECK.

triumphed over the Dutch. It has been pointed out as a very curious coincidence that our present Duke of York's birthday, June 3, 1865, was to a day the two hundredth anniversary of his naval ancestor's first great battle at sea, the victory off Lowestoft of June 3, 1665.

Coming down to a later period we find two of George II.'s grandsons serving in the Royal Navy, the one Prince Edward, Duke of York and Albany, the other Prince Henry Frederick, Duke of Cumberland. The former of these saw active service in the Seven Years' War. Then there was our "Sailor King," William IV. His father, George III., was thought to have raised the Navy in the social scale by giving the Duke of Clarence (as he then was) a "cockpit education." The Duke served under Nelson, and saw war service under Rodney. In 1814, as Admiral-of-the-Fleet, he commanded at the great naval review off Spithead, and in 1821 he was gazetted "Lord High Admiral," being the last holder of a title which now brings up memories of Gilbert and Sullivan.

Of our living Royal Princes, H.R.H. the Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha has been, of course, closely associated with the Navy, though his active connection ceased in 1889, when he relinquished his command of the Mediterranean Squadron. He is, how-

ever, still an officer of the Royal Navy, for he holds the rank of Admiral-of-the-Fleet.

Prince Alfred entered the service on the 31st of August, 1858, after a strict and searching examination; was appointed a naval cadet, and joined her Majesty's screw steam frigate *Euryalus*. Subsequently he served on the *St. George*, and in 1867, as Duke of Edinburgh, was appointed to the command of the frigate *Galatea*. In November, 1882, he was promoted to the rank of vice-admiral in her Majesty's Fleet, and in 1888 was given the command of the Mediterranean Squadron.

The story of the Duke of York's connection with the Royal Navy is, perhaps, not so well known as it deserves to be, and it will therefore be fitting briefly to recount it here. The lamented Duke of Clarence and his brother, Prince George of Wales, entered the Navy together as cadets on the 5th of June, 1877, and the younger of the two brothers was, perhaps, the youngest cadet that ever joined the *Britannia*, for he was but twelve years of age. For two years the Princes lived on board the *Britannia*, then under the command of Captain Fairfax.

Their special tutor was Mr. Lawless, one of the best naval instructors of the time. "Under him," says a certain writer, "they studied the sciences and the history books that

bear on the naval service of the Queen, and were well drilled in modern languages. Their nautical training was not ignored. They were taught to handle boats, and as much of the art and mystery of seamanship as was necessary to prepare them for entering a cruising ship of war. Life on the *Britannia* was not strewn with roses for the young Princes. They had to obey the discipline of the ship, though it is said that for this Prince George found compensation in the opportunities for 'larks' which the lads under training are most ingenious in devising. They lived the wholesome, hearty life of naval cadets in Dartmouth, and had no indulgence, save that they had a cabin apart from the others."

While on the *Britannia* Prince George made himself universally beloved, and won more than one prize for boat-sailing, and pulled in more than one victorious crew of cadets. After they had passed through their schooling in the *Britannia* the two young Princes joined the *Bacchante*, which was commissioned on the 15th of July, 1879, by Captain (now Admiral) Lord Charles Scott; and on the 8th of January, 1880, the elder Prince's sixteenth birthday,

both were rated as midshipmen. Mr. Lawless, their old tutor from the *Britannia*, accompanied the Royal middies, and a "governor" was also appointed in the person of the Rev. J. N. Dalton, better known as Canon Dalton.

The *Bacchante*, a steam corvette, was for the most part of the time attached to the training squadron under the command of Admiral the Earl of Clanwilliam; the other ships of the squadron were the *Inconstant*, the *Tourmaline*, the *Cleopatra*, and the *Carysfort*. While in the *Bacchante* the Princes went round the world and saw for the first time the West Indies, South America, the Cape, Australia, Fiji, Japan, China, Singapore, Ceylon, the Suez Canal, Egypt, the Holy Land, and Greece.

