

THE VOYAGE OF THE BETH.

THIRTEEN-TON YACHT'S TASMAN CROSSING.

Papers received by this week's Sydney mail contain interesting accounts of the voyage of the motor-yacht Beth, which with a crew of five, crossed from New Zealand to Australia via Norfolk and Lord Howe Islands, reaching Sydney at the end of October. "Displaying fortitude worthy of old-time adventurers in cockle-shells," says the Sydney Sun, they were dogged by bad weather almost throughout the whole journey. The voyagers were Mr. T. H. Webb, of Adelaide, skipper, and his two sons and Messrs C. Bowman and B. Stallard, of New Zealand. "The log tells a graphic story of the ordeal, though the facts are calmly but cheerfully set down and at times there is even an outcrop of humour. The most striking sentence, perhaps, is this, written at the height of a gale: 'The terribly confused sea is a severe trial for

any small vessel, but we are getting used to the sound of water crashing against the little craft, although we sometimes wonder what 1½-inch planking well framed can stand.'" The sea anchor had frequently to be used and on October 5th an oil bag was put out and an oil can set up in the exhaust pipe to drip slowly.

Writing to his parents in Levin, Mr Basil Stallard gives an interesting account of the voyage, though he does not dwell very much on the high lights of what must have been an adventurous journey. "The trip has not been exactly a picnic," he says. "Our sailing weather was not too good; still here we are in Sydney Harbour. We first sighted the coast at Newcastle, came down to Sydney, and dropped the pick just inside the Heads at 8.45 p.m. on Friday, October 28th. We didn't have much time at Norfolk Island; there is no shelter and we had to have a working crew on all the time; were only 3½ hours ashore. After waiting ten days at Whangaroa for fair

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weather we had a rough trip from the North Cape to Norfolk and were hove-to for 84 hours. She's a great sea-boat, but rolls terribly, never still, very narrow bilges. We steam about seven knots and with sail on do about $8\frac{1}{2}$ to 9 knots. From Norfolk, the first day was an oily calm; sighted plenty of whales some just a few yards off, and took movies of them. The second day we had a pretty stiff breeze on the quarter. In $3\frac{1}{2}$ days the Beth did 560 miles. Saw Lord Howe Island 55 miles off and then lost it in the haze till quite close. Next morning we moved to the anchorage in the lagoon. This is quite shallow and we had to go in on the tide. Inside the reef there is a pool about 12 feet deep formed by a fresh water spring on the bottom which stops the coral from growing. Lord Howe is a marvellous place, a real tropical island, palms and all. There are about 120 Islanders, just about all Europeans and they treated us like kings. Picnics, a dance, launch parties, meals. We were there for nine days and only a visit could make you realize its beauty. There were about forty tourists there—all great sports—who went on by the Morinda to Sydney.

“From Lord Howe to Australia the weather was rotten, head winds, hove-to for 14 hours, with the seas beginning to break. We took some nasty ones aboard, but barring a nasty shaking-up, were O.K. From Newcastle to Sydney, about 65 miles, there was a fair breeze and we bowled along in great style. Shipping everywhere.”

The writer mentions that one of the crew, Cecil Bowman, was in hospital, as the result of a severe blow in the face from a thrashing sail when they were hove-to, resulting in frequent nose-bleeding. The voyagers were making the most of their stay in Sydney and had received many invitations to various functions, too many, indeed, to be fulfilled.

It is expected that the Beth would leave Sydney on Sunday next in continuation of her voyage to Adelaide.