

NEWS FROM THE WEST INDIES.

(From an officer in the Fleet)

NAVAL NOTES.—The North American squadron, consisting of H. M. Ships "Bellerophon," "Comus," "Emerald," "Pelican" and "Thrush," left Bermuda for the annual West Indian cruise on the 7th January, and after calling at Dominica, arrived at St. Lucia on the 15th, where the "Tourmaline," "Pylades" and "Partridge" were awaiting orders. A most enjoyable dance at the Court House was given by the civilians on the 16th, and on the following morning the Fleet sailed for Jamaica, the "Partridge" remaining as Senior Officer on the Barbadoes Division. After a fair passage the fleet arrived at Port Royal on the 24th, and on Monday the 26th, the "Bellerophon," "Emerald," "Comus," "Pelican" and "Thrush" proceeded to Kingston to assist in the opening of the exhibition.

H. M. S. "Canada," Russian man-of-war "Minim" and Spanish gunboat "George Juan" were also present at the opening ceremony. The Training Squadron arrived at Barbadoes on the 22nd.

OPENING OF THE EXHIBITION, JAMAICA.—The opening of the Exhibition on Tuesday the 27th January, 1891, by H. R. H. Prince George of Wales, K. G., A. D. C., will long be remembered by the inhabitants of Jamaica. The landing of His Royal Highness was brilliant in the extreme. At 10 o'clock a. m. the Royal Barge left H. M. S. "Thrush," the ships, dressed in rainbow fashion with yards manned, firing a royal salute. A double line of boats, with oars tossed, reached from the Fleet to the shore; on the landing place H. R. H. was received by H. E. the Governor Sir Henry Blake, Vice-Admiral Watson, and Naval and Military officers. The streets were lined with troops from the landing place to the Town Hall, and presented a very gay appearance, spanned by floral arches and decorated with flags. The Prince having landed, a procession was formed, and escorted by the Governor and magnates of the city he drove slowly to the Town Hall. Dense crowds occupied every available space, cheering lustily as the procession passed. At the Town Hall, H. R. H. was received by the Custos and Mayor and conducted to a platform specially prepared and beautifully decorated, to receive an address from the Magistrates and Council of Kingston.

After the presentation of the address, to which the Prince made a most fitting reply, the procession was reformed and proceeded to King's House, while preparations were being made at the Exhibition building for the opening ceremony.

The building is a most imposing structure, designed by Mr. Messiter; it is cruciform in plan, with long arms running East and West. At the point of intersection a magnificent dome has been erected rising to the height of 100 feet from the floor. At each corner of the arms is a large minaret 73 feet in height with access by a staircase in the interior. The building is lighted by electricity; an arc light is hung in the cupola, and an electric search light in one of the minarets.

The doors of the Exhibition were open to the public at half past ten, and by half past eleven all standing room was occupied. Soon after noon the Royal Procession arrived at the building, and His Royal Highness was conducted to a dias beneath the dome, the choir singing the National Anthem.

Mr. Mackinnon, the Secretary of the Commissioners, then read an address of welcome, to which the prince responded in a most graceful and appropriate manner; his reply being received with great applause. The old hundredth hymn was then sung and a prayer read by the Lord Bishop of Jamaica. The Governor then presented His Royal Highness with a gold key, and amidst loud cheering he declared the Exhibition to be open.

In the evening a brilliant display of fireworks took place in the grounds, the ships in the harbours being illuminated and firing bouquets of rockets.

The Governor has issued invitations to a Grand Ball on the 28th. H. M. Ships returning to Port Royal the following morning.

The Fleet sails for Havana, Cuba, about the 5th February.

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