

CHAPTER XLVII

BERMUDA 1931

By Grandmother

August 29th, 1931 saw Grandfather, Grandmother, Grace and her college pal, Marian Gilchrist, aboard the S. S. Franconia bound for Bermuda. Like most world cruise boats, the Franconia has large airy state-rooms and real beds, also plenty of wardrobe space and dresser drawers. All the party wished they were settling for a long trip, for the sea was calm and the ship had many attractive features.

At 9 a.m. of the third day out, all were settled in St. George - the big ~~white~~ red-roofed hotel on top of a hill overlooking the sea. One hour later the four were in a phaeton drawn by two horses (there are no autos used in Bermuda) on the way to Hamilton.

The first thing that interested us was banjo island, so called from a bridge that resembles the bridge in a banjo and the island is round.

The first stops were at caves. For clear and brilliant formations all thought Crystal Cave surpassed any previously seen. The lake and castle on the Rhine in Leamington Cave probably is not excelled by any other picture formation. Angel Cave was very interesting with its queer and beautiful fish, although scarcely worth the 50 cents admission charge.

"Queenie", a beautiful, blue turbot, appeared to know her name and would come at call. After driving through the best residence sections of Hamilton, looking up the various noted hotels and visiting the cathedral, the party decided to remain at St. Georges, instead of moving to Hamilton the last part of the stay as they had planned.

Today we also visited the Inn, which formerly was Tom Moore's

house and sat under the calabash tree and beside Inspiration Pool where he wrote so much of his poetry.

The Government Aquarium is not extensive, but has some odd species. We saw a magnificent rubber tree at the Agricultural station. The next morning, armed with bathing paraphernalia, we joined a party from the hotel for a day at Tucker's Point.

We made the trip in a neat little motor boat and it was delightful. There are many interesting rock formations around Castle Island and the ruins of an old Spanish fort. It was rather warm when the boat stopped. Bathing suits were donned at once and never changed until the boat returned in late afternoon.

The hotel had sent out a lunch which was served in a rude sort of club house that had plain board tables and benches and all ate in their wet bathing suits. The beach there is glorious. It combines the best features of the Maine and Jersey Coasts. A hundred yards or so back from the water's edge are high cliffs with interesting formations and caves. When one came out of the water, it was very soon advisable to seek the cool shade of these cliffs. The sand is of a nice texture and of a slightly coral tinge.

Another day we went over to Hamilton on the Steamer Bermuda, got a carriage and drove out to Gibbs light, also visiting two famous beaches, Elbow and Coral. The former is generally conceded to be the best beach in Bermuda. Why this is so, is hard to determine. Possibly on account of its better facilities for bathing. It has individual lockers or bath houses so placed that they disfigure the beach as little as any could, while at Tucker's Point there are two rude shacks up on

top of the cliff, the woman's divided into two large rooms, the men's entirely communal.

A modern hotel on top of the cliff and a restaurant nearer the water's edge solves all refreshment problems at Elbow beach. None of our party had ever heard of Coral beach, but they all felt it had some distinct advantages over all the other beaches. The water is deep enough for swimming right up to the water's edge and continues at about the same depth for one half mile. At this point, a coral reef shuts out all danger of sharks and other undesirables. The sand here is a deeper tint of coral and, if possible, the water is even apparently clearer than at the other beaches.

One can thoroughly sympathize with the little American boy who was born in Bermuda and came to the United States with his parents. He was very fond of sea bathing but could not be induced to go in any place they took him in America, the only reason being he wanted "clean water".

Two days the party tried sailing around some of the various islands that constitute Bermuda, with Skipper Minas in The Elsie. The first day was a dismal failure. There was not a breath of wind to fill The Elsie's sails. Minas "tacked" and got out in the middle of Castle harbor and there we sat and fairly sizzled in the sun. Grandmother and the girls had worn their long-sleeved, warmest dresses, which had been brought for such an excursion, and this added to the discomfort.

The second venture on The Elsie was entirely successful. It was a beautiful ride. Although the water was pretty rough as the little boat rounded some of the small, rocky islands, everyone weathered the trip in good shape.

Minas told many stories of the early picturesque characters who lived on these islands. The descendants of some of them are still living there.

Grandmother hated to think that Labor Day, the date set for the return, was coming so near. We all liked St. Georges. No matter how hot it was, you could always find a cool spot on the shady knoll back of the hotel and plenty of easy chairs and hammocks.

The hotel had a wonderful pool and Grandfather and Grandmother felt as if it was their private property, for they arose at 7 a.m. and went swimming in it before any other guests were stirring.

A dilapidated old horse drew a diminutive bus from the hotel down to the military beach at Fort Catherine every two hours. The chief recommendation for this beach is its close proximity to the hotel, and the bus was usually loaded with guests from the hotel.

Grandmother thinks she had never heard more conflicting reports from friends who had visited a place than about Bermuda. Some had "praised it to the skies" and others had not a good word to say. Grandmother feels that the truth lies somewhere between and nearer to the praise.

Grandmother had a fine time and will not turn down an invitation to go again.