"The two Princes," says one of their biographers, "had to do duty in all weathers and in all hazards, just like any other young 'reefers' on board. They had no exceptional indulgences, and they gave themselves no airs of superiority. Prince George, indeed, was extremely popular with the other middies in the gun-room mess, and, like them, was not averse to indulgence in practical jokes. Wherever the young sailor went he brought



A ROYAL GROUP ON DECK.

away with him reminiscences of boundless hospitality and cordial welcome. On his hosts he left the impression of a free-spoken, happy-hearted, gallant lad, less shy and dignified than his brother, but full of the liveliest interest in everything that was going on and bent on learning as much as he could from his travels." The regularity with which Prince Eddy and Prince George wrote up their diaries was most exemplary.



H.R.H. CAPTAIN THE DUKE OF YORK.

The record of their voyages was published in 1886 under the title, "Cruise of H.M.S. *Bacchante*, 1879-82. By Prince Albert Victor of Wales and Prince George of Wales. With additions by John N. Dalton."

Before leaving the *Bacchante* it may be interesting to take note of an interesting little ceremony which took place recently at York House. The *Bacchante* was disposed of by the Admiralty when considered no longer suitable for active service, and her purchasers

were the Shipbreaking Company. Prior to the breaking up of the vessel the Company wrote to the Duke of York, asking whether he would like a souvenir of his old ship. His Royal Highness replied that he would be extremely pleased to receive some memento of the ship on board which three years of his youth had been spent. A model of the vessel's stern was therefore made out of a portion of her own timbers, and this faithfully reproduces in miniature some fifty feet of the original ship, from the name at the stern to the mizzen mast, thus including that part of the ship in which the young Princes had their quarters. The screw of the model is of gun-metal, while all the deck fittings are silvered. Beneath it is the following inscription upon a brass plate:—

MODEL OF THE STERN OF H.M.S.  
"BACCHANTE,"

4,120 tons, 4,420 h.p.  
Constructed from her own timber.

Presented to

H.R.H. THE DUKE OF YORK, K.G.  
As a memento of His Royal Highness's  
tour round the world, 1879-1882.

Soon after leaving the *Bacchante* the Princes went to Switzerland under the care of their naval instructor, Mr. Lawless, and the present French master at Eton, M. Hua. They resided at Lausanne for six months, and on the 1st of May, 1883, Prince George was appointed midshipman to the *Canada*, which was commissioned by Captain Durrant for service on the North American and West Indian stations. The Royal sailor now had an opportunity of seeing many of the famous places in the New World.

At the time of his visit to the Dominion the Marquis of Lorne was Governor-General of Canada, and Princess Louise was of course with her husband at Ottawa. It may be interesting to mention that it was here that Prince George made the acquaintance of Sir Francis de Winton, then secretary to Lord Lorne. Sir Francis is now the well known comptroller and treasurer of

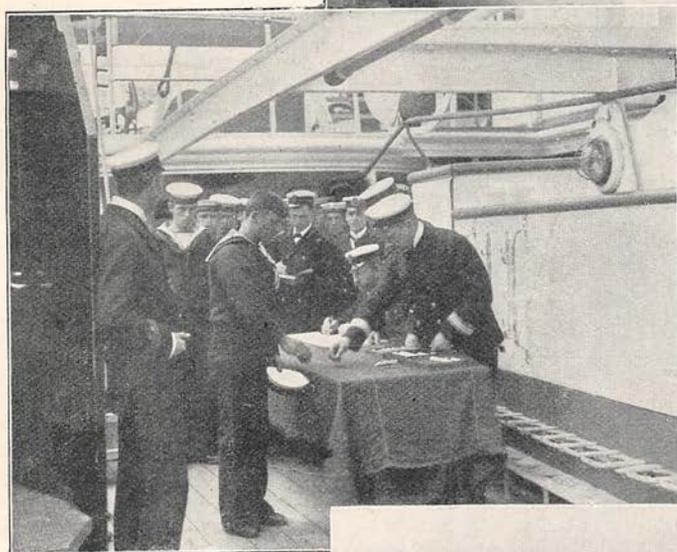
the Duke of York's household. After a cruise in the *Canada* among the West Indian Islands, Prince George passed as sub-lieutenant on his nineteenth birthday, 3rd of June, 1884, obtaining a "first class" in seamanship.

His next move was to the Naval College at Greenwich (and subsequently to H.M.S. *Excellent* at Portsmouth), in order to complete his sea training and to pass as lieutenant. Prince George, in



DECK CLEARED FOR ACTION.

ferred to H.M.S. *Dreadnought*. On the 25th of August, 1886, he was classed as one of the ship's regular lieutenants. Prince George's next step was on the 20th of April, 1888, when he was transferred to H.M.S. *Alexandra*, the flag-ship of H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh, then Admiral Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean.



PAY DAY.

fact, went through his lessons exactly like anybody else, and out of the five examinations he had to take (seamanship, navigation, torpedo, gunnery, and pilotage) he achieved the unusual distinction of getting a "first class" in four.

He was promoted to lieutenant's rank on the 8th of October, 1885, and on the 14th of January, 1886, was appointed to H.M.S. *Thunderer*, under the command of Captain Stephenson, on the Mediterranean Station, and soon after was trans-



A MARCH PAST ON THE QUARTER-DECK

On this ship he remained for three years, and during this period made great progress in his profession. He visited the Sultan at Constantinople, his uncle the King of the Hellenes at Athens, the late Khedive Tewfik at Cairo, and other dignitaries.

After returning to England, Prince George determined to continue his naval career, wisely preferring an active life on the sea to the existence Royalty is more or less compelled to lead in this country. He volunteered, therefore, after his Mediterranean cruise, for another course of gunnery training on H.M.S. *Excellent* at Portsmouth. This concluded, he was appointed on the 1st of February, 1889, to the *Northumberland*, the



PRINCESS VICTORIA OF WALES AND PRINCESS MARIE OF GREECE.

flagship of the Channel Squadron. During the naval manœuvres of the summer of that year he was placed in charge of one of the finest of the torpedo boats, and on one occasion he had an opportunity of showing what manner of seaman he was. I will tell the incident in the words of a naval expert who speaks with authority on the subject:—

“It happened that one of the torpedo squadron disabled her screw off the coast of Ireland and was in danger of drifting on to a lee shore. The sea was running high and there was a stiff gale blowing. Prince George was sent to her assistance. The task was a most difficult one, owing to the delicate nature of the construction of such

boats. He showed, however, such skill, judgment, and nerve in approaching, securing with wire hawser after several hours' effort, and ultimately towing the disabled craft into safety, as won him high encomiums of praise to the Admiralty from Captain Fitzgerald and other senior officers who witnessed his conduct on that occasion. The achievement was, perhaps, the more noteworthy as Prince George (like Nelson and many another distinguished naval officer) suffers terribly from sea-sickness, and the behaviour of a torpedo-boat in rough weather is not the most conducive to quietness of nerve or the comfortably collecting of the thoughts.”

It was, doubtless, as a consequence of this and sundry other proofs of his naval capability that the Admiralty ordered him on May 6th, 1890, to commission the *Thrush*, a gunboat of 805 tons and 1,200 horse-power, at Chatham, for service on the North American and West Indian stations. It may be stated that such independent commands are usually given to senior lieutenants only, and that the compliment paid him by the Lords of the Admiralty was a real proof of their high opinion of his qualities, and not a mere acknowledgment of his Royal prerogative. For thirteen months Prince George held the command of the *Thrush*, and it was during this command that he was deputed by the Queen to be her representative to open the Industrial Exhibition at Jamaica. It is characteristic of the Prince's dislike of parade and pomp that he specially requested the admiral in command of the station that he might be treated simply as an ordinary naval officer.

On arriving in England with the *Thrush*, Prince George received his next “step,” being promoted to the rank of commander on the 24th of August, 1891. He was then in his twenty-seventh year, and the fifteenth of his naval service.

It was in January, 1892, that H.R.H. the Duke of Clarence and Avondale passed away, and this sad event naturally altered the course of Prince George's career. He was now, of course, Heir to the Throne, and was raised to the Peerage as Duke of York.

His sailor life was naturally interrupted, for he had now social and official duties to perform in England, but he assured his naval friends that he had no intention whatever of severing his connection with

the service, but that he should pursue his naval career when opportunity allowed. The Duke of York's next "step" was in 1893, for on the 2nd of January of that year he was appointed captain in the Royal Navy.

In June, 1898, came the commissioning of H.M.S. *Crescent*, with the Duke of York as captain. His Royal Highness was in command of the *Crescent* for three months, part of which time was spent in the manœuvres and the rest in different ports.

Probably those weeks of command on the *Crescent* were among the happiest the Duke had spent since the death of his dearly loved brother. After a spell of several years on land he could not but be glad to get back to the Navy once more, and to feel that he was taking an active share in a profession

evident that the Duke of York's naval career has been a very real and serious matter to him, and he may well be proud of the fact that he has thoroughly earned each single step in his promotion, and that his position as captain to-day is due to his own exertions and not to his Royal birth.



PRINCE EDWARD OF YORK ON BOARD HIS FATHER'S VESSEL.



Many stories are told illustrative of the kindness shown to the crew of the *Crescent* during its recent commission by the Duke and Duchess. On one occasion they were both present at a concert given by the sailors, and while it was proceeding the Duchess noticed that the men were not smoking. She mentioned the matter to the Duke, who, having ascertained that his wife would not object, gave the order, "All hands may smoke." In an instant pipes were produced from pockets and immediately filled, cigars and cigarettes were lit, and before very long the room was filled

with which he had been for so long connected. That the Prince appreciated to the full his responsible position, and endeavoured to discharge his duties as captain of one of her Majesty's cruisers to the very best of his abilities, need hardly be said. From what has been already mentioned it will be quite

with tobacco smoke, making the place seem more like a smoking-carriage on the Underground Railway than a room on board a first class cruiser. The Duchess expressed herself as delighted with the entertainment, and remarked on leaving that she did not know when she had spent a more pleasant evening.

The photographs which accompany this article are reproduced by kind permission of Mr. McGregor, C.P.O. of the *Crescent*, who took them, in conjunction with Messrs. G. West and Sons, of Southsea. The Duke and Duchess very kindly allowed not only themselves, but their private apartments on the *Crescent*, to be pictured, and, more than this, his Royal Highness gave permission to Messrs. West, well known for their artistic work at sea, to take a series of "animated photographs" of the life of the sailors on board. These represent all sorts of subjects, such, for

course, that there is no noise to accompany the scenes) that one is gazing at something which is actually taking place. Mr. West told me that the first time he exhibited the animated photographs of the *Crescent* was before the captain of the ship and the crew.

"The scene," he said, "is impressed vividly on my mind as being most picturesque and novel. The *Crescent* was lying alongside the jetty, and the screen was fixed up on the jetty, so that the picture could be seen by everyone. Captain H.R.H. the Duke of York and his officers stood on the bridge,

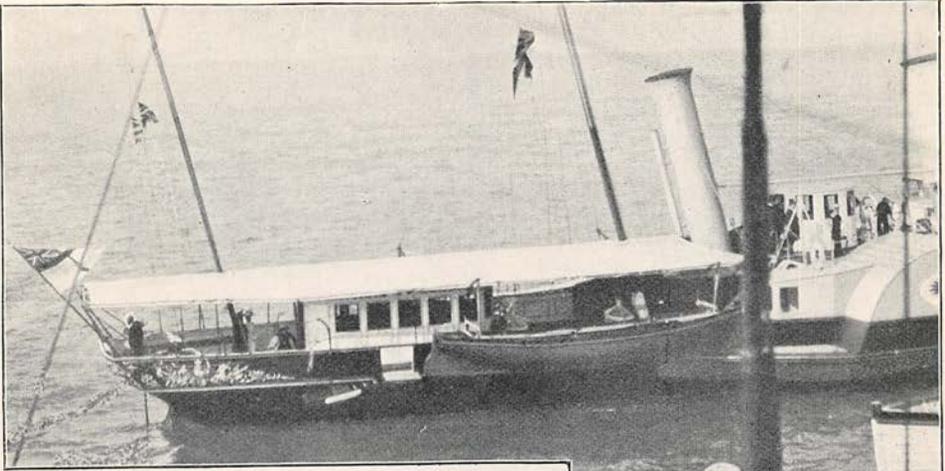


THE DUKE OF YORK'S APARTMENTS ON BOARD H.M.S. "CRESCENT."

instance, as "Field-gun Drill," "Sailors Dancing on the Forecastle," "The Midshipmen of the *Crescent* at Physical Drill," "March Round the Quarter-deck of H.M.S. *Crescent*." It may be here mentioned that it is the custom, in all ships of the Royal Navy, for the entire crew to walk in single file once a month before the captain. This is done in order that he may at least have the opportunity of seeing every sailor individually. A very good series is one showing a sailor dancing a hornpipe before the crew of the *Crescent*, and when these animated pictures are thrown on the screen it is quite easy to imagine (save, of

and the crew swarmed all over the ship, each with an eye to the best position for seeing the views. Several of the sailors came on to the jetty, and, some sitting and some standing, formed a circle around the screen.

"The enthusiasm and applause that greeted each picture was very great, and as they recognised each other in the march round the men laughed and cut jokes in right merry fashion. The second time I gave the exhibition was before the Queen at Osborne, and after it was over I cannot express how proud we felt at being so highly honoured by H.R.H. the Duke of York, who personally



THE QUEEN VISITING H.M.S. "CRESCENT" IN THE ROYAL YACHT.

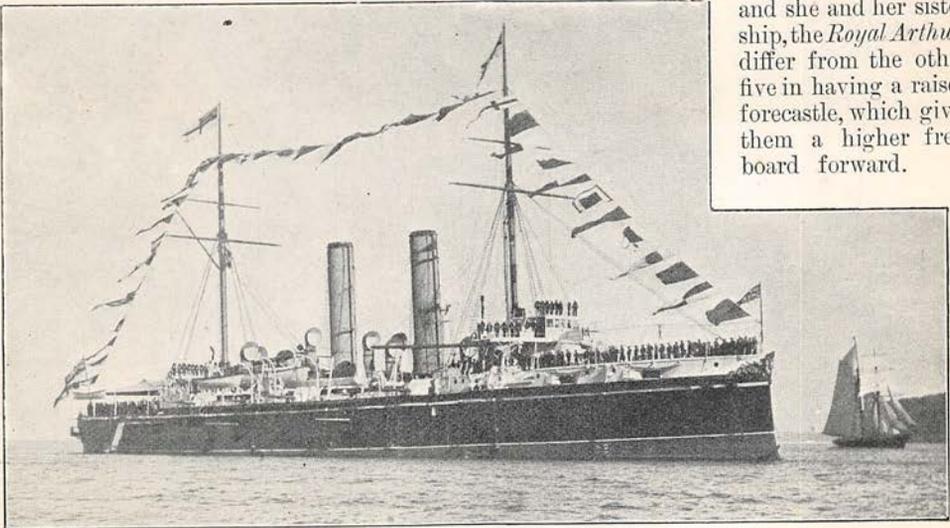
informed us that her Majesty was very pleased indeed with our pictorial display, while the Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Sir Michael Culme Seymour, told me that it was the finest show of the kind he had ever seen.

"Her Majesty sat in the drawing-room, and the pictures were thrown upon a screen fixed up in the doorway, the lanterns being operated from the dining-room. The exhibition lasted just over twenty minutes, and the Duke of York explained the various pictures to the Queen as they were projected on the sheet."

One of our photographs shows H.R.H. the Duke of York in the uniform of a captain in the Royal Navy. Simplicity is the most noticeable feature of the Duke's

dress. On his right sleeve are the four gold bands which denote his rank, the ring on the upper one showing his attachment to the Executive Council. Another photograph shows the Royal yacht *Osborne* with her Majesty on board. When the *Crescent* was anywhere near, the Queen would often go and pay her sailor grandson a visit.

The *Crescent* is one of a group of seven first class cruisers laid down under the Naval Defence Act of 1889, and she and her sister ship, the *Royal Arthur*, differ from the other five in having a raised fore-castle, which gives them a higher free-board forward.



THE "CRESCENT" DRESSED AND MANNED IN HONOUR OF HER MAJESTY'S VISIT.